

Management Strategies of School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study aims to review the management strategies of school principals in improving teacher performance through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Articles were collected from Google Scholar and accredited national journal databases using the keywords “principal management strategies”, “school principal leadership”, and “teacher performance”. The inclusion criteria consisted of articles published between 2018 and 2025, written in Indonesian or English, and directly discussing principals’ strategies for improving teacher performance. A total of 20 articles met the criteria and were included in the analysis. The results indicate that principals improve teacher performance through managerial functions, democratic and participatory leadership styles, academic supervision, motivation and reward systems, discipline building, and continuous professional development through training and workshops. Supporting factors include a conducive school climate, adequate facilities, and effective communication, while inhibiting factors consist of limited time, teachers’ resistance to change, and low participation among some teachers. This study recommends strengthening participatory leadership and continuous professional development programs for teachers.

Keywords: school management, principal leadership, teacher performance, primary school

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi manajemen kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru melalui pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Artikel dikumpulkan melalui penelusuran pada database Google Scholar dan beberapa jurnal nasional terakreditasi dengan menggunakan kata kunci “strategi manajemen kepala sekolah”, “kepemimpinan kepala sekolah”, dan “kinerja guru”. Kriteria inklusi meliputi artikel yang dipublikasikan pada tahun 2018–2025, berbahasa Indonesia atau Inggris, dan secara langsung membahas strategi kepala sekolah dalam peningkatan kinerja guru. Sebanyak 20 artikel memenuhi kriteria dan dianalisis lebih lanjut. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru dilakukan melalui pelaksanaan fungsi manajerial, penerapan gaya kepemimpinan demokratis dan partisipatif, pelaksanaan supervisi akademik, pemberian motivasi dan penghargaan, pembinaan disiplin, serta pengembangan profesional guru melalui pelatihan dan workshop. Faktor pendukung implementasi strategi tersebut antara lain iklim kerja sekolah yang kondusif, dukungan sarana prasarana, dan komunikasi efektif, sedangkan faktor penghambat mencakup keterbatasan waktu, resistensi guru terhadap perubahan, dan rendahnya partisipasi sebagian guru. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar kepala sekolah memperkuat kepemimpinan partisipatif dan program pengembangan profesional guru secara berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: manajemen sekolah, kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, kinerja guru, sekolah dasar



INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in developing high-quality and competitive human resources, particularly in responding to the challenges of the 21st century, which demand critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. In this global context, the quality of education systems is increasingly determined by the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in schools. One of the key factors influencing the success of learning is teacher performance, as teachers are the main actors in implementing educational practices in the classroom.

Empirical data at the national level indicate that teacher performance in Indonesia still requires serious attention. Results from the Teacher Competency Test (Uji Kompetensi Guru/UKG) conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) show that the average teacher competency score remains relatively low and uneven across regions. In addition, various national reports highlight issues such as low levels of pedagogical competence, limited innovation in teaching practices, and inconsistent implementation of professional development programs. These quantitative findings confirm that improving teacher performance is not only a conceptual issue but also an urgent empirical problem that directly affects the quality of education outcomes.

The issue of teacher performance cannot be separated from the role of the principal as an educational leader and manager in schools. Principals are responsible for managing school resources effectively, particularly human resources, to achieve educational goals. According to Syafaruddin and Nasution (2005), principals act as key drivers who shape school policies, work climate, and organizational culture. Effective principals are able to influence, guide, and motivate teachers to perform their duties professionally.

From a management perspective, educational management includes planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising all school activities. Andang (2017) emphasizes that effective school management creates a structured and coordinated system that supports optimal teacher performance. In practice, principals are expected to design strategic programs, allocate tasks based on teacher competencies, provide continuous coaching, and conduct systematic evaluations.

In addition to managerial competence, leadership plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance. Research by Wakila (2021) shows that communicative and participatory leadership can enhance teacher motivation and create a conducive school climate. Similarly, motivation, discipline, and reward systems are significant factors influencing teacher performance (Sule & Saeful, 2019; Santoso et al., 2023). Teachers who receive recognition and support tend to demonstrate higher commitment and responsibility in their work.

