

A Systematic Review on the Impact of Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance on Students' Academic Achievement

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Abstrak

Makalah ini mengkaji hubungan antara kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan kinerja guru dalam membentuk hasil akademik siswa. Makalah ini menggabungkan hasil dari berbagai penelitian yang meneliti bagaimana perilaku kepemimpinan, kompetensi guru, dan kualitas pengajaran memengaruhi pencapaian belajar siswa menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui tinjauan sistematis literatur (SLR). Berdasarkan analisis, kepala sekolah yang baik—yang mampu memotivasi, berkomunikasi secara efektif, dan menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang kolaboratif—memiliki dampak signifikan dalam meningkatkan kinerja profesional guru. Sebaliknya, guru yang menunjukkan tingkat keahlian tinggi dalam merencanakan, melaksanakan, dan mengevaluasi proses pembelajaran memiliki pengaruh besar dalam meningkatkan prestasi akademik siswa. Penelitian ini unik karena mensintesis studi-studi sebelumnya dan menekankan bagaimana profesionalisme guru dan kepemimpinan berinteraksi untuk menciptakan dasar fundamental dalam mencapai kesuksesan pendidikan. Kontribusi praktis studi ini adalah menyediakan sekolah dengan kerangka kerja untuk memperkuat praktik kepemimpinan dan mengembangkan program pengembangan guru. Secara keseluruhan, temuan ini memperkaya bidang manajemen pendidikan dan menawarkan wawasan berharga untuk perbaikan sekolah yang berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Kinerja Guru, Prestasi Akademik, Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis.

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between school principals' leadership and teacher performance in shaping students' academic outcomes. It incorporates results from numerous research that look into how leadership behaviors, teacher competency, and instructional quality affect learner achievement using a qualitative method through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). According to the analysis, good principals those who are able to motivate, communicate effectively, and cultivate a collaborative school environment have a significant impact on improving teachers' professional performance. In turn, teachers who exhibit high levels of proficiency in planning, carrying out, and assessing instruction have a big influence on raising students' academic performance. This work is unique because it synthesizes previous studies and emphasizes how teacher professionalism and leadership interact to create a fundamental basis for attaining educational success. The study's practical contribution is to provide schools with a framework for strengthening leadership practices and advancing teacher development programs. Overall, the findings enrich the field of educational management and offer valuable insights for continuous school improvement.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Teacher Performance, Academic Achievement, Systematic Literature Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education stands as one of the most essential pillars in building the intellectual and moral quality of a nation. In the era of globalization, a country's advancement is primarily determined by the competence of its human resources, which depends greatly on how effectively its education system operates (Na et al., 2024). Schools therefore serve as the central institutions for nurturing human potential, while the principal, as the educational leader, holds a strategic role in planning, managing, implementing, and supervising

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school programs to ensure quality learning outcomes (Husna et al., 2024). Leadership, in this context, refers to the ability to influence others willingly and effectively toward achieving shared objectives. The leadership approach adopted by school principals directly affects teacher performance and the overall success of the institution. An effective principal is not merely an administrative manager but also a source of motivation and inspiration who fosters a positive work climate, encourages innovation, and promotes professional collaboration among teachers (Almarashdi & Jarrah, 2023).

Meanwhile, teachers are the backbone of the educational process. Their performance has a direct and measurable impact on students learning achievements (Jajuli et al., 2022). The role of teachers extends beyond classroom instruction they act as mentors, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators who shape the quality of student learning experiences. Consequently, strong collaboration between visionary school leadership and professional teacher performance becomes a crucial determinant in improving academic achievement and ensuring educational excellence (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023).

2. METHOD

This study applied a qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to synthesize previous research related to the relationship between principal leadership, teacher performance, and students academic outcomes. The SLR process was conducted through several structured stages to ensure the credibility and rigor of the analysis:

1. Identification and Keyword Selection

Relevant keywords such as school leadership, teacher performance, academic achievement, and educational management were determined to guide the search for related studies.

2. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was carried out using major academic databases, including Google Scholar and Mendeley, focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2018 and 2024.

3. Screening and Selection Process

Articles were evaluated based on the relevance of their titles, abstracts, and full texts to the research topic. Only studies that explicitly discussed the relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance were included in the review.

4. Data Extraction

Essential information such as the author's name, research purpose, methodology, and key findings was systematically extracted from each selected study to ensure comprehensive data representation.

