

The Influence of Leadership and Motivation on the Performance of Teachers at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan motivasi kerja guru dengan kinerja guru di SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, Kecamatan Talang Kelapa, Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan desain survei kuantitatif. Data dikumpulkan dari guru melalui kuesioner skala Likert yang telah ditelaah validitas dan reliabilitasnya, lalu dianalisis dengan regresi linier berganda. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan motivasi kerja berhubungan positif dan signifikan dengan kinerja guru, serta kontribusi keduanya secara bersama-sama bermakna untuk penguatan kualitas pembelajaran. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa perbaikan sekolah perlu menekankan arahan pembelajaran yang konsisten, pengelolaan yang adil dan transparan, serta iklim kerja yang mendukung otonomi, kompetensi, dan dukungan kolegal guru.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, kepemimpinan instruksional, motivasi kerja, kinerja guru, sekolah dasar, iklim sekolah.

Abstract

This study examines how principal leadership and teachers' work motivation relate to teacher performance at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, Talang Kelapa District, Indonesia. The study used a quantitative survey design. Data were collected from teachers using a Likert-scale questionnaire that had been reviewed for validity and reliability, and then analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results indicate that principal leadership and work motivation are both positively and significantly associated with teacher performance, and their combined contribution is meaningful for strengthening teaching quality. The findings suggest that school improvement efforts need to focus on consistent instructional guidance, fair and transparent management, and a work climate that supports teachers' autonomy, competence, and collegial support

Keywords: principal leadership, instructional leadership, work motivation, teacher performance, elementary school, school climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of educational quality. At the school level, teacher performance directly influences instructional effectiveness, student engagement, and learning outcomes. In elementary education, where foundational competencies are developed, teacher performance becomes even more critical because teaching practices shape not only cognitive achievement but also students' attitudes and learning habits.

Recent research consistently shows that teacher performance is influenced by both organizational and psychological factors. Among organizational factors, principal leadership plays a central role. Principals function not only as administrators but also as instructional leaders who define school direction, supervise teaching practices, and create professional working environments. Studies on instructional and distributed leadership indicate that leadership behaviors such as goal setting, classroom supervision, professional support, and

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collaborative decision-making are associated with improved instructional quality and teacher professional engagement (Bellibaş, Gümüş, & Liu, 2021; Özdemir et al., 2022). Meta-analytic findings further demonstrate that principal instructional leadership has a meaningful relationship with teacher self-efficacy, which is closely related to teaching performance (Alanoğlu, 2021).

In addition to leadership, work motivation is another key determinant of teacher performance. Motivation affects how teachers invest effort, persist when facing instructional challenges, and engage in continuous professional improvement. According to self-determination theory, autonomous motivation is positively associated with job satisfaction, well-being, and work engagement (Slemp, Field, & Cho, 2020). Teachers who experience higher levels of internal motivation tend to demonstrate stronger instructional commitment and greater responsibility in managing classrooms. Furthermore, teacher well-being and job satisfaction have been linked to performance-related outcomes, including instructional quality and teacher–student interaction (Wartenberg et al., 2023; Zhou, Slemp, & Vella-Brodrick, 2024).

Leadership and motivation are not isolated variables. Contemporary research suggests that leadership practices can strengthen teacher motivation by fostering trust, collegial support, and professional autonomy (Cai et al., 2022). When principals provide clear instructional guidance and constructive feedback, teachers are more likely to feel competent and valued, which enhances intrinsic motivation. Therefore, leadership may influence teacher performance both directly and indirectly through motivational mechanisms.

In the Indonesian context, education reforms emphasize the importance of strengthening school leadership and teacher professionalism. The evaluation of the Guru Penggerak program highlights leadership competencies and instructional practices as critical components of school improvement (Khairina et al., 2023). However, many existing studies examine leadership and motivation at broader regional or multi-school levels. There remains a need for empirical evidence at the single-school level to understand how these variables interact within specific local contexts.

SDN 23 Talang Kelapa represents a typical elementary school setting in a district context where leadership practices and teacher motivation may vary depending on institutional conditions and available support. Understanding how principal leadership and work motivation relate to teacher performance in this setting can provide practical insights for targeted school improvement strategies.

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings discussed above, this study aims to examine:

1. The relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance.
2. The relationship between work motivation and teacher performance.
3. The simultaneous relationship between leadership and motivation and teacher performance.

It is hypothesized that both principal leadership and work motivation have positive and significant relationships with teacher performance.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research design

This study used a quantitative survey design with a correlational approach to examine the relationship between principal leadership (X1), work motivation (X2), and teacher performance (Y).

2.2 Site and participants

The study was conducted at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, Talang Kelapa District. Participants were teachers at the school who voluntarily completed the questionnaire with confidentiality assured.

2.3 Instruments

Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire. Principal leadership covered indicators such as instructional guidance, communication, supervision, fairness in task distribution, and support for professional development. Work motivation covered indicators such as achievement orientation, responsibility, recognition, and commitment to improving teaching. Teacher performance covered lesson preparation, teaching implementation, classroom management, assessment practices, and professional responsibilities.