Academic supervision is another important strategy. Effective and continuous supervision enables teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and improve their professional competencies. Sintani et al. (2022) highlight that supervision oriented toward coaching, rather than mere evaluation, significantly contributes to improving teacher performance.

Despite the growing body of research on principal management and leadership strategies, existing studies tend to focus on specific aspects, such as leadership style, managerial functions, or academic supervision, in particular contexts. These fragmented findings make it difficult to obtain a comprehensive understanding of effective strategies for improving teacher performance. However, no systematic synthesis has integrated these findings into a unified framework that explains the patterns, effectiveness, and implications of principal management strategies across different studies and contexts.

Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed to systematically identify, analyze, and synthesize previous research findings related to principal management strategies in

improving teacher performance. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach is considered appropriate for this purpose, as it allows for an objective and structured analysis of existing studies (Sugiyono, 2021).

Based on this background, the research question in this study is: What are the principal's management strategies in improving teacher performance based on published research findings? The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze effective principal management and leadership strategies through a systematic literature review. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational management and leadership studies and practically to school principals in designing sustainable strategies to improve teacher performance.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings related to principal management strategies in improving teacher performance. The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability of the study.

Review Protocol and Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted between January and February 2026 using several databases, including Google Scholar and accredited national journal portals (SINTA-indexed journals). The search utilized the following keywords and combinations: "principal management strategies," "principal leadership," "teacher performance," and their Indonesian equivalents.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria for selecting articles were defined as follows:

1. Inclusion criteria: (a) Articles published between 2018 and 2025, (b) Peer-reviewed journal articles, (c) Studies discussing principal management or leadership strategies in improving teacher performance, (d) Articles available in full text. 2. Exclusion criteria: (a) Conference proceedings, theses, and dissertations, (b) Articles not relevant to the research focus, (c) Duplicate publications.

Study Selection Process (PRISMA Flow)

The initial search yielded 85 articles. After removing 15 duplicate articles, 70 articles remained for the screening stage. Title and abstract screening resulted in the exclusion of 35 articles due to irrelevance. The remaining 35 articles were assessed for full-text eligibility, of which 15 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Finally, 20 articles were selected and included in the review.

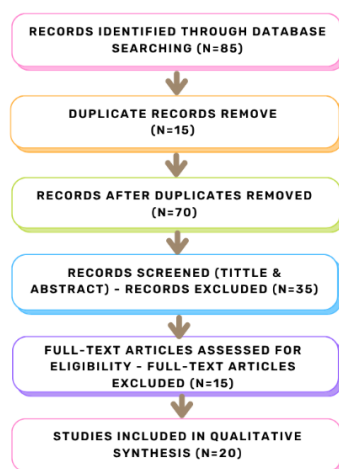


Figure 1 . Prisma Article Analysis

Quality Assessment (Critical Appraisal)

To ensure the quality of the selected studies, a critical appraisal process was conducted using adapted criteria based on research methodology standards, including: (a) clarity of research objectives, (b) appropriateness of research design, (c) validity and reliability of data collection methods, (d) rigor of data analysis, and (e) relevance of findings to the research topic. Each article was assessed and categorized into high, moderate, or low quality, and only articles with moderate to high quality were included in the final synthesis.

Data Characteristics (Research Subjects)

