

THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF MRANGGEN DISTRICT, DEMAK REGENCY

Istiqomah^{1a*}, Senowarsito^{2b}, and Harto Nuroso^{3c}

¹²³Manajemen Pendidikan, Pascasarjana, Universitas Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia, Jl. Lingga Raya No.6, Dr. Cipto, Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Semarang, 50125

^a istiq0620@gmail.com

^b senowarsito@upgris.ac.id

^c hartonuroso@upgris.ac.id

(*) Corresponding Author

istiq0620@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The quality of education in elementary schools is closely related to teacher performance, which is influenced by principals' instructional leadership. This study aims to examine the influence of instructional leadership on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. A quantitative approach with a causal associative design was employed. The population consisted of 139 teachers, and 103 teachers were selected as respondents using proportional random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The results show that instructional leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher performance. The regression analysis indicates that instructional leadership explains approximately 29% of the variance in teacher performance, suggesting a moderate level of influence. These findings indicate that instructional leadership contributes to teacher performance, although other factors also play important roles. Strengthening instructional leadership is therefore important for improving teacher performance and supporting overall school effectiveness in elementary education contexts.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Education plays a crucial role in national development by equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, character, and competencies necessary for social and economic progress. At the elementary level, educational quality is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of classroom instruction, which largely depends on teachers' professional

performance. Teacher performance includes the ability to plan lessons, implement instructional strategies, manage classrooms, and evaluate learning outcomes. High teacher performance contributes directly to student achievement and school effectiveness, whereas low performance may hinder educational goals. Therefore, improving teacher performance remains a key priority in educational management (Safrida et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2025).

One of the most influential factors affecting teacher performance is principals' instructional leadership. Instructional leadership positions the principal as a leader of learning who focuses on improving teaching and learning processes rather than merely handling administrative tasks. It involves setting clear academic goals, supervising instruction, supporting professional development, and fostering a positive learning environment. Empirical studies consistently show that instructional leadership contributes to teaching effectiveness, professional competence, and classroom performance (Jalal et al., 2024; Maksud et al., 2024; Susilawaty et al., 2024; Nasution et al., 2024; Ritonga et al., 2023; Ningrum et al., 2025; Werdiningsih et al., 2023; Sahirah et al., 2025; Sulistiana et al., 2025; Veranovita et al., 2024; Yudhi, 2025; Septiani et al., 2026; Hayati et al., 2023).

Despite extensive research demonstrating the positive relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance, several limitations remain. Previous studies have generally focused on broad or urban educational contexts and often emphasize general relationships without examining specific local conditions. Limited studies have explored how instructional leadership operates within elementary school settings in semi-urban or rural areas, particularly in regions such as Mranggen District, Demak Regency. Contextual factors such as institutional culture, teacher readiness, and local educational challenges may influence how leadership practices affect teacher performance. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand the influence of instructional leadership within this specific context.

Preliminary observations in elementary schools within Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency indicate that several aspects of instructional quality still require improvement. Data from the 2025 Education Report Card reveal relatively low performance in areas such as student numeracy, support for teacher reflection, and effective use of learning resources. Interviews with supervisors and teachers also highlight challenges related to instructional supervision, professional guidance, communication, and leadership support. These conditions suggest that principals' instructional leadership may play a critical role in shaping teacher performance in this context.

Based on the background above, the research problem of this study is the influence of principals' instructional leadership on teachers' performance in elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the influence of principals' instructional leadership on teachers' performance in elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational management knowledge, particularly in the area of instructional leadership, and to provide practical recommendations for improving teacher performance through effective school leadership practices.

METHOD

Research Type and Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal associative research type. The quantitative approach was selected because the study aims to examine the effect of principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance objectively through statistical analysis. The research design used was *ex post facto*, as the variables under investigation naturally exist within the school context and are not manipulated by the researcher. Through this design, the study seeks to explain causal relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance based on existing empirical conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Sugiyono, 2025).

