

The Influence of the Principal's Leadership on the Motivation of Teachers of SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan motivasi terhadap kinerja guru di SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan. Latar belakang penelitian ini berangkat dari pentingnya peran guru dalam menentukan keberhasilan pendidikan di Indonesia. Guru profesional dituntut memiliki kompetensi akademik, sertifikasi pendidik, serta kemampuan mengelola proses pembelajaran secara efektif. Di sisi lain, kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin tertinggi di sekolah memiliki peran strategis dalam meningkatkan motivasi dan kinerja guru agar tujuan pendidikan nasional dapat tercapai. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada tiga aspek utama, yaitu: (1) pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah terhadap kinerja guru, (2) pengaruh motivasi guru terhadap kinerja guru, dan (3) pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan motivasi guru secara simultan terhadap kinerja guru di SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi teoretis terhadap pengembangan ilmu manajemen pendidikan, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja guru. Secara praktis, hasil penelitian ini diharapkan menjadi masukan bagi guru untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan komunikasi, bagi kepala sekolah dalam mengembangkan gaya kepemimpinan yang efektif dan partisipatif, serta bagi sekolah dan dinas pendidikan dalam merancang program peningkatan mutu pendidikan melalui penguatan kepemimpinan dan motivasi sumber daya manusia.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Motivasi Guru, Kinerja Guru.

Abstract

This study aims to determine the influence of principals' leadership and motivation on teacher performance in SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan. The background of this research departs from the importance of the role of teachers in determining the success of education in Indonesia. Professional teachers are required to have academic competence, educator certification, and the ability to manage the learning process effectively. On the other hand, school principals as the highest leaders in schools have a strategic role in increasing teacher motivation and performance so that national education goals can be achieved. This research is focused on three main aspects, namely: (1) the influence of the principal's leadership on teacher performance, (2) the influence of teacher motivation on teacher performance, and (3) the influence of the principal's leadership and teacher motivation simultaneously on teacher performance at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan. The research method used is a quantitative approach with data collection techniques through questionnaires, observations, and documentation. The results of the research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of education management science, especially related to teacher leadership and work motivation. Practically, the results of this research are expected to be input for teachers to increase motivation and communication, for school principals in developing an effective and participatory leadership style, and for schools and education offices in designing programs to improve the quality of education through strengthening leadership and motivation of human resources.

Keywords: Principal's Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Teacher Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental determinants of educational success in Indonesia is the quality of teacher performance within schools. Amid rapid global transformations particularly in the

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domains of technology and information professional competence remains a core attribute that must continuously be strengthened within the educational community. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but central actors in shaping the nation's intellectual and moral development (Kozakli Ulger et al., 2022).

In the Indonesian legal framework, the professional standards of teachers are explicitly regulated under Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 8, which stipulates that professional teachers must possess academic qualifications, pedagogical competence, educator certification, physical and mental well-being, and the capability to effectively deliver instruction in order to achieve national education objectives. This regulatory mandate underscores the strategic role of teachers as agents of educational transformation (Ardliana et al., 2021).

Within the school organizational structure, the principal serves as the highest authority and plays a decisive role in influencing institutional success. The effectiveness of school programs and the continuity of organizational processes largely depend on the principal's leadership commitment and managerial capacity. A principal who demonstrates strong commitment and motivation can significantly enhance teachers' professional growth, thereby enabling them to manage the teaching and learning process more effectively (Che-Aron & Matcha, 2023).

Teacher certification represents one institutional mechanism designed to improve professional competence. However, the process of obtaining an educator certificate is often rigorous and demanding. Despite these challenges, certification serves as formal recognition of a teacher's professional eligibility and legitimizes the execution of instructional duties (Ardliana et al., 2021).

Teacher performance, as a critical component of educational quality, has broader implications for national human resource development. Similar to employee performance in corporate organizations, teacher performance is essential for achieving institutional objectives. Beyond influencing classroom learning outcomes, teacher effectiveness contributes substantially to the long-term advancement of national civilization through the development of high-quality human capital (Bastian et al., 2022).