In this SLR, the “subjects” of the study were the 20 selected articles, which were categorized as follows: 1. Education level: Elementary School (SD): 8 articles, Junior High School (SMP): 6 articles, Senior High School (SMA): 6 articles. 2. Research approach: Qualitative studies: 9 articles, Quantitative studies: 7 articles, Mixed-method studies: 4 articles. 3. Research design: Case studies: 10 articles, Survey research: 6 articles, Others (experimental/descriptive): 4 articles.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach involving several stages: 1. Data extraction: Important information from each article (author, year, method, findings) was summarized in a data extraction matrix. 2. Open coding: Key findings related to principal strategies were coded into initial categories. 3. Axial coding: Codes were grouped into broader themes based on similarities and relationships. 4. Theme development: Major themes were identified, such as managerial strategies, leadership approaches, motivation and discipline, and academic supervision. 5. Synthesis and interpretation: Findings were synthesized narratively to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across studies. The analysis process was conducted manually using a systematic matrix table to ensure consistency and traceability of findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on a review of 20 research articles, several main themes emerged that describe principals' management strategies for improving teacher performance. First, principals carry out managerial functions through program planning, task organization, supervision, and teacher performance evaluation. Second, democratic and participatory leadership styles have been shown to increase teacher motivation, responsibility, and involvement in school decision-making. Third, academic supervision is carried out in a planned manner through classroom observation, coaching, feedback, and assistance in improving learning tools, thereby enhancing teachers' professional competence. Fourth, providing motivation, rewards, and disciplinary guidance influences the improvement of teachers' commitment, discipline, and work ethic. Fifth, teacher professional development is carried out through training, workshops, seminars, in-house training, and teacher working groups (KKG/MGMP), which have an impact on improving pedagogical skills and learning performance. In addition, it was found that the success of the principal's strategy was influenced by supporting factors such as a conducive work climate, infrastructure support, and effective communication, while obstacles included time constraints, workload, low teacher participation, and resistance to change.

Table 1. Synthesis of Principal Management Strategies Based on Empirical

No.	Author and Year	Title	Results
1.	(Alhabsyi et al., 2022)	The Role of School Principals	The principal plays a role in improving teacher performance as

		Improving Teacher Performance	an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator.
2.	(Ali & Susilawati, 2025)	Principal Leadership Style on Teacher Performance in Elementary School Environment	The principal's leadership style strategy, which encourages teacher involvement in decision-making, creates a positive work environment, thereby enhancing teacher professionalism.
3.	(Alwi & Mumtahana, 2023)	The Principal's Strategy in Improving The Quality of Teacher Performance in The Learning Process in Islamic Elementary Schools	The principal's strategy is highly influential and necessary in improving teacher performance in the learning process through coaching, supervision, motivation, and oversight.
4.	(Fitri et al., 2024)	Literature Study: School Principal Leadership Management in Improving Teacher Performance	School principals' leadership applies an instructive (telling) leadership style, a consultative (selling) leadership style, and a delegative (delegating) leadership style.
5.	(Fitriani et al., 2025)	Principal Management Strategies to Enhance Teachers' Pedagogic Competence in Implementing Differentiated	The principal uses planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. They establish comprehensive planning steps in the Annual Activity Plan (RKT) and set clear standards and indicators of success.
6.	(Istikomah, 2018)	Principal Leadership Strategies in Improving Teacher Performance	Through disciplinary coaching, motivation, and rewards, the principal influences the improvement of teacher performance.
7.	(Marce et al., 2020)	Principal Leadership Management as Administrators in Improving Teacher Competence	The principal improves teacher performance through policy formulation, work arrangements, and supervision.
8.	(Mayasari, 2021)	Principal Leadership In Improving Teacher Performance: Systematic Literature Review	The principal's leadership applies a democratic leadership style and methods of discipline, motivation, work guidance/development, rewards, control and supervision of teacher performance, and leadership.
9.	(Muflikha & Haryanto, 2019)	Principal Leadership Management Strategies in	The principal engages in listening; clarifying; encouraging; presenting; problem solving; negotiating;

