Principal Leadership Practices in Strengthening Teacher Professionalism: Evidence from Primary Schools in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia

Buchari[1]*, Siraj[2], Cut Khairani[3]
Universitas Almuslim, Bireuen, Aceh, Indonesia[1,3]
Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia[2]
bucharispd82@gmail.com[1]*, siraj@unimal.ac.id[2], cut.fisip13@gmail.com[3]

Abstract: This study examines how principal leadership practices strengthen teacher professionalism within the *Guru Penggerak* program in primary schools in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Using a qualitative multi-case study design, data were collected from four schools through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. Findings show that principals enact integrated leadership practices strategic, instructional, transformational, and distributed to support teachers' pedagogical, personal, social, and professional development. Strategic planning aligned professional development with school needs, while organizational structuring positioned Teacher Leaders as facilitators, mentors, and change agents. Instructional and transformational leadership practices, including coaching, supervision, and motivational support, contributed substantially to collaborative professionalism. Despite challenges such as limited infrastructure, teacher resistance, and administrative burdens, principals applied adaptive strategies such as flexible scheduling, simplified administration, and individualized mentoring. The study concludes that effective leadership is essential for cultivating extended professionalism among Teacher Leaders and provides actionable insights for strengthening the implementation of Indonesia's educational reforms.
Keywords: principal leadership; teacher professionalism; guru penggerak; instructional leadership

Praktik Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Penguatan Profesionalisme Guru: Bukti dari Sekolah Dasar di Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana praktik kepemimpinan kepala sekolah memperkuat profesionalisme guru dalam program Guru Penggerak di sekolah dasar Kabupaten Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain studi multi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari empat sekolah melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah menerapkan praktik kepemimpinan yang terintegrasi strategis, instruksional, transformasional, dan distributive untuk mendukung pengembangan kompetensi pedagogik, kepribadian, sosial, dan profesional guru. Perencanaan strategis mengarahkan program pengembangan profesional agar selaras dengan kebutuhan sekolah, sementara pengelolaan organisasi menempatkan Guru Penggerak sebagai fasilitator, mentor, dan agen perubahan. Praktik kepemimpinan instruksional dan transformasional, termasuk coaching, supervisi, serta dukungan motivasional, berkontribusi kuat terhadap tumbuhnya profesionalisme kolaboratif. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur, resistensi guru, dan beban administrasi, kepala sekolah menerapkan strategi adaptif seperti penjadwalan fleksibel, penyederhanaan administrasi, dan pendampingan individual. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang efektif sangat penting untuk menumbuhkan profesionalisme guru secara berkelanjutan serta memberikan wawasan praktis bagi penguatan implementasi reformasi pendidikan di Indonesia.*
Kata kunci: *kepemimpinan kepala sekolah; profesionalisme guru; guru penggerak; kepemimpinan instruksional.*

1. Introduction

School leadership remains one of the most critical factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning across educational systems worldwide (Mincu, 2022; Bellibaş *et al*., 2021; Pont, 2020). Over the past two decades, research has increasingly demonstrated that effective principals shape school climate, establish shared instructional expectations, and cultivate collaborative teacher cultures that directly enhance student learning (Moh. Tasirun *et al*., 2025; Indriyanti et al., 2024; Lijun & Te, 2024). In contemporary reform movements, the role of the principal extends beyond managerial coordination to include instructional guidance, strategic direction, and nurturing teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism, encompassing pedagogical mastery, reflective practice, ethical conduct, and continuous capacity building, has become a cornerstone for schools seeking to improve learning outcomes and adapt to rapid educational changes (Hapsara *et al*., 2025; Hussein, 2025; Muksalmina *et al*., 2024; Nugroho, 2024). This global emphasis resonates strongly in Indonesia's current educational transformation under the Merdeka Belajar policy.

Within this reform movement, one of Indonesia's flagship initiatives is the *Guru Penggerak* program, designed to develop teachers who can lead pedagogical innovation, strengthen collaborative learning communities, and serve as agents of change in their schools (Junawati *et al*., 2025; Nurfadillah & Mustika, 2024; Sutanto, 2024). Teacher Leaders are expected not only to excel in classroom instruction but also to model exemplary professional behavior, mentor peers, and initiate school-based improvements (Awoyemi et al., 2024; Ghamrawi et al., 2024; Istiarsyah, Maisura, et al., 2024).