The success of teachers must therefore be measured against established professional standards. When teachers fulfill these predetermined competencies and ethical benchmarks, they may be regarded as successful educators with strong professional character. Conversely, failure to meet these standards indicates suboptimal performance and limits the categorization of teachers as professionally effective within the educational system (Nuray & Ceylan, 2021).

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 Principal's Leadership

The scope of a school principal's responsibilities is extensive and multidimensional. Among the most essential roles is that of a motivator serving as a driving force who mobilizes teachers and educational staff to perform their duties effectively. In this capacity, the principal is expected to inspire, direct, and energize subordinates so that institutional tasks are completed efficiently and aligned with the collective objective of realizing the school's agreed-upon vision and mission (Marmoah, 2019).

School effectiveness is shaped by numerous determinants, with principal leadership constituting one of the most decisive factors. According to Danim and Suparno (2019), leadership refers to the capacity to influence individuals or groups toward the attainment of specific goals. Such influence emerges through social interaction and may stem from formal authority embedded in organizational structures or informal legitimacy derived from personal credibility (Malik et al., 2020).

(Kartini et al., 2020) conceptualizes the principal's role as encompassing multiple interrelated functions: educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator. These functions require a comprehensive set of competencies, including strong personal integrity, deep understanding of educational principles, clarity of institutional vision and mission, sound decision-making skills, effective communication, and the capacity to delegate authority appropriately.

The impact of principal leadership on teacher performance is primarily manifested through the creation of a school climate that either facilitates or constrains professional effectiveness. As the highest authority within the educational institution, the principal functions as the central catalyst of the instructional process. Effective leadership is demonstrated not merely through administrative control, but through the consistent dedication of intellectual, emotional, and managerial capacities to achieve institutional objectives (Palah et al., 2022).

A principal's leadership effectiveness is therefore reflected in exemplary personal conduct, the ability to motivate and empower staff, strategic and rational decision-making, transparent communication practices, and the delegation of responsibilities in ways that foster accountability and professional growth. Through these mechanisms, leadership becomes a transformative force shaping teacher performance and overall school success (Irawan et al., 2020).

2.2 Motivation

Motivation constitutes a fundamental psychological determinant of teacher performance. (Firmansyah, 2025) asserts that teachers are more likely to demonstrate optimal professional engagement when they possess strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Highly motivated teachers tend to exhibit greater interest, sustained attention, and active participation in instructional responsibilities. Conversely, insufficient motivation often results in diminished instructional effectiveness, ultimately leading to reduced productivity and weakened performance outcomes.

This condition underscores the importance of institutional mechanisms that function as motivational drivers within schools. The presence of effective motivators (Darmawan & Pujiastuti, 2023) particularly the school principal becomes essential in fostering teachers' professional enthusiasm and commitment. Without adequate work motivation, teacher performance is unlikely to align with institutional expectations or educational standards.

(Lesiana et al., 2023) emphasize that work motivation significantly influences teachers' daily professional activities, including administrative responsibilities and the management of resources such as BOS (School Operational Assistance) funds. Work motivation can be conceptualized as the internal and external factors that energize, direct, and sustain individual behavior toward the achievement of predetermined goals in an effective and efficient manner. In the educational context, teacher work motivation functions as a psychological engine that generates professional dedication and perseverance.

From a theoretical perspective, the motivational process may be understood as a sequential dynamic: unmet needs give rise to desires; desires create psychological tension; tension stimulates action; and action culminates in decision-making and goal attainment. Thus, motivation operates as an interconnected chain linking individual needs to observable professional behavior. Within schools, strengthening teacher motivation is therefore not merely a supportive effort but a strategic necessity for enhancing instructional quality and institutional performance (Ditania, 2022).