		Improving the Quality of Educators and Education Personnel Performance	demonstrating; standardizing; and reinforcement.	directing; and providing
10.	(Puspitasari et al., 2022)	Principal Leadership Styles in Improving Teacher Performance	The principal uses an authoritarian leadership style and a democratic leadership style.	
11.	(Rostini et al., 2022)	The Significance of Principal Management on Teacher Performance and Quality of Learning	The principal plans teacher performance coaching programs, creates performance coaching methods and forms, allocates time for performance coaching, conducts performance coaching, including providing performance guidance, and conducts classroom visits.	
12.	(Sasmita & Prastini, 2023)	The Role of Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance	The principal has a democratic, straightforward, and open leadership style, sets aside time to communicate with the school community, is disciplined, holds meetings with the school community, guides teachers and helps them solve problems they face, directs teachers and provides training to them, and conducts classroom visits.	
13.	(Wicoksono et al., 2022)	The Managerial Leadership of Principal in Improving The Teachers' Performances	The principal has programs that include school learning planning, teacher supervision, collaboration, work meetings, and workshops.	
14.	(Sugiyanto et al., 2025)	The Role of Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teachers' Performance To Build 21st Century Student Character In Elementary School	The principal's leadership improves leadership capacity and creates a positive organizational climate.	
15.	(Hayati et al., 2023)	Leadership of The School Principle in Improving Teacher Performance In Elementary Schools	The principal provides broad academic supervision, develops a productive school culture, and gives performance-based rewards. In addition, the principal has resources that help instructors in their teaching.	
16.	(Setiawati et al., 2024)	The Role of Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance	School leadership provides motivation, guidance, discipline, maintains a neat appearance, offers consultation, gives rewards, conducts classroom visits,	

			exemplifies attitudes, sets exemplary behavior, encourages active, creative, cohesive work, and develops the teaching profession.
17.	(Prasetyono et al., 2023)	Principal Strategies in Improving Teacher Performance in Public Elementary Schools	The principal provides discipline and role model training that is incorporated into planning activities, conducts seminars and training, collaborates with other educational institutions, brings in experts, conducts regular academic supervision, and provides adequate facilities and infrastructure.
18.	(Hasriani et al., 2023)	The Role of Principal Management in Improving Teacher Performance	The principal creates a supportive environment, provides relevant training and constructive feedback, and makes significant contributions.
19.	(Susana et al., 2025)	Principal's Managerial Strategy in Strengthening Teacher Performance at Elementary School	The principal does this through training programs, regular supervision, open dialogue, and teacher involvement in decision-making.
20.	(Suryadhiningrat et al., 2022)	Analysis of Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance (Case Study of Muhammadiyah Priangan Elementary School in Bandung City)	The principal's leadership style is participatory and family-oriented, combined with better monitoring of teacher performance.

A systematic review of 20 empirical studies indicates that principals' managerial and leadership strategies significantly influence teacher performance. However, beyond confirming this general relationship, a deeper analysis reveals variations, inconsistencies, and contextual dependencies that were not fully explored in the initial descriptive discussion.

Comparative Analysis Across Studies

Although most studies agree that planning, organizing, supervising, and evaluating are central to improving teacher performance, the emphasis and effectiveness of these functions vary across contexts. For example, studies by Hasriani et al. (2023) and Susana et al. (2025) highlight structured planning and supervision as dominant factors, while Prasetyono et al. (2023) and Wicoksono et al. (2022) emphasize professional development programs such as training and workshops as more impactful.

This divergence suggests that: In structured institutional settings, formal managerial functions (planning, evaluation) are more influential. In dynamic or developing school environments, capacity-building strategies (training, collaboration) play a greater role. Thus, teacher performance improvement is not driven by a single dominant strategy, but rather by the alignment between leadership practices and school context.

Contradictions in Leadership Styles

Another critical finding is the inconsistency in leadership style effectiveness. While many studies (e.g., Setiawati et al., 2024; Suryadhiningrat et al., 2022) conclude that democratic and participatory leadership** enhances teacher motivation and engagement, other studies (e.g., Puspitasari et al., 2022) report that authoritarian leadership, when combined with clear structure and control, can also improve teacher performance.

This contradiction indicates that: Democratic leadership fosters intrinsic motivation, collaboration, and innovation. Authoritarian leadership may improve discipline, efficiency, and short-term performance outcomes. Therefore, leadership effectiveness appears to be situational rather than universal, supporting contingency leadership perspectives. The principal's ability to adapt leadership style to specific institutional needs becomes more important than adhering to a single style.

