

THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NGAWEN DISTRICT, KLATEN REGENCY

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Abstrak. Teacher performance serves as the primary benchmark in advancing the quality of basic education. However, the 2025 Education Report Card recorded that 34.48% of elementary schools in Ngawen District had inadequate learning quality. This fact was reinforced by supervision results showing that 53% of teachers had not completed administrative requirements, and 65% had not varied their teaching methods. These conditions are assumed to occur due to the less-than-optimal leadership of principals in providing supervision, motivation, and innovation. Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze the extent of the influence of principal leadership on the performance of elementary school teachers in the Ngawen District, Klaten. Using a quantitative approach with a survey method, the sample was selected through proportional random sampling techniques. Based on the results of questionnaire data analysis using simple linear regression, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between principal leadership and teacher performance. This means that the better the level of leadership, the higher the teacher performance. This study once again highlights the importance of the principal's role as a supervisor, innovator, and motivator for teachers..

Keyword : Principal Leadership; Teacher Performance; Elementary School.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Improving the quality of basic education constitutes a strategic step in human resource development, in which teacher performance plays a highly crucial role. As professionals, teachers bear full responsibility from the stages of planning, implementation, to evaluation of learning based on national standards. Teacher performance directly affects the quality of the learning process and student achievement; therefore, its optimization becomes an absolute prerequisite for the realization of excellent basic education.

Conceptually, Susanto (2016: 188) defines teacher performance as the capability of educators in carrying out their professional duties. To support the improvement of such performance, teachers are required to maximize their work achievements, carry out duties for the advancement of education and institutions, and actively function as a support system in realizing the school's vision, mission, and objectives.

Regulatively, the Regulation of the Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel Number 4242/B.B1/HK.03.01/2024 stipulates that teacher performance is the achievement of work outcomes and behaviors referring to indicators and targets mutually agreed upon with the principal. This achievement represents the implementation of teachers' main duties, which include planning, implementing, and assessing learning, as well as mentoring students and carrying out additional assignments. The performance cycle includes the stages of planning implementation (including monitoring and guidance), assessment, and follow-up of evaluation results.

According to the perspective of Robbins and Judge (2017:260), an individual's performance is fundamentally determined by the synergy of several key elements. This begins with work quality, which emphasizes the excellence of results based on expertise, as well as quantity, which measures the volume of output produced. In addition, timeliness in utilizing working duration and effectiveness in optimizing organizational resources such as technology

and budget serve as benchmarks for successful target achievement. On the other hand, internal factors such as independence in carrying out tasks and work commitment reflecting loyalty and responsibility toward the organization also constitute important foundations in assessing one’s performance.

However, the portrait of teacher performance in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency, currently demonstrates conditions that are not yet optimal or have not met the expected standards. This was identified through the results of the Education Report Card achievements, where the dimension of learning quality is still categorized as low. This phenomenon has become an urgency that requires further examination. As supporting data, the following presents details of the Education Report Card results at the public elementary school level in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency, particularly those representing the condition of learning quality in the field.

Table 1. Criteria for Learning Quality Achievement in 2025 in Elementary Schools of Ngawen District

Color Spectrum	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Red	Poor	10	34.48%
Yellow	Fair	7	24.14%
Green	Good	9	31.03%
Blue	Very Good	3	10.34%
	Total	29	100%

Source: Educational unit assistance data of Ngawen District, 2025

The data presented in Table 1 illustrate that the achievement of the learning quality dimension in elementary schools throughout Ngawen District remains highly varied and tends to be concerning. It was recorded that only 3 schools (10.34%) succeeded in achieving the “very good” category, while 9 schools (31.03%) were categorized as “good,” and 7 schools (24.14%) received the “fair” category. Ironically, there were 10 elementary schools or approximately 44.48% that still had low scores in this dimension. This figure emphasizes that nearly half of the elementary schools in this region require serious attention regarding the instructional processes conducted by teachers, while simultaneously serving as a strong indication that teacher performance in Ngawen District is generally still at a low level.

The low teacher performance in this region is reflected not only in learning quality scores but also in administrative and technical aspects in the classroom. Referring to supervisory reports, it was found that 53% of teachers had not comprehensively completed learning planning administration. In addition, as many as 65% of teachers were observed still using monotonous and less varied teaching methods. These conditions clarify that teacher professionalism and performance in Ngawen District have not yet operated optimally, thereby demanding systematic improvement efforts.

