



Principals' Learning Leadership and the Development of Learning Communities in Sekolah Penggerak of Aceh Tamiang

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ABSTRACT

The performance of teachers is a crucial factor influencing educational quality, especially in Indonesia, where both national and international evaluations reveal ongoing difficulties in student learning outcomes. This study is to investigate the impact of management competence, interpersonal communication, and success motivation on teacher performance in public elementary schools within the Meurah Dua Subdistrict. A quantitative descriptive methodology with a correlational survey design was implemented. The population comprised 128 teachers, all chosen using comprehensive sampling. Data were gathered using Likert-scale questionnaires that adhered to validity and reliability criteria (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$). Data were examined utilizing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Anticipated outcomes suggest that management competence and achievement motivation significantly enhance teacher performance, whereas interpersonal communication has a good but comparatively weaker impact. All three variables are anticipated to strongly forecast teacher performance. The findings are expected to underscore the significance of leadership capacity and motivational techniques in enhancing instructional quality and teacher productivity.

1. Introduction

The quality of education in Indonesia continues to encounter substantial and enduring issues, as demonstrated by international evaluations like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)(Wijaya et al., 2024). The persistently low performance of Indonesian pupils in reading, mathematics, and science indicates not simply shortcomings in curriculum execution but also fundamental flaws within the educational system(Nafisah et al., 2022). These findings highlight significant structural issues—such as inequitable access to excellent educational resources, insufficient professional development opportunities, and inadequate policy implementation—that hinder schools' capacity to promote higher-order thinking skills(Abdulah et al., 2022). Moreover, gaps between urban and rural schools intensify inequities in learning results, necessitating urgent reforms that target both instructional content and pedagogical methods throughout the nation's many educational settings(Maulana et al., 2023).

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The pivotal aspect of these issues is the essential function of teacher performance, which acts as the foundation for enhancing instructional quality and student success (Karmilasari et al., 2023). Teacher effectiveness is not exclusively a product of individual competence, but rather the consequence of a complex interaction between organizational dynamics and psychological characteristics (Sari et al., 2025). Effective school leadership establishes the professional culture by promoting collaboration, innovation, and accountability. Similarly, transparent communication enhances coordination and educational uniformity, while motivational elements—spanning internal satisfaction with work to extrinsic rewards and acknowledgment—substantially affect teachers' dedication and productivity (Nurhadi & Purnama, 2025). Consequently, any initiative to enhance educational quality in Indonesia must implement a comprehensive plan that incorporates leadership development, professional support structures, and motivational frameworks aimed at empowering teachers as catalysts for revolutionary educational change (Minsih et al., 2024).

School principals serve as essential transformative leaders who establish and maintain performance-driven school cultures (Hariyati et al., 2023). Their administrative proficiency—comprising the essential functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling—establishes the structural and psychological conditions required for effective teaching and learning (Lagarense et al., 2025). By means of strategic planning, principals guarantee that educational objectives correspond with national standards and local requirements, while systematic organization facilitates effective resource distribution and work assignment (Welch & Aziz, 2022). Leadership and oversight direct educators towards pedagogical excellence and accountability, while efficient control systems ensure alignment between aims and results (Ridzkiyah et al., 2021). Collectively, these management elements promote an atmosphere of transparency, assistance, and collective objective, allowing educators to concentrate on instructional excellence and student success (Chyalutfa et al., 2022).

In addition to administrative proficiency, the relational aspect of leadership—anchored in interpersonal communication and motivating dynamics—is also essential (Nurin Nabila et al., 2023). Effective principals establish trust via clear and compassionate communication, fostering a culture of openness and mutual respect. This trust fosters collaboration, promotes the exchange of best practices, and enables collective problem-solving within the school community. Simultaneously, teachers' accomplishment motivation—driven by acknowledgment, professional independence, and avenues for self-improvement—enhances creativity, persistence, and innovation in pedagogical practices. When robust leadership, transparent communication, and intrinsic motivation align, schools transform into professional learning communities that perpetually enhance and adjust to evolving educational requirements.

