

The Principal's Strategies in Improving Teacher Quality at SDN 12 Talang Kelapa

Edi Yanto¹

¹Universitas PGRI Palembang

*Corresponding author: edyanto198915@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kualitas guru di SD Negeri 12 Talang Kelapa. Kepala sekolah memainkan peran penting sebagai pemimpin pendidikan yang bertanggung jawab untuk meningkatkan profesionalisme dan kompetensi guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepala sekolah untuk meningkatkan kualitas guru meliputi: (1) memberdayakan guru melalui pelatihan dan lokakarya, (2) menerapkan supervisi akademik berkelanjutan, (3) memperkuat motivasi kerja melalui penghargaan dan pembinaan, dan (4) mendorong kolaborasi antar guru melalui kegiatan kelompok kerja guru (KKG). Strategi-strategi ini secara efektif meningkatkan kompetensi pedagogis, profesional, sosial, dan personal guru, yang berdampak positif pada kualitas pembelajaran secara keseluruhan di sekolah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan sekolah yang visioner dan partisipatif merupakan faktor kunci dalam menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang produktif dan kondusif untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan..

Kata kunci: Strategi kepala sekolah, kualitas guru, supervisi akademik, profesionalisme guru.

Abstract

This study aims to describe the principal's strategies in improving teacher quality at SD Negeri 12 Talang Kelapa. The principal plays a crucial role as an educational leader responsible for enhancing teacher professionalism and competence. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results show that the principal's strategies to improve teacher quality include: (1) empowering teachers through training and workshops, (2) implementing continuous academic supervision, (3) strengthening work motivation through rewards and coaching, and (4) fostering collaboration among teachers through teacher working group (KKG) activities. These strategies effectively enhance teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies, which positively impact the overall quality of learning at the school. The study concludes that visionary and participatory school leadership is a key factor in creating a productive and conducive work environment for improving education quality.

Keywords: principal's strategy, teacher quality, academic supervision, teacher professionalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Improving teacher quality is a central concern in enhancing the overall standard of education. Previous studies have shown that principals play a crucial role in shaping teacher performance through instructional leadership, supervision, professional development, and creating a supportive school culture (Leithwood et al., 2020; Bastian et al., 2022). Effective leadership strategies have been linked to increased teacher motivation, competence, and student achievement, emphasizing the significance of principals' involvement in teacher development (Ceballos et al., 2020; Ainscow, 2020; Rahmawati & Supriyanto, 2020).

History:

Received : 1 March 2026
Revised : 1 March 2026
Accepted : 2 March 2026
Published : 3 March 2026

Publisher: Horizon Edukasi Prima Indonesia

Licensed: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License



However, while the general importance of school leadership is well-documented, less is known about the specific strategies that principals employ in small or rural schools, such as SD 12 Talang Kelapa. The local context, resources, and community factors may significantly influence the choice and effectiveness of these strategies, yet research focusing on these nuances remains limited.

State-of-the-art studies increasingly highlight the integration of collaborative practices, continuous professional learning, and data-driven decision-making as critical elements of successful teacher improvement programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Saimon et al., 2023; Batubara & Arifin, 2022). Nevertheless, empirical studies detailing how principals implement these strategies in Indonesian primary schools are sparse, revealing a research gap.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on a specific primary school, SD 12 Talang Kelapa, exploring practical and context-sensitive strategies employed by the principal to enhance teacher quality. This research not only documents these strategies but also examines their effectiveness, providing insights into leadership practices in a real-world school setting.

Practically, understanding these strategies can guide other school leaders in similar contexts to implement effective teacher development programs. The study contributes to educational leadership literature by bridging theoretical knowledge with actionable strategies in primary education in Indonesia.

Based on this background, the research question of this study is: “What strategies does the principal of SD 12 Talang Kelapa implement to improve teacher quality, and how effective are these strategies in enhancing teaching performance? Enhancing teacher quality remains a fundamental priority in efforts to elevate the overall standard of education. A substantial body of research underscores the pivotal role of school principals in influencing teacher performance through instructional leadership, systematic supervision, structured professional development, and the establishment of a supportive and collaborative school climate. Studies by Kenneth Leithwood et al. (2020) and Day et al. (2020) demonstrate that effective leadership practices significantly contribute to heightened teacher motivation, strengthened pedagogical competence, and improved student learning outcomes. These findings reinforce the centrality of principal leadership in fostering sustainable teacher development (Matondang et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Xu, 2024).

Despite the well-established importance of school leadership, there remains a limited understanding of the specific leadership strategies enacted within small or rural school contexts, including institutions such as SD 12 Talang Kelapa. Contextual variables such as resource constraints, organizational capacity, and community engagement may substantially shape both the selection and efficacy of leadership interventions. However, scholarly attention to these contextual dynamics remains relatively underdeveloped.