One important determinant influencing fluctuations in teacher performance is the pattern of principal leadership. This is in line with the findings of Suryadi, Bastian, and Nurfaishal (2024), which state that the effectiveness of teacher performance is highly dependent on how principals lead. Leadership itself plays a crucial role as a catalyst for organizational success. As explained by Mulyasa (2017:107), leadership is a process of influencing individuals or groups to direct their efforts toward achieving certain goals in specific situations.

However, the reality in the field indicates a significant gap. Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researchers in elementary schools throughout Ngawen District, principal leadership has actually become one of the points frequently complained about by educators. Various issues were found indicating that the role of principals in providing direction, motivation, and supervision has not been implemented optimally in supporting quality improvement in schools.

supporting teacher performance. To provide a clearer picture regarding these conditions, the researchers present findings related to principal leadership in elementary schools in Ngawen District as displayed in the following table:

Table 2. Conditions of Principal Leadership in Ngawen District

No.	Conditions of Principal Leadership	Percentage
1.	Principals have not been able to create innovations that can improve teachers’ teaching abilities	59%
2.	Principals have not been open in accepting suggestions, criticism, and ideas from teachers	62%
3.	Principals have not been able to provide motivation and professional direction to teachers	41%
4.	Principals have not conducted supervision to comprehensively monitor and evaluate teacher performance, rather than merely fulfilling administrative formalities	59%

Source: Preliminary study on leadership symptoms in elementary schools in Ngawen District

Based on Table 2 above, it shows that there are many leadership problems among principals in elementary schools in Ngawen District. The main problem, amounting to 59%, is that principals have not conducted supervision to comprehensively monitor and evaluate teacher performance, but merely as an administrative formality. So far, principals have only conducted supervision as a form of administrative completion, not according to its original function, namely to monitor and evaluate teacher performance in schools. Therefore, principals must pay greater attention to teachers' complaints that have been addressed so that teachers' vision and mission in carrying out assigned duties can operate effectively and efficiently. The second problem, amounting to 26%, is that principals have not been able to provide motivation and professional direction to teachers. Teachers need to obtain substantial motivation from principals in order to improve their performance in learning activities. The third problem, amounting to 22%, is that principals have not been able to create innovations capable of improving teachers' teaching competencies; the role of principals as innovators is still considered very minimal. This can be observed from the absence of real breakthroughs initiated to support educators' pedagogical skills. In addition, around 19% of complaints stem from the weak function of principals as communicators. Leadership attitudes that tend to be closed and less receptive to criticism, suggestions, and new ideas create psychological distance within the school environment. As a result, teachers feel restricted and reluctant to convey aspirations or constructive input.

In fact, the importance of this leadership role has been widely proven through various previous studies. Research conducted by Andriani, Kesumawati, and Kristiawan (2018) emphasized that leadership style significantly affects teacher performance, considering the position of principals as directors, motivators, and supervisors simultaneously. In line with this, Fitria (2018) and Supardi (2016) also found that effective leadership is capable of enhancing teacher professionalism while creating a conducive work climate and culture in schools. Mulyasa (2017) further reinforced these findings by stating that institutions led optimally consistently demonstrate far superior levels of teacher performance due to continuous guidance and supervision.

Although the correlation between leadership and teacher performance has been widely explored, the majority of existing literature remains macro in nature and located in different regions. Until now, studies specifically examining these dynamics at the district level based on factual data—such as Education Report Cards and academic supervision results—remain very limited.

Departing from this literature gap, this study offers novelty by specifically focusing the study on elementary schools in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency. The added value of this research lies in the utilization of objective data from the Education Report Card and supervisory supervision results as the main foundation in unraveling the problem. Ultimately, this study is expected to present a comprehensive empirical portrait regarding the extent to which the effectiveness of the principal's role—whether as supervisor, motivator, or communicator—contributes to improving the quality of teacher performance in the region, and as an innovator in enhancing teacher performance within the context of basic education at the regional level.

Starting from the exposition of these phenomena and gaps, it is considered highly urgent to conduct an in-depth study specifically investigating the influence of principal leadership on the performance of elementary school teachers in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency. The exploration in this study is expected to present measurable empirical evidence regarding the real contribution of school leaders in improving the performance of teaching personnel. Furthermore, the findings generated are projected to become a strategic foundation for stakeholders in formulating appropriate policies aimed at improving the quality of education, particularly at the elementary school level.