However, evidence suggests that these expectations can only be realized when school leaders provide supportive structures, vision, and professional learning opportunities (Yunus *et al*., 2025; Meglona Hutabarat *et al*., 2024; Lillejord & Børte, 2020). In other words, the success of the *Guru Penggerak* program is deeply intertwined with the leadership capacity of school principals. Without coherent leadership, even professionally trained Teacher Leaders struggle to enact their roles, especially in resource-limited or rural contexts.

International scholarship has long highlighted the significance of principal leadership models. Transformational leadership encourages principals to inspire, motivate, and empower teachers by articulating a clear vision and fostering professional commitment (Ermita & Baysa, 2025; Yakob *et al*., 2025; Kamarullah *et al*., 2024). Instructional leadership emphasizes the principal's role in guiding teaching and learning processes through supervision, feedback, and pedagogical support (He *et al*., 2024; Istiarsyah *et al*., 2025; Shaked, 2025; Thessin, 2019). Distributed leadership underscores collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility among school stakeholders (Istiarsyah, *et al*., 2024; Nadeem, 2024; Shal *et al*., 2024; Liu & Watson, 2023). Collectively, these models suggest that strengthening teacher professionalism requires leadership that is relational, reflective, and strategically aligned with teacher growth. Yet, despite the richness of this literature, relatively few studies have explored how these leadership frameworks are enacted within Indonesia's Guru Penggerak program, especially in primary schools where teacher leadership structures are still developing.

Research on leadership and professional development in Indonesia often focuses on general teacher performance, certification programs, or school accreditation, leaving a gap concerning the specific mechanisms through which principals nurture the professionalism of Teacher Leaders (Judijanto *et al*., 2025; Abidin et al., 2024; Elfira *et al*., 2024; Surbakti & Siti Aisyah, 2024). Many existing studies examine leadership from a conceptual standpoint or concentrate on administrative compliance, rather than exploring the relational and instructional dimensions of leadership that directly shape teacher growth (Karim *et al*., 2025; Siagian *et al*., 2025; Lumban Gaol, 2023).

Moreover, most empirical investigations are situated in urban or well-resourced environments and therefore overlook rural districts such as Aceh Tamiang, where contextual constraints including limited digital infrastructure, traditional pedagogical norms, and uneven teacher readiness may significantly influence how leadership practices are enacted. These gaps highlight the need for localized, school-based research that reveals how principals actually strengthen teacher professionalism, what specific strategies they apply, and how contextual realities mediate their leadership practices.

This study seeks to address these gaps by offering an in-depth exploration of principal leadership practices across four primary schools in Aceh Tamiang. Previous studies have examined the relationship between principal leadership and teacher professionalism, such as the work of Ghamrawi *et al*. (2024), which highlighted the role of instructional leadership in enhancing

teachers' collaborative practices, and Yunus *et al*. (2025), who found that transformational leadership significantly influences teachers' professional commitment and motivation. However, these studies were largely conducted in urban or well-resourced contexts and did not specifically examine the Guru Penggerak program or primary schools in rural districts.

Its novelty lies in examining leadership not as a single model but as an integrated practice that blends managerial, supervisory, instructional, and transformational dimensions tailored to the professional development needs of Teacher Leaders. Unlike previous research that isolates leadership functions or treats teacher professionalism superficially, this study investigates how principals strategically use coaching, peer mentoring, collaborative learning communities, and data-driven planning to foster what Hoyle (1982) terms "extended professionalism." This form of professionalism goes beyond classroom competence to include reflective inquiry, innovation, and active engagement in school improvement initiatives. The distinctive contribution of this study is its multi-case qualitative design, which captures cross-school variations in leadership practices and reveals how contextual factors such as limited infrastructure, administrative workload, and teacher mindset shape leadership enactment in rural primary schools. The study also reveals contextual constraints such as administrative workload, technological limitations, and teacher mindset challenges, as well as the adaptive solutions designed by principals to sustain ongoing professional growth. These insights offer a nuanced understanding of how leadership unfolds in diverse and resource-constrained school settings.