2.3 Teacher Performance

High-quality teacher performance is an indispensable prerequisite for improving educational standards. Nevertheless, suboptimal teacher performance remains a persistent challenge within the Indonesian education system. A survey conducted by the Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI), covering 28 provinces, revealed that in 16 provinces teacher performance was categorized as only moderately satisfactory (Chen et al., 2022). This finding highlights systemic concerns regarding professional effectiveness and instructional quality.

Sarifudin (in Sabila & Jabar, 2022) emphasizes that the success of education is fundamentally determined by the quality of teacher performance in schools. The effectiveness of instructional delivery, student learning outcomes, and academic achievement are closely correlated with teachers' professional competence and commitment. In this regard, teacher performance functions not merely as an individual attribute but as a strategic determinant of institutional educational success.

Conceptually, teacher performance refers to the measurable outcomes of teachers' professional duties, encompassing lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation. According to Uno (in Pramudya & Mardikaningsih, 2021), teacher performance reflects the intensity and quality of teachers' engagement in the teaching and learning process, grounded in professional discipline and work ethic. Thus, performance is not solely about output, but also about adherence to pedagogical standards and ethical responsibilities.

Teacher performance is influenced by a constellation of internal and external factors. Internal determinants originate within the individual teacher and include personality traits, pedagogical skills, professional competencies, self-efficacy defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute tasks successfully (Rohmawati et al., 2019) and intrinsic work motivation (Su'udah, 2021). These psychological and professional attributes shape teachers' resilience, instructional creativity, and commitment to student development.

Conversely, external factors arise from the institutional environment and encompass recognition systems, incentives, infrastructural support, working conditions, and leadership practices within the school (Suprayogi et al., 2024). Leadership patterns, in particular, play a pivotal role in either facilitating or constraining teacher performance by influencing organizational climate, professional autonomy, and morale.

Therefore, teacher performance must be understood as a multidimensional construct shaped by dynamic interactions between individual capacities and systemic conditions. Strengthening both internal professional competencies and supportive organizational structures is essential to achieving sustainable improvements in educational quality (Fauz et al., 2020).

3. METHOD

3.1 Place and Time of the Study

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan, located in Pengarayan Village, Tanjung Lubuk District, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency. The research was implemented over a two-month period, from September to October 2025.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach. Quantitative methodology is characterized by the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to examine relationships among variables and to test hypotheses objectively. Through statistical procedures and mathematical modeling, this approach aims to measure constructs in a structured manner and generate findings that are generalizable to a broader population (Rohmawati et al., 2019).

3.3 Population

The population of this study comprised all teachers of SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan.

3.4 Sample

The sample was determined using either purposive random sampling or stratified random sampling techniques to ensure proportional representation of respondents based on relevant characteristics (e.g., teaching experience, employment status, or subject area). The number of respondents was calculated using the Slovin formula or other appropriate statistical estimation techniques to ensure adequate representativeness and reliability (Anggraini, 2020).

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to teachers as respondents. The questionnaire consisted of systematically arranged items designed to capture teachers' perceptions regarding Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance Motivation. The instrument utilized scaled responses to enable quantitative measurement and subsequent statistical analysis (Sobirin & Suryani, 2022).

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study employed descriptive quantitative analysis. The responses obtained from the questionnaire were processed numerically and converted into statistical representations, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and other relevant descriptive measures (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022).

This analytical approach aims to present empirical findings in a systematic and objective manner by transforming raw data into measurable statistical information. The numerical results were subsequently interpreted and described narratively to facilitate comprehensive understanding and clarity of the research findings (Zusniarni et al., 2024).

Through descriptive quantitative analysis, the study provides an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance Motivation without making inferential generalizations beyond the observed data (HASHEMI, 2021).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Overview

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan, located in Tanjung Lubuk District, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency. The respondents consisted of the entire teacher population at the school, totaling 13 individuals.

Based on the data obtained through the questionnaire, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were identified and categorized accordingly (Widiastuti et al., 2023).