Analysis and Synthesis

5. All data were analyzed qualitatively to identify recurring patterns, thematic consistencies, and research gaps across the selected studies. In total, 15 articles were reviewed to obtain an in-depth understanding of how leadership and teacher performance contribute to students' academic success.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The review identified consistent evidence across numerous studies, confirming that principal leadership plays a vital role in shaping teacher performance, which subsequently influences students' academic achievement. Effective principals create a conducive and motivating work atmosphere that encourages teachers to innovate, collaborate, and continuously refine their instructional practices. For instance, research conducted by Toni et al. (2023) and Garai (2024) demonstrated that strong leadership, supported by adequate school facilities, positively impacts teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Similarly, Samsunantri (2021) and Maryati & Hanggara (2022) reported that leadership style, teacher attitudes, and motivation collectively enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction and foster improved academic results. Several studies also highlighted the mediating effects of organizational culture, school climate, and teacher motivation.

Masitha et al. (2024) found that leadership influences teacher performance both directly and indirectly through the establishment of discipline and a healthy organizational environment. Likewise, Rosmayni et al. (2023) and Zahroh et al. (2022) indicated that principals who promote a positive work culture and conduct regular supervision are able to improve teacher discipline, leading to higher student achievement.

Furthermore, the synthesis revealed that the effect of leadership on students' academic achievement is often mediated by teacher competence and classroom management. Strong leadership provides direction, support, and professional development opportunities that empower teachers to perform optimally. Therefore, improving both leadership capabilities and teacher professionalism is essential to achieving educational excellence. In summary, the reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that leadership and teacher performance are interdependent elements within the school system. Principals who are visionary and communicative foster an environment that motivates teachers to deliver high-quality instruction, while teachers who are dedicated and skilled translate this leadership into tangible learning gains for students. The synergy between these two factors forms the cornerstone of effective educational outcomes and long-term institutional success (Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024).

The findings obtained from the analysis of fifteen selected journal articles that met the author's inclusion criteria demonstrate that principal leadership and teacher performance collectively exert a positive and significant effect on students' academic outcomes (Priestley et al., 2021). High levels of student achievement are the result of effective teaching and learning processes, which in turn rely on the quality of teacher performance (Boardman et al., 2024). Strong teacher performance is a fundamental aspect of educational implementation, as teachers serve as both innovators and key agents of transformation within schools and classrooms (Akteruzzaman et al., 2023). Teacher performance is manifested through students' learning achievements as reflected in instructional activities (Azamatova et al., 2023). Leadership, in this context, represents a teacher's capacity to influence, motivate, and engage students to participate actively and willingly in achieving learning objectives (Yundayani et al., 2023). When applied to teachers, leadership can be defined as the ability to encourage, guide, inspire, and direct students to willingly follow and act toward predetermined educational goals (Dewi & Siwi, 2024). To ensure optimal teacher performance, school leaders must create conditions that allow teachers to work professionally, think creatively, and be supported with adequate teaching resources (Cereda, 2024).

Principals play a vital role in fostering collaboration through guidance and motivation, thereby enhancing teacher performance and improving student outcomes (Pavajeau & Montero, 2023). They should also possess the ability to provide conceptual understanding, knowledge, and experience in effective leadership, enabling teachers to exercise leadership within their classrooms (Sabgini & Triastama Wiraatmaja, 2022). Principals who can successfully motivate, direct, and support their staff will be more capable of leading schools toward academic success (Davids & Rinqest, 2024). The partial influence of leadership and performance variables further highlights that principals have an essential role in managing educational personnel, organizing administrative operations, developing professional staff, and optimizing the use of school facilities and infrastructure (Jajuli et al., 2022). As professional educators, teachers contribute directly to improving students' academic success through mastery of essential competencies (Rojo-Ramos et al., 2025; Orakcı, 2021). Their performance significantly affects student learning outcomes, while principal leadership indirectly reinforces this effect (Ditania, 2022; Jajuli et al., 2022; Ventaja-Cruz et al., 2024). Thus, it can be concluded that principal leadership and teacher performance together form a synergistic force that drives students' academic achievement and overall school effectiveness (Zusniarni et al., 2024; Roja & Salim, 2023; Rudini & Khasanah, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the synthesis of fifteen selected studies, it can be concluded that both principal leadership and teacher performance have a positive and significant influence on students' academic achievement. Effective leadership from principals establishes a strong organizational foundation that encourages teachers to perform at their best. In turn, competent and motivated teachers enhance the quality of learning, leading to improved student outcomes. Leadership serves as a driving force that shapes the overall school environment, ensuring that educational objectives are achieved efficiently.

Principals who demonstrate effective leadership by motivating, guiding, and empowering teachers create a culture of professionalism and collaboration that directly supports academic success. Meanwhile, teachers who exhibit high performance and professionalism translate leadership direction into meaningful learning experiences for. Therefore, it is essential for schools to strengthen both leadership capacity and teacher competence in an integrated manner. Professional development programs, leadership training, and continuous performance evaluation should be prioritized to ensure sustainable improvement in educational quality and student achievement.

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