2.4 Data analysis

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the relationship of X1 and X2 with Y, both partially and simultaneously. Standard regression assumption checks (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity) were conducted.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study indicate that principal leadership and work motivation are both positively and significantly related to teacher performance at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa.

Descriptive findings show that teachers generally perceive the principal's leadership practices as supportive and instructional-oriented. Indicators such as clarity of instructional direction, supervision of classroom activities, constructive feedback, and fairness in task distribution receive relatively positive responses from respondents. This suggests that the leadership environment in the school provides structure and guidance that help teachers carry out their professional responsibilities effectively.

Teachers' work motivation is also reflected at a moderate-to-high level. Respondents express agreement with statements related to responsibility in completing teaching duties, commitment to improving instructional quality, and willingness to engage in professional development activities. These responses indicate that teachers demonstrate both intrinsic motivation (such as professional pride and personal commitment) and extrinsic motivation (such as recognition and institutional support).

Teacher performance, measured through indicators including lesson preparation, teaching implementation, classroom management, assessment practices, and professional responsibilities, also shows a generally positive level. Teachers report consistent preparation of lesson plans, structured classroom delivery, and responsible evaluation practices.

The regression analysis confirms that principal leadership has a positive and statistically significant relationship with teacher performance. This means that improvements in leadership practices are associated with improvements in teachers' instructional behaviors. Teachers who perceive stronger instructional guidance and transparent management tend to demonstrate better planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities.

Similarly, work motivation shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with teacher performance. Teachers with higher levels of commitment and professional drive demonstrate stronger consistency in managing instructional tasks and classroom responsibilities.

When both variables are examined simultaneously, principal leadership and work motivation jointly contribute meaningfully to explaining teacher performance. The combined

model indicates that teacher performance is influenced by both organizational factors and internal psychological factors. Among the two predictors, work motivation shows slightly stronger predictive influence compared to leadership, indicating that internal commitment plays a crucial role in sustaining professional performance.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the view that principal leadership plays a central role in shaping teacher performance. Instructional leadership practices, such as setting clear academic priorities, supervising classroom instruction, and providing constructive feedback, create a structured professional environment that supports teachers' daily work. These findings are consistent with research indicating that instructional and distributed leadership are positively associated with teachers' classroom practices and instructional quality (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Özdemir et al., 2022). Furthermore, leadership behaviors that emphasize guidance and professional support strengthen teacher self-efficacy, which is closely related to performance outcomes (Alanoğlu, 2021).

The significant role of work motivation in this study confirms that internal psychological factors are essential for sustaining performance. Teachers who demonstrate strong intrinsic motivation, such as commitment to student success and professional pride are more likely to invest effort in lesson preparation and classroom management. This finding aligns with meta-analytic evidence showing that autonomous motivation is positively associated with job satisfaction, well-being, and supportive teaching practices (Slemp et al., 2020). In addition, teacher well-being and job satisfaction have been shown to correlate with performance-related outcomes, including instructional quality and teacher–student interaction (Wartenberg et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Interestingly, motivation appears slightly more dominant than leadership in predicting teacher performance. This suggests that while leadership provides institutional direction and structure, teachers' internal commitment ultimately determines how consistently they apply professional standards in daily practice. In contexts where structural resources may be limited, motivation becomes particularly important for maintaining performance stability.

The interaction between leadership and motivation can also be understood as complementary rather than independent. Leadership practices that promote trust, collaboration, and professional learning opportunities may strengthen teacher motivation (Cai et al., 2022). When teachers feel supported and valued by their principal, they are more likely to experience a sense of autonomy and competence, which enhances intrinsic motivation. Therefore, leadership may influence performance not only directly but also indirectly through motivational mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that school improvement efforts at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa should integrate leadership development with motivational strengthening strategies. Strengthening instructional supervision, maintaining transparent communication, and encouraging collaborative reflection can enhance teachers' professional consistency. At the same time, providing recognition, fair workload distribution, and opportunities for professional growth can sustain teacher motivation.

From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms that teacher performance is shaped by the interaction of structural and psychological factors. Organizational leadership establishes direction and professional standards, while motivation determines the intensity and persistence of teacher effort. Sustainable improvement in teacher performance therefore requires attention to both dimensions simultaneously.

Overall, the findings highlight that principal leadership and teacher work motivation function as interconnected determinants of teacher performance. In the context of SDN 23

Talang Kelapa, strengthening both factors provides a practical pathway for enhancing instructional quality and sustaining professional standards in elementary education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that principal leadership and teachers' work motivation are both positively and significantly related to teacher performance at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. Leadership contributes by shaping instructional focus, supervision quality, and a fair work system that supports daily teaching tasks. Motivation contributes by driving effort, persistence, and willingness to improve teaching practices. Together, leadership and motivation provide a practical foundation for school improvement.

Recommendations include: (1) establishing routine instructional leadership practices (classroom visits, constructive feedback, and follow-up support); (2) strengthening teacher motivation through recognition, clear role expectations, and opportunities for professional learning; and (3) improving school climate by promoting trust, collaboration, and open communication. Future studies can add classroom observation measures and longitudinal data to better capture changes in performance over time.

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