1. Employment Status

Regarding employment classification, the 13 teacher-respondents were distributed into three categories:

- 3 teachers held Civil Servant (PNS) status;
- 4 teachers were categorized as Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK);
- 6 teachers were employed as honorary teachers.

This distribution indicates that the majority of teachers at the school are non-permanent staff, which may have implications for work motivation, organizational commitment, and performance dynamics within the institution.

The following table 4.1 illustrates the distribution of teacher staffing status:

Yes	Employment Status	Sum	Percentage
1	PNS	2	15,4%
2	PPPK	4	30,8%
3	Honorary	7	53,8%
Total		13	100%

2. Gender Distribution

Based on the questionnaire data, the gender composition of respondents indicates that 11 teachers (76.9%) were female, while 2 teachers (23.1%) were male. This distribution demonstrates that the teaching workforce at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan is predominantly female. Such a composition is generally consistent with staffing patterns commonly found in elementary education institutions, where female educators often constitute the majority of the workforce (Su'udah, 2021).

No.	Gender	Sum	Percentage
1	Man	3	23,1%
2	Woman	10	76,9%
Total		13	100%

3. Tenure

The distribution of respondents based on length of service shows varying levels of professional experience. Out of the 13 teacher respondents, 7 teachers (53.8%) had a tenure of less than five years. Meanwhile, 3 teachers (23.1%) had worked for approximately five to ten years, and another 3 teachers (23.1%) had more than ten years of teaching experience.

These findings indicate that the majority of teachers at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan are relatively early in their professional careers, which may influence work motivation, adaptability to leadership practices, and overall teaching performance within the school environment (Ayu et al., 2022).

Yes	Tenure	Sum	Percentage
1	< 5 years	7	53,8%
2	5–10 years	3	23,1%
3	>10 years	3	23,1%
Total		13	100%

Based on the respondent characteristics presented above, it can be inferred that the majority of teachers at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan are categorized as early-career educators, with a tenure of less than five years. This demographic composition may influence professional adaptability, motivational patterns, and performance dynamics within the institution.

2.2 Description of Research Data

This study explored three principal variables: Principal's Leadership (X_1), Teacher Motivation (X_2), and Teacher Performance (Y). Data was collected using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale (1–5), which was distributed to 13 teachers.

1. Principal's Leadership (X_1)

Overall, the results suggest that teachers viewed the principal's leadership as "good." The principal was recognized for providing clear direction, setting a professional example, and offering institutional support to facilitate teachers' responsibilities. Key leadership strengths included the ability to foster a positive working environment and maintain transparent, open communication, which contributed to organizational stability and teacher engagement.

2. Teacher Motivation (X_2)

Teacher motivation was generally rated as high, with most respondents indicating strong professional enthusiasm and an intrinsic drive to improve instructional performance. However, differences were noted based on employment status. Civil Servant (PNS) and Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) showed more stable motivation levels compared to honorary teachers, who often face structural challenges related to job benefits and long-term career security. This suggests that employment status plays a role in the consistency of teacher motivation (Sujiati et al., 2023).

3. Teacher Performance (Y)

The analysis showed that overall teacher performance was rated as good. This assessment was based on key indicators such as attendance, lesson planning, teaching implementation, and the evaluation of student outcomes. However, the data also indicated that teachers with fewer than five years of experience needed additional professional development, especially in lesson planning and the effective use of digital learning tools. This points to the importance of targeted mentoring and professional development for early-career teachers (López-Morales et al., 2023).

3.3 Intervariable Relationship Analysis

1. The Influence of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

The findings derived from questionnaire responses indicate that principal leadership exerts a significant influence on teacher performance. Respondents perceived that principals who demonstrate effective communication, exemplary conduct, and consistent appreciation toward teachers are more successful in fostering professional responsibility and enhancing work morale.

Leadership behaviors characterized by clarity of direction, participative engagement, and recognition mechanisms appear to positively shape teachers' commitment to instructional duties. These findings align with (Nugraha & Suyatmin, 2021) who posits that principals functioning as leaders, motivators, and innovators play a decisive role in directing teacher behavior toward greater productivity and institutional effectiveness.