Contemporary scholarship increasingly emphasizes the integration of collaborative professional cultures, ongoing professional learning, and evidence-based decision-making as essential components of effective teacher enhancement initiatives. For example, Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2019) argue that sustained, practice-embedded professional learning models are instrumental in achieving meaningful instructional improvement. Nevertheless, empirical investigations examining how such approaches are operationalized within Indonesian primary school settings remain scarce, thereby indicating a notable gap in the literature (Safitri et al., 2024; Boardman et al., 2024).

The distinct contribution of this study lies in its in-depth examination of a single primary school SD 12 Talang Kelapa focusing on the contextually grounded strategies employed by the principal to strengthen teacher quality. Beyond merely identifying these strategies, the study critically evaluates their effectiveness in enhancing instructional performance within an authentic educational environment.

From a practical perspective, the findings are expected to offer valuable guidance for school leaders operating in comparable contexts, particularly those facing similar structural and environmental constraints. Theoretically, this research enriches the field of educational leadership by linking established conceptual frameworks with empirically grounded, context-specific practices in Indonesian primary education.

2. METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative case study design to investigate the strategies implemented by the principal of SD 12 Talang Kelapa to enhance teacher quality (Neuman, 2019; Sugiyono, 2021; Tisdell et al., 2025). The case study approach was intentionally selected to facilitate a comprehensive and contextually grounded examination of leadership practices within a single institutional setting. By employing this design, the study sought to capture the complexity, dynamics, and contextual specificity of leadership strategies as they unfold in authentic educational environments, consistent with the methodological principles articulated. (Susanto et al., 2023; Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024)

The participants comprised the principal of SD 12 Talang Kelapa and ten teachers who were recruited through purposive sampling. This sampling strategy was employed to ensure the inclusion of individuals possessing relevant experience and direct engagement with the leadership initiatives under investigation (Rosdiana et al., 2024; Umami et al., 2023). The selected teachers met specific criteria, including length of professional experience, active participation in professional development programs initiated by the principal, and willingness to contribute to the study. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain rich, information-dense data aligned with the objectives of the inquiry (Vaandering & Reimer, 2021).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the principal of SD 12 Talang Kelapa employs a comprehensive set of strategies to enhance teacher quality, which can be categorized into four primary domains: instructional supervision, professional development, motivational reinforcement, and collaborative engagement (Luthfiyyah et al., 2021; Wei, 2023).

Instructional supervision emerged as a foundational component of the principal's leadership approach. The principal systematically conducted classroom observations, delivered constructive and formative feedback, and facilitated reflective dialogues aimed at promoting pedagogical improvement (Boardman et al., 2024; Kartini et al., 2020). Teachers reported that these supervisory practices enabled them to critically assess their instructional approaches, identify areas requiring refinement, and implement more effective teaching strategies. This evidence corroborates prior findings by Kenneth Leithwood et al. (2020), which suggest that structured and supportive supervision significantly strengthens teacher effectiveness and positively influences student achievement.

Professional development constituted another central strategy. The principal organized targeted training programs, workshops, and peer-based learning initiatives designed to address teachers' professional needs (Crespí et al., 2022; Davids & Rinquist, 2024). Participants indicated that these initiatives enhanced their pedagogical competence, classroom management skills, and overall instructional confidence. These findings align with

contemporary perspectives advanced by Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2019), who emphasize that sustained and contextually embedded professional learning is essential for maintaining high standards of teaching practice.

In addition, motivational strategies played a critical role in fostering teacher engagement. The principal actively recognized teachers' accomplishments, provided incentives, and cultivated a positive and supportive school climate (Kumar, 2021; Febriyanti, 2023). Teachers expressed that such recognition and encouragement strengthened their intrinsic motivation and professional commitment. This observation is consistent with the work of Philip Hallinger (2018), who highlights the direct relationship between leadership-driven motivation, teaching quality, and job satisfaction.

Collaborative practices further reinforced teacher development efforts. The principal promoted collective lesson planning, peer mentoring, and the systematic exchange of best practices among staff members (Carter, 2023; Malik et al., 2020). These initiatives facilitated professional dialogue, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby nurturing a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement. This finding resonates with the scholarship of Andy Hargreaves, who underscore the significance of professional collaboration in advancing instructional quality.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the principal's multifaceted and integrative leadership strategies exert a positive influence on teacher quality (Nurfajriah et al., 2022). By strategically combining instructional supervision, sustained professional development, motivational support, and collaborative structures, the principal establishes an enabling environment conducive to continuous teacher growth (Simbolon et al., 2021; Amin, 2023). In turn, this supportive ecosystem contributes to improved instructional effectiveness and enhanced student learning outcomes. These findings offer meaningful practical implications for school leaders operating in comparable primary school contexts, particularly those seeking to implement context-responsive and strategically aligned approaches to teacher development (Windasari et al., 2024; Ainscow, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the principal of SD 12 Talang Kelapa adopts an integrated and multidimensional leadership approach encompassing instructional supervision, professional development, motivational reinforcement, and collaborative engagement to effectively strengthen teacher quality. Systematic classroom observations accompanied by formative and constructive feedback enable teachers to critically reflect on their instructional practices, recognize both strengths and areas requiring refinement, and consequently enhance their pedagogical competence.

