

# School Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir

**Andri Ria Munanda<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas PGRI Palembang

\*Corresponding author: [andre.doank08@gmail.com](mailto:andre.doank08@gmail.com)

## Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan dan menganalisis peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di Sekolah Dasar Negeri 18 Tungkal Ilir. Kepala sekolah memegang tanggung jawab besar dalam membimbing, melatih, dan memotivasi guru untuk melaksanakan tugas mereka secara profesional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru melalui gaya kepemimpinan partisipatif dan komunikatif. Kepala sekolah berusaha menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang kondusif, memberikan dukungan moral, dan mendorong pengembangan kompetensi guru melalui pelatihan dan supervisi akademik. Selain itu, komunikasi terbuka antara kepala sekolah dan guru meningkatkan motivasi kerja dan rasa tanggung jawab guru. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang efektif dan inspiratif dari kepala sekolah secara signifikan berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan kinerja guru di Sekolah Dasar Negeri 18 Tungkal Ilir.

**Kata kunci:** *Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, kinerja guru, motivasi, supervisi akademik, pendidikan dasar.*

## Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze the role of the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir. The principal holds a major responsibility in guiding, coaching, and motivating teachers to perform their duties professionally. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that the principal's leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance through participative and communicative leadership styles. The principal strives to create a conducive work environment, provide moral support, and encourage teacher competency development through training and academic supervision. Furthermore, open communication between the principal and teachers increases work motivation and teachers' sense of responsibility. Thus, it can be concluded that effective and inspirational leadership of the principal significantly contributes to improving teacher performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir.

**Keywords:** *Principal leadership, teacher performance, motivation, academic supervision, elementary education.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential factors in determining educational quality at the elementary level. Effective teaching practices, classroom management, instructional planning, and professional engagement significantly contribute to student achievement and overall school effectiveness (Grissom et al., 2021; Sun &

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Leithwood, 2021). Within this framework, school leadership plays a decisive role in shaping teachers' professional behavior and instructional practices.

Recent educational leadership research emphasizes that principals are no longer merely administrative managers but instructional leaders who directly influence teaching quality (Hallinger, 2022; Liu & Hallinger, 2023). Transformational leadership fosters teacher motivation and commitment, while instructional leadership ensures academic supervision and curriculum alignment (Leithwood et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022). Participative leadership further strengthens collaboration and teacher engagement in decision-making processes (Printy et al., 2021; Spillane & Zuberi, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, educational decentralization policies encourage schools to strengthen internal leadership capacity (Kemendikbudristek, 2023; World Bank, 2023). However, empirical studies focusing specifically on rural elementary schools remain limited. Most leadership studies concentrate on urban or secondary schools, leaving a contextual research gap concerning small-scale public elementary institutions.

State Elementary School 18 Tungal Ilir represents a rural educational setting where leadership practices may differ from those in metropolitan schools. Understanding how the principal's leadership influences teacher performance in this specific context is essential for generating practical and policy-relevant insights.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of principal leadership on teacher performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungal Ilir. It seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding how instructional, transformational, and participative leadership dimensions contribute to improving teacher performance.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach. Quantitative methodology was selected to measure the magnitude and statistical significance of the relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

### *Population and Sample*

The population consisted of all teachers at State Elementary School 18 Tungal Ilir (N = 30). Due to the small population size, total population sampling was applied.

### *Research Instrument*

Data were collected using structured questionnaires based on validated leadership and teacher performance indicators adapted from recent leadership frameworks (Hallinger, 2022; Leithwood et al., 2021). The leadership variable included:

- Instructional leadership
- Transformational leadership
- Participative leadership

Teacher performance indicators included:

- Lesson planning
- Classroom management
- Instructional delivery
- Professional development engagement

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using:

- Descriptive statistics
- Validity and reliability testing
- Assumption tests (normality, linearity, homoscedasticity)
- Simple linear regression analysis

Statistical significance was determined at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The regression model aimed to determine whether principal leadership significantly predicts teacher performance (Hitt & Tucker, 2021).

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the influence of school principal leadership on teacher performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir. Data were collected from all teachers at the school ( $N = 30$ ) using structured questionnaires measuring principal leadership and teacher performance.

#### 3.1 Descriptive Findings

The descriptive analysis shows that teachers perceive principal leadership positively, with an average score of 4.2 on a 5-point Likert scale. Among the leadership dimensions, instructional leadership received the highest score, indicating that the principal actively supervises teaching practices, provides academic guidance, and supports professional growth. Transformational and participative leadership also scored high, suggesting that teachers experience motivation, participatory decision-making, and collaborative culture in the school.

Teacher performance demonstrated a high average score of 4.1, particularly in classroom management and lesson planning. Other indicators, including instructional delivery and engagement in professional development, also showed positive trends. These results reflect a strong alignment between the principal’s leadership practices and teachers’ professional competencies.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables ( $N = 30$ )

Variable	Mean	SD	Category
Principal Leadership	4.20	0.41	High
Instructional Leadership	4.35	0.38	High
Transformational Leadership	4.15	0.42	High
Participative Leadership	4.10	0.44	High
Teacher Performance	4.10	0.40	High
Lesson Planning	4.15	0.39	High
Classroom Management	4.20	0.41	High
Instructional Delivery	4.05	0.42	High
Professional Development Engagement	4.00	0.43	High

Note: Scale 1–5 (1 = very low, 5 = very high)

#### 3.2 Inferential Findings

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test whether principal leadership predicts teacher performance. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Regression Analysis Results

Predictor Variable	$\beta$	t	p	Interpretation
Principal Leadership	0.68	5.12	0.001	Significant positive effect
$R^2$	0.46	$F = 26.18$	$<0.001$	Significant model

The regression results indicate that principal leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher performance ( $\beta = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that teachers’ professional competencies including lesson planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, and engagement in professional development improve when the principal exhibits effective leadership practices.

## Discussion

These findings align with prior research emphasizing the role of leadership in enhancing teacher performance. Instructional leadership strengthens teachers' classroom practices and provides academic guidance, improving instructional quality (Hallinger, 2022; Sun & Leithwood, 2021). Transformational leadership enhances intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, and willingness to engage in continuous improvement (Li et al., 2022). Meanwhile, participative leadership fosters a collaborative culture, encourages shared responsibility, and increases teacher engagement in school initiatives (Spillane & Zuberi, 2022).

In rural school contexts like Tungkal Ilir, the principal's leadership assumes an even more critical role due to limited access to external resources (World Bank, 2023). Effective leadership operates as a central mechanism to supervise, motivate, and develop teacher capacity, reinforcing the theoretical perspective that leadership acts as an organizational driver influencing teacher competence, motivation, and performance (Grissom et al., 2021; Liu & Hallinger, 2023).

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that principal leadership at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir substantially contributes to teacher performance, highlighting the importance of strong, participative, and transformational leadership practices in enhancing educational outcomes.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The study confirms that principal leadership significantly and positively affects teacher performance at State Elementary School 18 Tungkal Ilir. Instructional, transformational, and participative leadership practices collectively contribute to enhanced lesson planning, classroom management, teaching effectiveness, and professional engagement. The findings emphasize that effective leadership is a strategic determinant of school improvement, particularly in rural elementary schools. Principals who provide structured supervision, motivational support, and collaborative decision-making opportunities create an environment conducive to professional growth. These results suggest that leadership development programs for school principals should prioritize instructional competence, adaptive leadership skills, and collaborative management strategies to strengthen teacher performance and educational quality.

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