This investigation is particularly urgent because the long-term success of the Guru Penggerak program is highly dependent on leadership quality at the school level. Without structured guidance, supportive professional environments, and meaningful collaborative opportunities, Teacher Leaders may not fully realize their potential as catalysts for pedagogical transformation. Conversely, when principals enact strong and coherent leadership practices, they amplify the impact of Teacher Leaders and contribute to sustainable improvements across the school community. Understanding these dynamics is therefore crucial for educational policymakers, district authorities, and school leaders seeking to strengthen reform implementation and professional development systems.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how principal leadership practices strengthen teacher professionalism within the Guru Penggerak initiative in primary schools in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Through a qualitative multi-case inquiry, it seeks to describe the leadership strategies employed, identify the competencies developed, and examine contextual challenges and adaptive solutions. By focusing on an under-researched rural Indonesian context and integrating multiple leadership dimensions within the Guru Penggerak framework, this study offers both theoretical enrichment for leadership and professionalism literature and practical guidance for principals and policymakers seeking to strengthen school-based professional learning. However, this study is limited by its focus on a small number of primary schools within a single district and relies on qualitative data, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Despite these limitations, the in-depth insights generated provide valuable understanding of leadership practices in resource-constrained settings.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative multi-case study design to explore how principal leadership practices strengthen teacher professionalism within the *Guru Penggerak* program in primary schools. The research was conducted from January 2025 to September 2025 in four elementary schools in Aceh Tamiang Regency. A qualitative approach was selected because the research sought to understand the meanings, processes, and contextual nuances of leadership practices as experienced by principals and Teacher Leaders in their natural environments. The multi-case design allowed the researcher to examine variations across four different schools and to identify cross-case patterns, providing a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted in four public primary schools located in Aceh Tamiang District, Indonesia. These schools were chosen through purposive sampling based on two main criteria, (1) each school had at least one active *Guru Penggerak*, and (2) the school principal had been involved in implementing professional development aligned with Merdeka Belajar.

Participants

Participants included four school principals and four Teacher Leaders (one from each school). Principals were selected as primary informants because the research focused on leadership

practices, while Teacher Leaders were included to triangulate data and provide insight into the influence of principal leadership on their professionalism (see Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of Research Sites and Participants

No	School Code	Location Type	Principal Experience	Number of Teacher Leaders	Reason for Selection
1.	SD-A	Rural	>10 years	1	Active GP program, strong PD culture
2.	SD-B	Sub-urban	7-10 years	1	Demonstrated instructional initiatives
3.	SD-C	Rural	>15 years	1	Limited digital access, strong relevance to context
4.	SD-D	Urban Fringe	5-7 years	1	Active teacher collaboration programs

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three complementary qualitative techniques, in-depth interviews, structured observations, and document analysis (see Table 2). These techniques were selected to enable a rich, triangulated understanding of how principal leadership practices support the professionalism of Teacher Leaders.

Table 2. Data Collection Techniques and Their Purposes

Data Collection Technique	Description	Purpose	Data Produced
In-Depth Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with four principals and four Teacher Leaders using a 10-item interview protocol. Duration: 45–75 minutes each.	To explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and detailed accounts of leadership practices and teacher professionalism.	Verbatim transcripts, narratives, quotations, conceptual insights.
Structured Observations	Observations conducted using an observation sheet focusing on leadership behaviors, supervision routines, PLC activities, and school-based professional development.	To capture leadership practices as they naturally occur in school settings and validate consistency with interview data.	Field notes, behavioral logs, descriptive accounts.
Document Analysis	Review of RKS, PD programs, supervision forms, PLC records, teacher outputs, reflective journals, and IHT documentation.	To enrich and verify field data, understand school structures, and identify historical patterns of leadership and professionalism.	Document excerpts, artifacts, coded records, institutional evidence.

Instruments

To ensure that data collection was systematic, consistent, and aligned with the research objectives, this study employed a set of structured qualitative research instruments developed from the conceptual framework of principal leadership and teacher professionalism. These instruments were designed to guide the researcher in exploring leadership practices comprehensively across the four case study sites.