II. METHOD

Methodologically, this study applies a quantitative approach employing an *ex post facto* design. The selection of the quantitative method is based on the primary objective of the research, namely to measure and examine the significance of the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance through statistical analysis based on numerical data. The *ex post facto* design is considered the most relevant because the researcher does not conduct experiments or manipulate variables, but rather portrays phenomena and factual conditions that have naturally occurred in the field. This research will be conducted at public elementary schools throughout Ngawen District, Klaten Regency, in 2025. The research population comprises all educators with the status of public elementary school teachers in the area, totaling 213 individuals. Through the application of the total sampling technique, all members of the population will be comprehensively involved as research respondents.

This study examines the relationship between two main variables, namely principal leadership as the independent variable (X) and teacher performance as the dependent variable (Y). Principal leadership is

conceptualized as the capability of a leader to influence, direct, guide, and motivate educators in achieving the vision of the educational institution. Its measurement dimensions encompass four crucial roles of the principal: as an innovator, motivator, communicator, and supervisor. On the other hand, teacher performance is interpreted as the quality of work outcomes and the manifestation of educators' work behavior in carrying out their professional functions. The indicators of performance include competence in lesson planning, implementation of the teaching-learning process, evaluation of learning outcomes, and fulfillment of additional duties.

In the data collection process, the researcher distributed closed-ended questionnaires adopting a Likert Scale model with a score range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), as well as collected relevant supporting documentation. The statement items in the instrument were directly developed from the elaboration of the theoretical indicators of each variable. To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instrument, the instrument was tested in advance. The validity test was conducted using the Product Moment correlation technique, whereas the reliability test employed the Cronbach Alpha parameter, in which the instrument is considered reliable when the Alpha value exceeds 0.70.

The collected data were subsequently processed using statistical software through descriptive and inferential analysis techniques. As a standard procedure prior to hypothesis testing, the researcher conducted classical assumption tests serving as prerequisites, namely the normality test and linearity test. After all prerequisites were fulfilled, hypothesis testing was executed through simple linear regression analysis to measure the extent of the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance. The hypothesis was validated through the *t*-test at a significance level of 5% (0.05). As a complementary calculation, the coefficient of determination value (R^2) was also analyzed to map the percentage contribution of the principal leadership variable in shaping the trend of teacher performance at the research site. Referring to, the analysis results indicate that all 36 statement items used to measure the teacher performance variable (Y) have fulfilled the validity criteria and are declared valid.

After the instrument validity was ensured, the next stage involved conducting a reliability test. The reliability testing of the instrument was executed by calculating the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with the assistance of SPSS version 30 statistical software. The basis for decision-making in this test refers to the coefficient threshold of 0.60. An instrument is categorized as reliable when the calculated Alpha value is greater than 0.60. Conversely, if the calculated α value is below 0.60, the statement items in the instrument are considered inconsistent or unreliable.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results of Teacher Performance (Y)

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.961	36

Based on Table 4 of the reliability test results above, the Cronbach Alpha value for this variable is higher than the *r*-table value, namely $0.968 > 0.6$, thus the results prove that all statements in the teacher performance variable questionnaire (Y) are declared reliable.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results of Principal Leadership (X1)

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.968	30

Based on Table 5 of the reliability test results above, the Cronbach Alpha value for this variable is higher than the *r*-table value, namely $0.968 > 0.6$, thus the results prove that all statements in the principal leadership variable questionnaire (X1) are declared reliable. The results of the linearity test of the principal leadership variable on the teacher performance variable can be seen in the following table:

Table 6. Linearity Test Results of the Principal Leadership Variable (X1) on the Teacher Performance Variable (Y)

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Kinerja Guru * Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	Between Groups: (Combined)		13197.662	56	235.673	2.532	<.001
	Linearity		7436.395	1	7436.395	79.882	<.001
	Deviation from Linearity		5761.266	55	104.750	1.125	.312
Within Groups			7354.331	79	93.093		
Total			20551.993	135			

Based on Table 6, it can be identified that the Deviation from Linearity value of variable X1 toward Y is 0.312. This indicates that the value is greater than 0.05, or $0.312 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that variables X1 and Y possess a linear equation/relationship.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 7. Correlation Results of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

Correlations		Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	Kinerja Guru
Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	Pearson Correlation	1	.602**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	136	136
Kinerja Guru	Pearson Correlation	.602**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	136	136