Initial observations in Meurah Dua Subdistrict indicate a series of interconnected problems that hinder the implementation of good teaching and learning processes (Hadi et al., 2024a). The identified deficiencies in managerial competence across various schools indicate shortcomings in essential administrative duties, including planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring educational operations (Sain et al., 2024). This administrative deficiency frequently results in inadequate support for educators, ambiguous educational objectives, and an absence of uniform evaluation frameworks (Asbari, 2024). Furthermore, largely top-down communication procedures limit teacher involvement in decision-making and obstruct the sharing of innovative pedagogical concepts. Hierarchical communication arrangements often reduce teachers' feeling of ownership and participation, so impacting their motivation and responsiveness to professional development programs.

The low level of accomplishment motivation among teachers is also concerning as evidenced by their inadequate enthusiasm for instructional innovation, professional collaboration, and continuous enhancement. This motivational deficiency results in inadequate classroom management, poorly

organized lesson planning, and erratic assessment procedures, all of which diminish the overall quality of teaching (Marmoah & Poerwanti, Suharno, 2022). These patterns indicate a systemic issue that transcends individual teacher conduct, affecting wider institutional and leadership issues inside the schools. Thus, it is imperative to analyse the relationship among leadership attributes, motivational factors, and teacher efficacy (Elfira et al., 2024). Comprehending the interplay of these factors within the unique socio-organizational framework of Meurah Dua Subdistrict can yield critical insights for focused interventions designed to bolster school leadership, cultivate intrinsic motivation, and ultimately improve the efficacy of teaching and learning outcomes.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which management competence, interpersonal communication, and achievement motivation influence teacher performance in public elementary schools in Meurah Dua Subdistrict. The study aims to determine how principals' managerial abilities—which include effective planning, organizing, leading, and controlling—contribute to the creation of conducive work conditions that improve teaching efficacy. Similarly, the study looks at how interpersonal communication within schools, both among instructors and between teachers and administrators, promotes collaboration, trust, and shared commitment to institutional goals. Furthermore, it investigates the function of accomplishment motivation as a motivator for teachers to innovate, endure in the face of adversity, and engage in ongoing professional development.

Through combination these three dimensions—leadership competency, communication quality, and motivational dynamics—the study hopes to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the factors influencing teacher performance in the local educational setting (Hadi et al., 2024b). The Meurah Dua Subdistrict is an appropriate location for such an investigation due to visible inequalities in school administration techniques and teacher outcomes. The study's findings are expected to have both theoretical and practical implications: theoretically, they will contribute to the discussion of organizational behaviour and educational leadership; practically, they will provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, school leaders, and educators seeking to design targeted interventions that improve teacher performance and, ultimately, the quality of education at the elementary level.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Approach and Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive methodology with a correlational survey design to assess the associations between variables without intervention. This method facilitates the systematic identification of the strength and direction of connections among managerial competence (X1), interpersonal communication (X2), achievement motivation (X3), and teacher performance (Y).

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study population comprised all instructors employed in public elementary schools within Meurah Dua Subdistrict, amounting to 128 individuals. Due to the population's relatively modest and controllable size, the research employed a total sample technique, guaranteeing that every instructor was included as a respondent. This method was chosen to ensure thorough representation and reduce sample bias, therefore enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. The study encompasses the entire population, thereby providing a comprehensive and precise understanding of the factors affecting teacher performance across various schools and circumstances within the subdistrict.

Furthermore, total sampling offers a benefit in educational research contexts because population diversity—encompassing differences in experience, credentials, and school conditions—can markedly affect results. Incorporating all 128 educators facilitates a more intricate examination of

the interplay of management competence, interpersonal communication, and achievement motivation on performance across several teaching contexts. This approach guarantees that policy recommendations and practical interventions resulting from the study are rooted in the realities of the entire teacher community in Meurah Dua Subdistrict, enhancing the generalizability and applicability of the findings for educational leaders and decision-makers..