Research Setting and Time

The study was conducted in public elementary schools within Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency, covering a total of 12 schools. The research was carried out from the proposal development stage in April 2025 until the thesis examination in May 2026. The selection of the research site was based on its relevance to the research focus, particularly regarding principals' instructional leadership and teacher performance in elementary education.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all teachers in public elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, totaling 139 teachers. The sample was determined using proportional random sampling to ensure that each school was represented proportionally based on the number of teachers. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 103 teachers as respondents. Thus, the sample adequately represents the population and allows for accurate analysis of the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance (Arikunto, 2020; Sugiyono, 2025).

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study includes one independent variable and one dependent variable. The independent variable is principals' instructional leadership (X), while the dependent variable is teacher performance (Y). Teacher performance is defined as the outcomes achieved by teachers in carrying out their professional duties, including lesson planning, instructional implementation, classroom management, student assessment, and continuous professional development. Teacher performance reflects teachers' competence, responsibility, and effectiveness in fulfilling instructional roles (Pianda, 2022). Principals' instructional leadership refers to the ability of school principals to formulate learning goals, manage instructional programs, create a supportive learning environment, conduct academic supervision, monitor teaching practices, and facilitate teachers' professional development. In this role, principals act as leaders of learning who directly influence the quality of teaching and learning processes in schools (Usman, 2020; Sapitri, 2024).

Conceptually, the relationship between the two variables is framed within educational management theory, which posits that leadership practices focused on instruction play a decisive role in shaping teacher performance. Effective instructional leadership provides direction, supervision, support, and professional guidance that enable teachers to perform their duties more effectively (Suharto & Wahab, 2022).

Research Instrument

The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The instrument was developed based on operational indicators of instructional leadership and teacher performance. The use of a closed-ended questionnaire facilitates structured measurement of respondents' perceptions and enables quantitative data analysis (Arikunto, 2020; Sugiyono, 2025). The instrument consisted of 36 items measuring teacher performance and 36 items measuring principals' instructional leadership. All items were designed to capture respondents' perceptions quantitatively.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Prior to the main study, the instrument was pilot-tested on 30 respondents outside the research sample. Validity testing included content validity through expert judgment and construct validity using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The results showed that all items across both variables had correlation values higher than the critical value ($r_{table} = 0.361$), indicating that all items were valid (Arikunto, 2020; Sugiyono, 2025).

Specifically, all 36 items measuring teacher performance and 36 items measuring principals' instructional leadership were declared valid, so no items were excluded from the instrument. Thus, the total number of valid items used in the study was 72 items.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results showed reliability coefficients of 0.985 for instructional leadership and 0.972 for teacher performance. Both values exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instruments were highly reliable and suitable for use in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected primarily through questionnaires distributed to teachers. The questionnaire served as the main instrument for obtaining quantitative data on instructional leadership and teacher performance. Documentation was also used to support and verify the data obtained. The use of multiple data sources helps strengthen the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Sugiyono, 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in three stages: descriptive analysis, assumption testing, and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the condition of each variable through mean, standard deviation, minimum score, maximum score, and categorical classification.

Assumption testing included tests of normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis. After meeting these assumptions, hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis with the assistance of SPSS software. This analysis was used to examine the effect of principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance. The contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable was measured using the coefficient of determination (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Sugiyono, 2025).

Research Ethics

This study adhered to ethical research principles, including obtaining respondents' consent to participate, ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' identities, and using the data solely for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that their responses would remain anonymous. These procedures were implemented to maintain research integrity and protect participants' rights (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study involved 103 public elementary school teachers in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine general trends in the variables of principals' instructional leadership and teacher performance. The results indicate that both variables have high mean scores, with standard deviations relatively smaller than their respective means. This suggests that the data are relatively homogeneous and that respondents' perceptions are fairly consistent.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instructional Leadership	36	103	141.00	175.00	153.5340	8.57472
Teacher Performance	36	103	141.00	176.00	153.0485	9.70080

Source: SPSS output, 2026.