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 7 above, it can be explained that the correlation between principal leadership and teacher performance obtained a correlation value of 0.602, which is categorized as a strong correlation, with a significance value of 0.001, smaller than the significance level of 0.05, or $0.001 < 0.05$. Furthermore, to determine whether Hypothesis 1 is accepted or rejected, the ANOVA test can be seen below:

Table 8. ANOVA Test Results of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7436.395	1	7436.395	75.976	<.001 ^b
	Residual	13115.597	134	97.878		
	Total	20551.993	135			

a. Dependent Variable: Kinerja Guru

b. Predictors: (Constant), Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah

Based on Table 8 above, it can be seen that $F_{count} = 75.976 > F_{table} = 3.912$ with a significance level of $0.001 < 0.05$, meaning that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Thus, the regression model used in this study is significant, meaning that the principal leadership variable (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the teacher performance variable (Y). The next process to determine the magnitude of the influence of the principal leadership variable (X1) on the teacher performance variable (Y) is the coefficient of determination value (R^2) by observing the R square in Table 9 of the model summary output below:

Table 9. Summary of Regression Test X1 on Y

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.602 ^a	.362	.357	9.893

a. Predictors: (Constant), Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah

Based on Table 9 above, it explains that the correlation value (r) is 0.602 and the coefficient of determination (R²) obtained is 0.357, which implies that the influence of the principal leadership variable (X1) on the dependent variable of teacher performance (Y) is 35.7%, while the remaining 64.3% is influenced by other variables.

Table 10. Regression Coefficient Results of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	89.355	5.447		16.403	<.001
	Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	.414	.047	.602	8.716	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Kinerja Guru

Based on Table 10, the results of the regression test of the principal leadership variable on teacher performance obtained a constant value of 89.355 and a regression coefficient value of 0.414 with a significance value of 0.001, and the regression equation obtained is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 89.355 + 0.414 X1$$

Referring to the resulting regression equation, the constant value obtained is 89.355. Mathematically, this figure indicates that if the principal leadership variable is constant or equal to zero (0), then the teacher performance score will automatically remain at the point of 89.355. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for the independent variable (principal leadership) shows a positive value of 0.414. This value represents a direct relationship between the two variables. This means that every one-unit increase in the quality of principal leadership will trigger an increase in teacher performance by 0.414 units. From these findings, it can be concluded that the dynamics of teacher performance whether high or low are strongly influenced by the quality of principal leadership. The more optimal the leadership implemented, the higher the teacher performance, and vice versa.

In addition, the correlation analysis reinforces the existence of a positive relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance, with the correlation coefficient value (r) reaching 0.602, which falls into the strong category. The significance of this relationship is validated by the significance value of 0.001, which is far smaller than the error tolerance level of 0.05. Furthermore, the model feasibility test (ANOVA) recorded an Fcount value of 75.976. This figure significantly exceeds the Ftable threshold of 3.912, with a significance level of 0.001 < 0.05. This series of tests confirms that the regression model developed in this research is highly appropriate and significant. In other words, it has been empirically proven that principal leadership exerts a positive and significant influence on teacher performance.

Regarding the magnitude of its impact, the regression analysis revealed a coefficient of determination (R²) value of 0.357. This finding implies that principal leadership contributes 35.7% to the fluctuation of teacher performance. Meanwhile, the remaining majority proportion, namely 64.3%, is determined by other factors or variables not examined within the scope of this study. Based on the overall results of these statistical tests, the regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 89.355 + 0.414X$$

Statistically, the constant value of 89.355 means that if the principal leadership variable is assumed to be constant or equal to zero, then teacher performance achievement will remain at a score of 89.355. On the other hand, the figure of 0.414 in the regression coefficient indicates the existence of a positive linear correlation. This means that every one-unit escalation in the quality of principal leadership will correspond with an increase in teacher performance by 0.414 units. This empirical evidence is further strengthened by the significance value of 0.001 (far below the tolerance limit of 0.05), which confirms that the influence is statistically highly significant. In conclusion, the style and quality of principal leadership provide a positive and significant impact in shaping teacher performance.

Overall, the findings of this research underline the urgency of the role of school leadership in teacher productivity. The correlation index categorized as strong ($r = 0.602$) emphasizes the principle of causality: the more optimal the leadership implemented, the more significant the improvement in teacher performance quality. The contribution of 35.7% indicates that leadership is one of the essential determining pillars, although not the sole variable. The remaining percentage suggests the intervention of other factors beyond the limitations of this study, such as individual work motivation, school climate and culture, level of professional competence, and the work environment ecosystem.