Each instrument served a distinct yet complementary function facilitating the collection of in-depth verbal accounts, capturing observable leadership behaviors, and validating findings through institutional documentation. Together, these instruments strengthened methodological rigor and supported triangulation across interviews, observations, and school documents (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of Research Instruments

Instrument	Purpose	Key Indicators Covered
Interview Guide	Explore leadership perceptions & practices	Planning, organizing, supervision, motivation, professional development
Observation Sheet	Capture leadership in action	Coaching, PLC facilitation, supervision, collaborative dynamics
Document Checklist	Validate and enrich field data	RKS alignment, GP activities, PD records, teacher outputs

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed the Miles and Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of three iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Asipi *et al*., 2022)(see Table. 4). These stages were applied continuously to ensure that findings remained grounded in evidence. Throughout the process, the researcher moved fluidly between reduction, display, and verification. Initial codes were refined into themes, displayed in comparative formats, and validated through triangulation to ensure that the final findings were credible and firmly supported by the data.

Table 4. Integrated Data Analysis Procedures

No.	Stage	Description	Purpose	Examples of Actions
1.	Data Reduction	Selecting and simplifying raw data from interviews, observations, and documents through coding and categorization.	Focus data on essential themes and eliminate irrelevant information.	Actions included coding interview transcripts, grouping similar codes into categories, and identifying patterns that developed into preliminary themes.
2.	Data Display	Organizing reduced data into visual or structured formats for interpretation.	Help recognize patterns, relationships, and variations across cases.	Actions involved creating matrices, preparing thematic summaries, and mapping connections between leadership practices and teacher professionalism.
3.	Conclusion Drawing & Verification	Interpreting patterns and validating emerging themes through triangulation.	Ensure conclusions are accurate, consistent, and grounded in evidence.	Actions included comparing findings across data sources, conducting member checking, and confirming cross-case insights before finalizing conclusions.

3. Result and Discussion

This section integrates the study's findings with scholarly literature to provide a deeper understanding of how principal leadership practices strengthen teacher professionalism in primary schools implementing the *Guru Penggerak* program. Evidence from interviews, observations, and documents is synthesized within each theme.

Strategies Strategic Leadership in Planning Professional Development

Across all four schools, principals played a central role in designing and directing professional development aligned with teachers' needs and school goals. Planning was data-driven and grounded in supervision results, informal classroom walkthroughs, and reflections from Teacher Leaders. One principal stated:

"*When planning the school program, I always start from the teachers' needs. Whatever aspects are still weak, that is where we focus our training or mentoring.*"

(Principal, School A)

Observation data showed that annual professional development calendars were publicly displayed, lesson-study cycles were scheduled consistently, and Teacher Leaders were formally appointed as facilitators. Document analysis confirmed that PD plans were explicitly integrated into the School Work Plan (RKS), reflecting deliberate and systematic leadership.

These findings demonstrate the principals' exercise of strategic instructional leadership, consistent with the literature emphasizing the principal's role in shaping learning-focused school cultures (Moh. Tasirun *et al*., 2025; Indriyanti *et al*., 2024; Lijun & Te, 2024). Strategic planning is highlighted as a critical determinant of school effectiveness (Mincu, 2022; Bellibaş *et al*., 2021), and this study confirms that effective principals go beyond routine administrative tasks to articulate clear direction for teacher learning. The integration of PD into the RKS reflects the alignment between leadership intent and school-wide instructional priorities, a hallmark of effective instructional leadership.

Moreover, by using data to drive PD decisions, principals illustrated adaptive decision-making aligned with modern educational reforms under Merdeka Belajar. This reinforces the argument that school leaders must be proactive, evidence-informed, and responsive to teacher capacities when designing learning interventions (Pont, 2020). The findings also show that principals served as "architects" of professional development, ensuring structure, continuity, and coherence conditions widely recognized as essential for sustaining teacher professionalism.

Organizational Management and the Positioning of Teacher Leaders

Principals actively positioned *Guru Penggerak* teachers as instructional leaders and internal change agents. Teacher Leaders were given significant responsibilities, such as coordinating literacy programs, facilitating PLCs, mentoring peers, and supporting curriculum development. One Teacher Leader shared:

"The principal entrusted me with the role of literacy coordinator. I facilitate other teachers to design assessments and prepare teaching modules."
(Teacher Leader, School B).

Observations documented Teacher Leaders conducting internal workshops, guiding colleagues during lesson-study discussions, and assisting principals in supervisory tasks. School documents, including PLC minutes and PD portfolios, confirmed their active leadership roles.