2.3 Data Collection

Data were gathered using standardized Likert-scale questionnaires developed from theoretical indicators corresponding to each variable. The quality of the instrument was validated through pilot testing, which showed its construct validity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables over 0.70, signifying robust internal consistency and appropriateness for comprehensive research.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis employed descriptive statistics to define each variable and inferential statistics to investigate the relationships among variables. Pearson correlation was utilized to evaluate the strength and direction of correlations, whilst multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the simultaneous influence among variables. Tests of classical assumptions confirmed the appropriateness of regression methodologies.

3. Results

3.1 *The Strategic Role of School Principals in Establishing Learning Communities at Sekolah Penggerak.*

In the context of educational transformation, the principal's position as a leader is essential in fostering a vibrant and efficient learning environment. Principals are tasked with developing a vision and mission that promote inclusive and collaborative educational objectives, ensuring that all community members feel engaged and have a unified purpose. Moreover, principals facilitate training for educators and staff to enhance competencies and promote creativity in learning. In Sekolah Penggerak, the strategies used by principals are essential for the success of learning and the enhancement of teacher and student competencies. Principals aggressively promote parental and community engagement to foster synergy that enhances the overall educational process. By employing a professional leadership approach, principals may foster an optimal learning environment and cultivate a productive and sustainable educational community.

In addition to establishing a vision, ethics serve as catalysts for professional development and instructional innovation. It gives continuous training and development programs for teachers and staff, promoting the improvement of pedagogical skills, creativity, and flexibility to emerging learning paradigms. In Sekolah penggerak, where innovation serves as a standard for broader educational progress, the strategic decisions of principals are crucial in influencing the efficacy of teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, by actively cultivating ties with parents and the wider community, principals create collaborative synergies that enhance student success and institutional sustainability. By employing professional, ethical, and transformative leadership, principals enhance school performance and foster a learning environment defined by mutual respect, innovation, and sustained educational achievement.

3.2 *Developing Leadership Skills for Promoting Learning Communities.*

Leadership abilities are essential for fostering an exciting, coherent, and high-performing instructional environment in schools. Effective leadership, whether by administrators, teachers, or staff, transcends administrative duties to include the capacity to inspire, reflect, and adjust to evolving educational demands. By employing proactive and reflective leadership, educators can collectively improve their professional skills, share novel teaching methods, and foster a culture of mutual accountability for learning results. This collaborative method enhances both the efficiency

and enjoyment of the learning experience while also fortifying interpersonal trust and professional solidarity, which are essential for a strong and resilient learning community inside the institution.

In the context of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program—an innovative project aimed at expediting educational transformation—the cultivation of leadership abilities serves as the primary mechanism for systemic enhancement. Leadership serves as a cohesive and directive force that aligns the endeavours of all stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, and the broader community, towards common educational objectives. By promoting collaboration and decentralized leadership, schools may create an environment in which each individual feels esteemed and accountable for the institution's success. Thus, the acquisition and implementation of leadership competencies not only direct and structure various educational activities but also instil a sense of ownership and purpose among all members of the school community, transforming the institution into a dynamic exemplar of participatory and sustainable educational excellence.

3.3 The Impact of Implementing Learning Leadership in Building Learning Communities.

The implementation of learning leadership significantly influences the establishment of sustainable and collaborative learning communities in educational institutions. Learning leadership underscores the roles of principals and teachers as facilitators of growth, innovation, and collaborative learning, rather than as mere conveyors of knowledge or enforcers of rules. This leadership strategy enables school leaders to cultivate a culture in which reflection, experimentation, and continual improvement are integral to daily practice. They promote teachers' participation in collaborative inquiry, the exchange of pedagogical strategies, and the joint analysis of student outcomes—transforming schools into vibrant hubs of learning for educators and students alike. This collaborative attitude improves instructional quality and fosters professional trust, communication, and a sense of belonging among staff, which are essential for establishing robust learning communities.