Based on Table 1, both instructional leadership and teacher performance demonstrate very high mean scores. Instructional leadership has a mean of 153.53, indicating that principals are perceived to implement instructional leadership effectively. Teacher performance also shows a very high mean score of 153.05, suggesting that teachers demonstrate strong performance in carrying out their professional duties. The slightly higher standard deviation in teacher performance indicates somewhat greater variation among respondents compared to instructional leadership.

Table 2. Category of Variable Scores

Variable	Very High Interval	Empirical Mean	Category
Instructional Leadership	145–180	153.53	Very High
Teacher Performance	145–180	153.05	Very High

Source: SPSS output, 2026.

Table 2 shows that both variables fall within the "very high" category based on predetermined score intervals. This categorization refers to the positioning of empirical mean scores within the upper range of the Likert scale distribution, indicating that respondents generally provided favorable evaluations of instructional leadership practices and teacher performance. Conceptually, a "very high" category reflects a dominant tendency toward positive perceptions rather than an absolute measure of optimal conditions. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted as indicating strong perceived practices rather than definitive evidence of maximum performance levels.

Assumption Testing

Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted. The normality test using Kolmogorov–Smirnov yielded a significance value of 0.039 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data do not fully meet the assumption of

normal distribution. However, examination of the Normal P–P Plot shows that the residuals are distributed relatively close to the diagonal line, suggesting that deviations from normality are not substantial. In large samples ($N > 30$), regression analysis is generally robust to moderate violations of normality due to the central limit theorem. Therefore, the data were considered sufficiently acceptable for further regression analysis with caution in interpretation.

Linearity testing shows a deviation from linearity value of 0.133 (> 0.05), indicating a linear relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance. The heteroscedasticity test indicates that residuals are randomly distributed without a clear pattern, suggesting no heteroscedasticity problem. Overall, the regression model meets the majority of required assumptions, although the normality result should be interpreted carefully.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the effect of principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	t-value	Sig.
Constant	19.664	1.208	0.230
Instructional Leadership	0.610	6.440	0.000

Source: SPSS output, 2026.

The regression equation is: $Y = 19.664 + 0.610X$. This equation indicates that principals' instructional leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance. The regression coefficient (0.610) means that every one-unit increase in instructional leadership is associated with a 0.610 increase in teacher performance.

The t-test result shows a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that instructional leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher performance. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating that principals' instructional leadership influences teacher performance is accepted.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.539	0.290	0.283	8.00

Source: SPSS output, 2026.

The R value of 0.539 indicates a strong relationship between principals' instructional leadership and teacher performance. The R Square value of 0.290 shows that 29.0% of the variance in teacher performance is explained by instructional leadership, while the remaining 71.0% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.283 confirms that the model remains robust after adjustment. Overall, the regression model provides a meaningful explanation of the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance, although other variables beyond the scope of this study also contribute to variations in teacher performance.

Discussion

The Effect of Principals' Instructional Leadership on Teacher Performance

The findings indicate that principals' instructional leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. This result confirms that principals who perform instructional leadership roles—such as guiding instruction, supervising classroom practices, and supporting professional development—tend to contribute to improved teaching quality. In this context, principals function not only as administrative managers but as leaders of learning who shape instructional practices, academic expectations, and professional culture within schools. When instructional leadership is implemented effectively, teachers tend to demonstrate better engagement with instructional responsibilities and a stronger commitment to teaching quality. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that instructional leadership contributes to teacher effectiveness and professionalism (Jalal et al., 2024; Maksud et al., 2024).

However, the regression analysis shows that instructional leadership explains approximately 29% of the variance in teacher performance, which can be interpreted as a moderate level of influence. This finding suggests that although instructional leadership is an important factor, it is not the sole determinant of teacher performance. The relatively limited contribution (29%) may be explained by the complex and multidimensional nature of teacher performance. Factors such as teachers' professional competence, motivation, organizational commitment, workload, and access to professional development opportunities may also play substantial roles. In addition, institutional conditions such as school facilities, resource availability, and support systems can influence how leadership practices are translated into actual teaching performance. Previous research similarly indicates that instructional leadership operates alongside other organizational and individual factors in shaping teacher performance (Nasution et al., 2024; Ritonga et al., 2023).