These findings strongly illustrate the enactment of distributed leadership an approach that conceptualizes leadership as a shared and collaborative process rather than a position limited to the principal (Nadeem, 2024; Shal *et al.*, 2024; Liu & Watson, 2023). By strategically positioning Teacher Leaders, principals created leadership capacity within the school, thereby enhancing the relational and professional culture.

This is consistent with research showing that teacher leadership flourishes when principals cultivate enabling conditions such as trust, autonomy, and structured opportunities to lead (Awoyemi *et al.*, 2024; Ghamrawi *et al.*, 2024). By delegating authority and empowering Teacher Leaders, principals demonstrated not only managerial competence but also a broader vision for professional growth one where leadership becomes a collective endeavor.

This approach aligns with Merdeka Belajar's core philosophy: increased teacher agency, collaborative professionalism, and school-based innovation. The study provides empirical evidence that Indonesian primary schools can successfully operationalize distributed leadership when principals intentionally structure organizational roles to support it.

Instructional and Transformational Leadership Practices

Instructional leadership behaviors were highly prominent in all four cases. Principals conducted classroom observations, reviewed lesson plans, provided feedback, and ensured alignment between instruction and competency-based curriculum standards. One principal explained:

"I do not conduct supervision merely for compliance. I observe how teachers teach, then I discuss with them how the lesson could be improved."

(Principal, School C)

Transformational leadership behaviors were also evident. Teachers described their principals as supportive and motivational:

"Our principal always encourages us, especially when teachers feel unsure about trying something new."

(Teacher Leader, School D)

Observations confirmed that principals maintained open-door communication, acknowledged teachers' efforts, and modeled professionalism in daily interactions.

These findings reinforce theoretical perspectives that strong instructional leadership is central to improving teaching quality (Shaked, 2025; He *et al.*, 2024; Thessin, 2019). By focusing on classroom practice and engaging in reflective dialogue, principals supported teachers' pedagogical development and deepened their professional knowledge.

Equally important is the transformational dimension, where principals inspired teachers to innovate, embrace change, and commit to school improvement. This aligns with Ermita & Baysa (2025) and Yakob *et al.* (2025), who note that transformational behaviors such as emotional support, vision-sharing, and individualized encouragement enhance teacher motivation and self-efficacy.

The combination of instructional and transformational leadership creates a powerful synergy: structured guidance coupled with relational support. This duality is crucial for fostering the multidimensional professionalism described by Hussein (2025) and Nugroho (2024), where teachers are not merely skilled

practitioners but reflective, collaborative, and values-driven professionals.

Strengthening the Four Domains of Teacher Professionalism

The study found that principals contributed significantly to teachers' development across the four domains of professionalism: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional. Teachers reported increased confidence, improved instructional strategies, and better collaboration with peers. One Teacher Leader reflected:

"After receiving consistent coaching, I feel much more confident implementing differentiated instruction in my class."

(Teacher Leader, School A)

Document analysis confirmed improved instructional documentation, reflective journals, and enhanced evidence of assessment literacy. These findings affirm Hoyle (1982) concept of *extended professionalism*, which encompasses not only technical competence but reflective inquiry, moral commitment, and ongoing innovation. Principals in this study facilitated this expansion by providing structured opportunities for learning, reflection, and collaboration.

The results also address gaps in Indonesian research identified by Abidin *et al.* (2024), Elfira *et al.* (2024), and Surbakti & Siti Aisyah (2024), who argue that studies have not sufficiently demonstrated how principals directly support Teacher Leaders' growth. Here, the evidence clearly shows that principals played an active mentoring role, co-constructing environments that allowed Teacher Leaders to evolve into mentors, facilitators, and instructional resources within their schools.

Contextual Constraints and Principals' Adaptive Strategies

Leadership practices were shaped by contextual realities such as limited digital infrastructure, heavy administrative loads, and resistance to change among some teachers. Principals responded with adaptive strategies, including flexible PLC schedules, simplified administrative processes, and personalized mentoring. As one principal stated:

"Not all teachers are ready to change. So I mentor them individually; slowly they begin to try new approaches."

(Principal, School D)

These adaptive responses echo Dang et al., (2025) argument that effective leadership is context-responsive, especially in resource-constrained environments. Principals employed transformational and distributed strategies to navigate systemic challenges demonstrating flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving.