Critical Examination of Supervision and Motivation

Most studies emphasize academic supervision and motivation as key strategies. However, a critical examination shows differences in how these are implemented and their outcomes. Some studies (e.g., Rostini et al., 2022) describe supervision as structured coaching with measurable outcomes. Others (e.g., Muflikha & Haryanto, 2019) frame supervision as interpersonal processes (listening, negotiating, reinforcing). This suggests two models of supervision: 1. Technical-supervisory model, focuses on evaluation and performance standards. 2. Relational-supervisory model, focuses on communication and teacher support. Similarly, motivation strategies vary: Extrinsic (rewards, incentives, discipline), Intrinsic (recognition, involvement, professional growth). The findings imply that over-reliance on one approach may limit effectiveness, and a balanced integration is required.

Contextual Constraints and Their Implications

Several studies identify constraints such as limited resources, time constraints, and resistance to change (Hayati et al., 2023; Susana et al., 2025). However, these are not merely external barriers, they also mediate the effectiveness of leadership strategies. For instance: Strong leadership may fail without adequate infrastructure. And, Teacher participation may decline in rigid organizational cultures. This highlights that teacher performance is not solely a function of leadership, but also of organizational readiness and systemic support.

Proposed Conceptual Model

Based on the synthesis and critical analysis, this study proposes a conceptual model of principal management strategies in improving teacher performance: $\text{Teacher Performance Improvement} = f(\text{Managerial Functions} + \text{Leadership Style Adaptability} + \text{Professional Development} + \text{Contextual Moderators})$. Where: Managerial Functions: Planning, organizing, supervising, evaluating. Leadership Style Adaptability: Ability to shift between democratic and directive approaches. Professional Development: Training, workshops, collaborative learning. Contextual Moderators: School climate, resources, teacher readiness, resistance to change. This model emphasizes that no single factor operates independently. Instead, effectiveness emerges from the interaction between leadership practices and contextual conditions.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, these findings extend existing leadership models by demonstrating that hybrid and adaptive leadership approaches are more effective than fixed styles. Practically, principals should: Adjust leadership strategies based on school conditions. Balance supervision between evaluation and support. Integrate motivation strategies (intrinsic and extrinsic). Strengthen teacher professional development continuously

Summary of Critical Insights

In contrast to a purely descriptive interpretation, this review demonstrates that: 1. There is no universal best strategy effectiveness is context-dependent. 2. Leadership styles show contradictory but complementary roles. 3. Supervision and motivation must be integrated and balanced. 4. Contextual factors act as moderators, not just obstacles. 5. A holistic and adaptive model better explains teacher performance improvement.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm that principals' management and leadership strategies play a significant role in improving teacher performance. However, this influence is context-dependent and multifaceted, rather than determined by a single dominant approach. While core managerial functions such as planning, organizing, supervising, and evaluating remain essential, their effectiveness varies depending on how they are aligned with school conditions and teacher needs. The findings reveal that professional development initiatives (e.g., training, workshops, and collaborative activities) and academic supervision contribute substantially to improving teacher competence. At the same time, leadership styles demonstrate both complementary and contradictory effects. Democratic and participatory leadership tend to enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, commitment, and engagement, whereas more directive or structured approaches can strengthen discipline and short-term performance outcomes. This indicates that adaptive and flexible leadership, rather than a fixed style, is more effective in practice. Furthermore, the study highlights that teacher performance improvement is influenced by the interaction between leadership strategies and contextual factors. Supportive elements such as a positive school climate, effective communication, and adequate infrastructure strengthen the implementation of leadership practices. In contrast, constraints such as limited time, resistance to change, and low teacher participation act as moderating factors that can reduce their effectiveness. Based on these findings, this study proposes that improving teacher performance requires an integrative approach, combining managerial functions, adaptive leadership styles, continuous professional development, and supportive organizational conditions. Therefore, school principals are recommended not only to strengthen their managerial and leadership capacities but also to develop context-sensitive and flexible strategies that respond to the specific needs and challenges of their schools.

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