From a contextual perspective, the moderate influence observed in this study can also be linked to local educational conditions in Mranggen District, particularly in Dabin III. Preliminary findings indicate that schools in this area still face challenges related to instructional supervision, teacher reflection practices, and effective use of learning resources. These conditions suggest that while principals may already demonstrate instructional leadership practices, their implementation may not yet be fully optimized or consistently applied across all schools. Variations in teachers' readiness, differences in school capacity, and uneven access to resources may reduce the overall impact of leadership on teacher performance. Thus, the 29% contribution reflects not only the role of leadership but also the influence of contextual constraints that mediate its effectiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding reinforces the concept of instructional leadership as leadership that is directly oriented toward improving teaching and learning processes. Unlike managerial leadership, which emphasizes administrative tasks, instructional leadership focuses on academic supervision, curriculum implementation, teacher development, and monitoring of instructional outcomes. Principals who establish clear academic goals, conduct classroom supervision, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate professional growth create conditions that enable teachers to improve their performance. Empirical studies confirm that academic supervision and instructional guidance from principals play a crucial role in strengthening teachers' professional competence and instructional effectiveness (Ningrum et al., 2025; Werdiningsih et al., 2023).

Furthermore, instructional leadership influences teachers' professional behavior through mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning activities. Teachers who receive consistent academic guidance and feedback tend to demonstrate better lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment practices. Leadership that prioritizes instructional improvement also encourages continuous professional development and innovation in teaching (Sahirah et al., 2025; Sulistiana et al., 2025).

The findings also suggest that elementary school teachers are highly responsive to leadership that directly supports classroom practices. Principals who actively monitor teaching processes and provide professional assistance create a supportive environment that enhances teachers' motivation to perform effectively. Studies indicate that leadership strategies focused on learning supervision and instructional support can significantly strengthen teacher performance in various educational contexts (Septiani et al., 2026; Veranovita et al., 2024).

However, the moderate coefficient of determination also indicates that teacher performance is multidimensional and influenced by factors beyond leadership alone. Individual teacher characteristics, school resources, professional development opportunities, and organizational climate may also play important roles. Therefore, while strengthening instructional leadership is essential, improving teacher performance requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both organizational and individual dimensions.

Implications of the Research Findings

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study reinforces educational leadership theory by demonstrating that principals' instructional leadership contributes to teacher performance, while also highlighting that its influence is partial and context-dependent. This supports the perspective that leadership effectiveness should be understood within a broader system of organizational and individual factors.

Practically, the findings suggest that efforts to improve teacher performance in elementary schools in Mranggen District should prioritize strengthening principals' instructional leadership capacity while simultaneously addressing contextual constraints. Professional development programs for principals should focus on academic supervision, instructional monitoring, teacher coaching, feedback provision, and curriculum leadership. At the same time, support for teachers—such as training, mentoring, and resource provision should be enhanced to maximize the impact of leadership practices.

Furthermore, policymakers and educational authorities should consider instructional leadership as a strategic lever for improving school effectiveness, while also ensuring that supporting systems such as infrastructure, professional development, and evaluation mechanisms are adequately developed. In this way, improvements in teacher performance can be achieved through the integration of leadership, capacity building, and contextual support.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that principals' instructional leadership has a positive and statistically significant influence on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Dabin III, Mranggen District, Demak Regency. The findings indicate that instructional leadership contributes to variations in teacher performance, although its influence is moderate, accounting for approximately 29% of the variance. This suggests that while instructional leadership plays an important role, teacher performance is also shaped by other individual, organizational, and contextual factors.

Practically, the study highlights the importance of strengthening principals' instructional leadership capacity through professional development, particularly in academic supervision, instructional monitoring, and teacher support. Such efforts may enhance teaching quality and contribute to overall school improvement.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted within a limited geographical area, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Second, the study examined only one independent variable, while teacher performance is influenced by multiple factors not included in this model. Third, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias.

Future research is recommended to include additional variables, involve broader samples, and employ more comprehensive analytical approaches to obtain a deeper understanding of factors influencing teacher performance.

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