Their adaptive strategies also highlight an important contribution: leadership in rural Indonesian schools requires a nuanced understanding of context, culture, and teacher readiness. This study adds to the literature by showing that strong leadership is not merely the application of generic "best practices" but the thoughtful adaptation of those practices to local realities.

Overal, the integrated results and discussion demonstrate that principal leadership in Aceh Tamiang is deeply intertwined with teacher professionalism. Strategic planning, purposeful delegation, instructional coaching, transformational support, and adaptive problem-solving collectively strengthen the professionalism of Teacher Leaders. These findings resonate with international scholarship while offering localized insights into how Indonesian principals operationalize leadership in varied contexts.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study examined how principal leadership practices strengthen teacher professionalism within the *Guru Penggerak* program in four primary schools in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. The findings confirm that principal leadership is a decisive factor in shaping professional learning environments, empowering Teacher Leaders, and supporting the realization of Merdeka Belajar reforms. Across all cases, principals demonstrated a blend of strategic, instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership practices that contributed meaningfully to the development of teachers' pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies.

Strategic leadership was evident in data-driven planning processes that aligned professional development programs with school needs. Organizational structuring enabled Teacher Leaders to take on important roles as facilitators, mentors, and innovators. Instructional and transformational leadership practices including supervision, coaching, motivation, and modeling of professional behaviorsproved essential in fostering reflective inquiry, collaborative learning, and teacher autonomy. Importantly, principals' adaptive responses to contextual constraints such as limited infrastructure, teacher resistance, and administrative workload ensured that

professional development remained continuous and meaningful.

Overall, the study concludes that effective principal leadership is critical for cultivating extended professionalism among Teacher Leaders. The combination of structured guidance, empowerment, relational support, and contextual adaptation enables Teacher Leaders to become catalysts for instructional improvement within their schools. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on leadership for teacher professionalism, particularly within the context of educational transformation in Indonesia.

References

Abidin, J., Hilmiyati, F., & Zohriah, A. (2024). Unravelling the Dynamics of Madrasah Principal Performance and Teacher Quality: A Literature Review. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, *10*(01), 89–102. https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v10i01.9337

Asipi, L. S., Rosalina, U., & Nopiyadi, D. (2022). The Analysis of Reading Habits Using Miles and Huberman Interactive Model to Empower Students' Literacy at IPB Cirebon. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, *2*(3), 117–125. https://doi.org/10.58557/ijeh.v2i3.98

Awoyemi, O., Atobatele, F. A., & Okonkwo, C. A. (2024). Enhancing High School Educational Leadership through Mentorship: A Data-Driven Approach to Student Success. *Journal of Frontiers in Multidisciplinary Research*, *5*(1), 168–175. https://doi.org/10.54660/.IJFMR.2024.5.1.168-175

Bellibaş, M. Ş., Gümüş, S., & Liu, Y. (2021). Does school leadership matter for teachers' classroom practice? The influence of instructional leadership and distributed leadership on instructional quality. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *32*(3), 387–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2020.1858119

Dang, C., Le, K.-M. A., & Nguyen, C. (2025). Context-responsive leadership in Vietnam: supporting students' postsecondary education and career opportunities. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2025.2572729

Elfira, Rasdiana, Fitrawati, Jasman, M. W., Reski,

K., Anwar, A., & Enaldi. (2024). How does principal's instructional leadership shape teacher performance mediated by teacher self-efficacy in Indonesian education context? *Frontiers in Education*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1401394

Ermita, L., & Baysa, M. L. (2025). Transformational Leadership Practices of School Heads: Teachers' Motivation and School Performance. *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan*, *3*(3), 178–202. https://doi.org/10.60132/jip.v3i3.499

Ghamrawi, N., Shal, T., & Ghamrawi, N. A. R. (2024). Cultivating teacher leadership: evidence form a transformative professional development model. *School Leadership & Management*, *44*(4), 413–441. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2024.2328056

Hapsara, A. S., Adams, C., Lubi, M. V. T., Nguyen, N. T.-C., Muti'ah, S., Visal, T., Liew, F. B., Hayeekhade, A.-A., Xaiyalath, C., & Nakashima, Y. (2025). Advancing Sustainable Development Goals through Character Education and Social Studies in Japanese Schools. *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, *10*(1), 735–745. https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i1.1736