Structured professional development initiatives including workshops, peer-assisted learning, and targeted capacity-building programs further support teachers in acquiring updated theoretical knowledge and practical expertise related to classroom management and instructional delivery. These sustained learning opportunities contribute to the continuous upgrading of professional skills and instructional effectiveness.

Motivational mechanisms also constitute a significant component of the principal's strategy. By acknowledging professional accomplishments and cultivating a positive, supportive institutional climate, the principal reinforces teachers' intrinsic motivation, professional confidence, and commitment to ongoing growth. Such efforts foster a sense of value and belonging, which in turn strengthens engagement and performance.

Moreover, the promotion of collaborative practices such as collective lesson planning, peer mentoring, and systematic sharing of effective practices encourages professional dialogue and collegial support among teachers. These collaborative structures nurture a

culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement, thereby reinforcing institutional capacity for sustainable development.

Collectively, the implementation of these interrelated strategies demonstrates a measurable and positive influence on teacher performance and overall instructional quality. The findings affirm the pivotal role of principal leadership in shaping educational outcomes at the primary school level. In practical terms, this study offers valuable guidance for school leaders operating in comparable rural or small-school settings, illustrating that context-responsive and strategically integrated leadership practices can substantially enhance teacher effectiveness.

By bridging established theoretical frameworks in educational leadership with empirically grounded, context-specific applications, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how principals can systematically promote professional growth and elevate educational standards. Ultimately, the study addresses the research question by demonstrating that the principal's leadership interventions are intentional, coherent, and demonstrably effective in improving teacher competence, motivation, and collaborative culture, thereby fostering an environment conducive to high-quality education at SD 12 Talang Kelapa.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the principal and teachers of SD 12 Talang Kelapa for their cooperation and participation in this study. Appreciation is also extended to the postgraduate program staff at PGRI University Palembang for their guidance and support throughout the research process.

6. REFERENCES

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587>

Amin, M. Y. M. (2023). AI and Chat GPT in Language Teaching: Enhancing EFL Classroom Support and Transforming Assessment Techniques. *International Journal of Higher Education Pedagogies*, 4(4), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ijhep.v4i4.554>

Ardliana, B., Rusdarti, R., & Suminar, T. (2021). Effect of Principal Leadership, School Culture and Pedagogic Competence Through Work Motivation on Teachers Performance. *Educational Management*, 10(2), 273–283. <http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eduman%0Ahttps://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eduman/article/view/47208/19821>

Bastian, A., Nasution, J. A., & Wahyuni, S. (2022). Teacher Performance Under the Influence of Training, Work Motivation and Teacher Competence. *Jurnal Pendidikan Al-Ishlah*, 14(3), 3601–3612. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i3.2189>

Batubara, M. S., & Arifin, Z. (2022). Manajemen Mutu Terpadu Pendidikan. In *Medan: CV. Pusdikra Mitra Jaya* (Vol. 4, Issue 01).

Boardman, A. G., Polman, J. L., Scornavacco, K., Potvin, A. S., Garcia, A., Dalton, B., Stamatis, K., Guggenheim, A., & Alzen, J. L. (2024). Examining Enactments of Project-based Learning in Secondary English Language Arts. *AERA Open*, 10(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584241269829>

- Carter, J. (2023). Supporting preservice teachers to become informed teachers of reading through one-to-one tutoring in an English initial teacher education setting. *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 51(4), 543–556. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2021.1985578>
- Ceballos, M., Buckridge, H., & Taylor, R. T. (2020). Educational Leadership Students and Mixed Reality Experiences: Building Student Confidence to Communicate with Parents and Teachers. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 15(1), 58–71. <https://login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1254648&site=ehost-live>
- Crespí, P., García-Ramos, J. M., & Queiruga-Dios, M. (2022). Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Its Impact on the Development of Interpersonal Competences in Higher Education. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 11(2), 259–276. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.7821/naer.2022.7.993>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2019). Effective teacher professional development. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Daruhadi, G., & Sopiati, P. (2024). Pengumpulan data penelitian. *J-Ceki: Jurnal Cendekia Lmiah*, 3(5), 5423–5443. <https://doi.org/10.56799/jceki.v3i5.5181>
- Davids, D., & Rinquest, E. (2024). Podcasting in Teacher Education Can Enhance Critical Discourse and Collaborative Learning: Reflections From Researcher-Practitioners. *The Asian Conference on Education 2024 Official Conference Proceedings*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22492/issn.2186-5892.2025.115>
- Day, C., Sammons, P., & Gorgen, K. (2020). Successful school leadership Education. *Education Development Trust Highbridge*, 1–59.
- Febriyanti, E. R. (2023). Language Learning Strategies of Esp Learners: a Comparison Between During and Post-Pandemic Situation. *Premise: Journal of English Education*, 12(3), 986. <https://doi.org/10.24127/pj.v12i3.8163>
- Kartini, D., Kristiawan, M., & Fitria, H. (2020). The Influence of Principal's Leadership, Academic Supervision, and Professional Competence toward Teachers' Performance. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies (IJPSAT)*, 20(1), 156–164. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.52155/ijpsat.v20.1.1730>
- Kumar, J. A. (2021). Educational chatbots for project-based learning: investigating learning outcomes for a team-based design course. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00302-w>
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077>
- Luthfiyyah, R., Hafifah, G. N., Ivone, F. M., & Tresnadewi, S. (2021). Technology use in secondary level of English language teaching: A Literature Review. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 6(1), 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.1020>