3.3.1 The Main Impact of Learning Leadership for Teachers.

A transformational leadership strategy is crucial for improving teacher engagement and performance by fostering innovation, creativity, and ongoing cooperation. Through visionary leadership, administrators motivate teachers to transcend conventional practices and adopt innovative concepts that enhance educational outcomes. This leadership fosters a conducive environment for change and enhances instructors' confidence in adopting alternate educational methods. The focus on a common objective and reciprocal assistance motivates educators to engage in professional development activities, such as training and coaching, which enhance their educational competencies. With access to ongoing professional development, instructors enhance their competence and motivation to employ learner-centred approaches that address varied student needs, so elevating overall instructional quality.

Concurrently, principals enhance professional development by cultivating robust collaborative networks inside educational communities, where educators share knowledge, experiences, and exemplary practices. This collaborative culture fosters professionalism and enhances reflective teaching, enabling classroom issues to be tackled by collective understanding rather than solitary endeavor. A collaborative and inclusive educational atmosphere fosters teachers' feelings of value as co-architects of academic objectives, so augmenting their sense of belonging and dedication to student achievement. Furthermore, transformational leaders assist educators in managing resistance to change by offering adaptable, supportive, and progressive leadership, so facilitating the surmounting of obstacles and the adoption of educational innovation. Through these

strategic initiatives, principals enhance teacher development and cultivate a sustainable culture of continuous improvement that matches with the evolving demands of contemporary education.

3.3.1 *The Main Impact of Learning Leadership for Students.*

From the students' viewpoint, the adoption of learning leadership has drastically altered the classroom into a more stimulating, dynamic, and pleasurable educational setting. Educators functioning within a robust learning community are more adept at crafting classes that ignite interest, foster collaboration, and relate academic material to students' real-world experiences. This transition has resulted in significant enhancements in student motivation, autonomy, and critical thinking abilities. Students are no longer passive receivers of information; they are active participants in knowledge construction—posing inquiries, investigating concepts, and assuming responsibility for their learning processes. Consequently, students exhibit enhanced creativity, confidence, and communication skills, indicating the efficacy of learning leadership in cultivating significant educational experiences.

The principal's role as a learning leader enhances this positive transition by serving as a facilitator who guarantees the quality, coherence, and sustainability of instructional methods. By employing contextual and problem-based learning methodologies, principals direct teachers to develop lessons that are pertinent to students' lives and foster problem-solving and decision-making skills. This leadership methodology not only connects theoretical concepts with practical application but also equips students to confront intricate real-world issues with resilience and adaptability. Furthermore, consistent and inclusive leadership fosters a school culture that prioritizes diversity, empathy, and collaboration. This culture fosters a friendly atmosphere where every learner, irrespective of background or ability, feels esteemed and empowered to realize their greatest potential.

4. Conclusions

The principal's approach to establishing a learning community at the Penggerak School in Aceh Tamiang Regency is highly planned and centralized. The principal serves as a catalyst for innovation rather than merely an administrative manager by executing tactics such as establishing a leadership team, leveraging technology, empowering educators, and engaging parents and the community. This technique has effectively established a supportive, cooperative, inclusive, and sustainable learning environment that addresses local requirements.

The principal's application of learning leadership at Sekolah Penggerak Kabupaten Aceh Tamiang is effective in fostering a learning community. Leadership styles, including servant leadership, adaptive leadership, authentic leadership, and distributive leadership, have effectively enhanced teachers' professional ability, stimulated innovation and reflection in learning, and incorporated the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile. This enhances collaboration and engagement, hence positively influencing the overall quality of learning. The implementation of learning leadership in establishing learning communities at Sekolah Penggerak in Aceh Tamiang Regency has yielded notably favorable and significant outcomes. The capacity of school principals to effectively leverage resources and foster collaboration with stakeholders has led to the establishment of learning communities that are mutually beneficial, sustainable, and pertinent to future requirements. The effects encompass enhanced educational quality, the cultivation of creative and autonomous student character, and a robust basis for educational change.

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