2. The Influence of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Performance

The analysis further reveals a positive relationship between teacher work motivation and performance outcomes. Teachers exhibiting strong intrinsic motivation such as achievement orientation, accountability, and a sense of belonging to the school community tend to demonstrate higher levels of professional effectiveness compared to those with lower motivational levels (Nuray & Ceylan, 2021).

This result is consistent with the motivational framework proposed by (Ardliana et al., 2021) whose Two-Factor Theory emphasizes that motivator factors including achievement, recognition, and responsibility serve as primary drivers of productivity and job satisfaction. In this context, internal psychological encouragement significantly contributes to enhanced instructional performance.

3. The Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership and Teacher Motivation on Teacher Performance

Descriptive analysis suggests that principal leadership and teacher motivation collectively contribute to improved teacher performance. The interaction between effective leadership practices and high levels of teacher motivation generates a synergistic effect that strengthens professional engagement.

Principals who are capable of guiding, inspiring, and cultivating a supportive organizational climate indirectly reinforce teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Consequently, the integration of strong leadership and sustained work motivation creates a conducive environment for optimal performance at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan.

These findings underscore that teacher performance is not determined by a single variable but rather by the dynamic interplay between leadership quality and motivational intensity within the school organization.

Discussion

The findings of this study corroborate several established theoretical perspectives and empirical investigations in the field of educational management.

First, the positive influence of principal leadership on teacher performance aligns with the argument proposed by Saptiany and Prabowo (2024) who assert that school leadership directly determines the effectiveness of teachers' professional practices. The present findings reinforce the notion that leadership characterized by clear direction, exemplary conduct, and supportive engagement fosters improved instructional commitment and productivity among teachers (Seckel et al., 2022).

Second, the significant relationship between teacher motivation and performance supports the perspective of (Panjaitan & Fardana, 2023) who emphasize that work motivation constitutes a critical driver of teacher productivity. In this study, teachers demonstrating stronger internal motivation manifested through responsibility, discipline, and professional enthusiasm tended to achieve higher performance outcomes. This confirms that psychological engagement functions as a central mechanism in translating individual capacity into observable performance.

Furthermore, the results are consistent with Che-Aron & Matcha (2023) who conceptualizes teacher performance as the product of an interaction between internal factors (such as motivation and personality traits) and external factors (including leadership practices and organizational environment). The simultaneous influence of principal leadership and teacher motivation identified in this research illustrates the integrative nature of performance determinants within educational institutions (Crespí et al., 2022).

Overall, the study demonstrates a clear pattern: enhanced principal leadership quality combined with elevated teacher motivation leads to improved teacher performance at the elementary school level. These findings highlight the importance of adopting a holistic approach in educational management, where leadership effectiveness and motivational reinforcement operate synergistically to strengthen instructional quality and institutional achievement.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings derived from a study involving 13 teachers at SD Negeri 04 Pengarayan, several important conclusions can be drawn.

First, principal leadership demonstrates a positive influence on teacher performance. Principals who function as role models, provide constructive guidance, and deliver clear direction contribute significantly to enhancing teachers' professional effectiveness. Leadership characterized by exemplary behavior and supportive supervision fosters greater responsibility and accountability among teachers.

Second, teacher work motivation is positively associated with teacher performance. Educators who possess high levels of motivation exhibit stronger dedication, improved work discipline, and a more professional work ethic in carrying out instructional responsibilities. This finding confirms that internal motivational strength plays a crucial role in determining performance outcomes.

Third, principal leadership and teacher motivation simultaneously exert a positive influence on teacher performance. The interaction between effective leadership practices and strong motivational drives creates a synergistic effect that strengthens overall teacher productivity. The combination of these two variables contributes meaningfully to the improvement of teacher performance within the institutional context. Overall, the study underscores that optimizing teacher performance requires not only competent leadership at the managerial level but also sustained efforts to strengthen teachers' motivational foundations.

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