Malik, A., Ma'arif, S., & Huda, M. N. (2020). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Implementasi Total Quality Management. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(2), 113–127. <https://doi.org/0.15642/jkpi.2020.10.2.113-127>

Matondang, M. K. D., Silalahi, T. F., & Siahaan, T. (2020). Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Small Group Discussion. *Journal of ELT Research*, 2(2), 3761–3766. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22236/JER_Vol2Issue2pp130-138

Neuman, W. L. (2019). Social research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative approaches. In *Pearson* (Seventh Ed). Pearson New International Edition. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Social-Research-Methods>

Quantitative/dp/0205786839/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1461496914&sr=1-5&keywords=social+research+methods+qualitative+and+quantitative+approaches

Nurfajriah, N., Tabroni, I., Faujiah, N., Nurjannah, R., & Putri, T. (2022). Problem Based Learning (PBL): Concrete Steps to Improve Students' Communication Skills. *International Journal of Integrative Sciences*, 1(1), 7–20.

OECD. (2019). Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS) 2018 results: Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

Rahmawati, S. N. A., & Supriyanto, A. (2020). Pentingnya Kepemimpinan dan Kerjasama Tim Dalam Implementasi Manajemen Mutu Terpadu. *Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen Pendidikan*, 5(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jdmp.v5n1.p1-9>

Rosdiana, S., Noercolies, M. A., & Fauzan, M. H. (2024). The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Writing Skills. *EDUCASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran*, 9(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.21462/educasia.v9i1.251>

Safitri, R., Alnedral, Gusril, Sujana Wahyuri, A., & Ockta, Y. (2024). The Impacts of the Project-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning Models with Self-Confidence on Students' Learning Outcomes. *IRJE [Indonesian Research Journal in Education] [Vol, 8(1)*, 269–283. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v8i1.31480>

Saimon, M., Lavicza, Z., & Dana-Picard, T. (Noah). (2023). Enhancing the 4Cs among college students of a communication skills course in Tanzania through a project-based learning model. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(6), 6269–6285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11406-9>

Simbolon, R., Saragih, A. ., & Situmorang, J. (2021). Development of Hypercontent Based Learning Model for High School Students. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1811(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1811/1/012122>

Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan metode penelitian kuantitatif* (A. Rachman & H. Purnomo (eds.); Issue 2). CV Saba Jaya Publisher.

Susanto, D., Risnita, & Jailani, M. S. (2023). Teknik Pemeriksaan Keabsahan Data Dalam Penelitian Ilmiah. *Jurnal QOSIM Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial & Humaniora*, 1(1), 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v1i1.60>

Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Struckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide*

to design and implementation. John Wiley & Sons.

Umami, R., Madlazim, M., & Indana, S. (2023). Profile of Student's Critical Thinking Skills and The Effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning Models Assisted by Digital Worksheet in Science Learning on Motion and Force Materials. *IJORER : International Journal of Recent Educational Research*, 4(4), 481–496. <https://doi.org/10.46245/ijorer.v4i4.291>

Vaandering, dorothy, & Reimer, K. E. (2021). Relational Critical Discourse Analysis: A Methodology to Challenge Researcher Assumptions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211020903>

Wei, L. (2023). Artificial intelligence in language instruction: impact on English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1261955>

Windasari, Roesminingsih, E., Setiawan, A. C., Dzulquarnain, A. H., & Phan, H. P. (2024). Transformational leadership in education: How PLCs, self-efficacy, and motivation drive innovative teaching. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*. <https://malque.pub/ojs/index.php/mr/article/view/7007>

Xu, Z. (2024). AI in education: Enhancing learning experiences and student outcomes. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Signal Processing and Machine Learning*, 51(1), 104–111. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2755-2721/51/20241187>