Furthermore, these empirical findings simultaneously validate educational leadership theory, which positions the principal in four central functions: as an innovator, motivator, supervisor, and communicator in realizing high-quality learning. A leadership figure who is reliable in executing directed supervision, proactively stimulating work enthusiasm, being inclusive toward input, and continuously initiating instructional innovation is undoubtedly capable of accelerating teacher professionalism in the field. As a final conclusion, strengthening and improving the leadership capacity of school principals constitute a highly crucial strategic step in the broader agenda of enhancing the quality of basic education in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency.

Empirically, the results of this study confirm that principal leadership brings a highly significant impact on the escalation of teacher performance. Data analysis proves the existence of a clear positive correlation between the managerial competence of principals—in terms of leading, directing, and supervising—and the improvement of teaching quality. Leaders who are proactive in providing moral encouragement, strategic direction, and professional support have been proven capable of creating a conducive work ecosystem. Consequently, educators are able to execute their instructional responsibilities far more optimally. The conclusion is very clear: the higher the quality of leadership implemented by the principal, the more superior the performance and dedication of teachers in the classroom.

This essential finding strongly resonates with several relevant previous studies. The research conducted by Andriani et al. (2018), for example, confirmed that leadership positively correlates with teacher performance due to the central role of principals in boosting motivation and fostering an achievement-oriented work culture. In line with this, the investigation by Handayani et al. (2020) emphasized that leadership style is capable of influencing teacher performance through the creation of a supportive work climate and the implementation of targeted academic supervision. Furthermore, the study by Afriyanli and Sabandi (2020) proved that supervisory interventions from school leaders are highly effective in enhancing teacher professionalism. The convergence of these research findings further strengthens the postulate that principal leadership is a fundamental element in supporting the quality of educators.

Viewed from the aspect of implications, the findings of this research imply how strategic the position of principals is within the constellation of improving the quality of educational institutions. The role of principals can no longer be underestimated merely as passive administrators, but has transformed into instructional leaders who are required to actively assist, motivate, and supervise the educational process. Therefore, the agenda for improving principal competencies—whether through intensive leadership training programs, strengthening academic supervision capacity, or continuous professional development—must become a primary priority for policymakers. This effective leadership transformation is believed to directly lead to improved teacher performance, which will ultimately accelerate the quality of both the learning process and student learning outcomes as a whole.

Although this study has been able to present a comprehensive portrait regarding the relationship between leadership and teacher performance, this research is certainly not free from several limitations. First, the sample size and research locus are still limited to a specific regional population, so the conclusions drawn may not necessarily be generalized to the demographic characteristics of schools in broader regions. Second, the architecture of this study only focuses on the determination of one independent variable, whereas in managerial reality, teacher performance is a highly complex construct that is also influenced by other external and internal variables, such as individual motivation levels, organizational culture, and work environment conditions. In response to these limitations, future

researchers are highly recommended to develop more comprehensive research models, integrate additional variables, expand the scope of observational areas, and apply more varied methodological approaches.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the series of analyses and data testing conducted on elementary school teachers throughout Ngawen District, Klaten Regency, a principal conclusion can be drawn that principal leadership exerts both a positive and significant influence on teacher performance. The validity of this conclusion is supported by the acquisition of a correlation coefficient of 0.602—which represents a strong level of relationship—as well as a significance value of 0.001, which is far below the tolerated margin of error (0.05). Through regression analysis, it was proven that the leadership capacity of school principals contributes a tangible proportion of 35.7% toward the improvement of teacher performance quality within the region. Meanwhile, the dominant proportion of 64.3% constitutes the result of interventions from various other variables beyond the scope of this research. This pattern of influence is also mathematically illustrated through the regression equation $\hat{Y} = 89.355 + 0.414X$, which implies a principle of proportionality: every incremental improvement in the quality of principal leadership will consistently be followed by an increase in teacher performance. As a final conclusion, the findings of this research reinforce the strategic position of leadership quality as one of the essential pillars in determining the quality of elementary school teacher performance in Ngawen District, Klaten Regency. The correlation is highly linear; the more capable a principal is in orchestrating leadership roles namely as a solution-oriented innovator, an inspirational motivator, an open communicator, and a well-directed supervisor the more optimal the dedication, productivity, and professionalism of teachers will be in carrying out their educational duties in the field..

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