He, P., Guo, F., & Abazie, G. A. (2024). School principals' instructional leadership as a predictor of teacher's professional development. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *9*(1), 63. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-024-00290-0

Hoyle, E. (1982). The professionalization of teachers: A paradox. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *30*(2), 161–171. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.1982.9973622

Hussein, H. (2025). A Proposed Model for Teacher Education: Rethinking the Future of the Next Generation. *International Journal of Research in Educational Sciences*, *8*(2), 41–78. https://doi.org/10.29009/ijres.8.2.1

Indriyanti, L., Metta Caroline Setiadi, Ni Wayan Setiyawati Astin Bakti, Ahmad Suriansyah, & Celia Cinantya. (2024). Pentingnya Peran Kepala Sekolah dan Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Siswa di Sekolah Dasar. *Journal Educational Research and Development*, *1*(2), 273–283. https://doi.org/10.62379/jerd.v1i2.149

Istiarsyah, I., Garnida, D., Kamarullah, K.,

Setiawan, R., Sabaruddin, S., & Santoso, Y. B. (2024). Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru Penyelenggara Pendidikan Inklusif Melalui Bimbingan Teknis Pemenuhan Guru Pembimbing Khusus. *Sasambo: Jurnal Abdimas (Journal of Community Service)*, *6*(1), 60–74. https://doi.org/10.36312/sasambo.v6i1.1794

Istiarsyah, I., Maisura, M., Nurhabibah, N., Kumita, K., & Kamarullah, K. (2024). Transforming Teacher Competence through ChatGPT: Designing Innovative and Effective Lesson Modules. *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, *10*(1), 505–513. https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i1.1586

Istiarsyah, I., Ulfa, Z., & Kway, E. H. (2025). Sewing Training for Students with Hearing Disabilities: A Vocational Approach to Enhancing Work Transition Readiness. *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, *10*(2), 1553–1561. https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v10i2.1950

Judijanto, L., Jata, I. W., & Istiarsyah, I. (2025). Evolution of Curriculum Design Approaches in Education Studies. *The Eastasouth Journal of Learning and Educations*, *3*(03), 294–308. https://doi.org/10.58812/esle.v3i03.801

Junawati, J., Rasid, R., & Lilianti, L. (2025). Peran Motivasi Guru Penggerak dalam Pelaksanaan Transformasi Pembelajaran di SMA Kolaka Utara. *Edum Journal*, *8*(1), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.31943/edumjournal.v8i1.305

Kamarullah, K., Istiarsyah, I., Maisura, M., Maulya, R., & Bahri, S. (2024). Analysis on Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM): Does it affect teachers' workload and well-being? *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, *4*(2), 9407–9421. https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i2.14294

Karim, A., Fathurohman, O., Sulaiman, S., Marliani, L., Muhammadun, M., & Firmansyah, B. (2025). How do principals act as leaders and managers in boarding and public schools in Indonesia? *Cogent Education*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2445354

Lijun, W., & Te, H. C. (2024). The Role of Primary School Principals and Administrators in Promoting Student Achievement , Teacher Effectiveness , and a Positive School Culture. *Journal of Roi Kaensarn Academi August*, *9*(8), 727–739.

Lillejord, S., & Børte, K. (2020). Trapped between accountability and professional learning? School leaders and teacher evaluation. *Professional Development in Education*, *46*(2), 274–291. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1585384

Liu, Y., & Watson, S. (2023). Whose leadership role is more substantial for teacher professional collaboration, job satisfaction and organizational commitment: a lens of distributed leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *26*(6), 1082–1110. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1820580

Lumban Gaol, N. T. (2023). School leadership in Indonesia: A systematic literature review. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *51*(4), 831–848. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211010811

Meglona Hutabarat, T. D., Panjaitan, I. S., & Ulfakh Sinaga, H. F. R. (2024). Peran Guru Penggerak Mendukung Peningkatan Pendidikan Indonesia dengan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, *13*(1), 919–932. https://jurnaldidaktika.org/contents/article/view/1410

Mincu, M. (2022). Why is school leadership key to transforming education? Structural and cultural assumptions for quality education in diverse contexts. *PROSPECTS*, *52*(3–4), 231–242. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09625-6

Moh. Tasirun, Sigit Setiyo Budi, Fetty Hermawati, Sonya Diah Paramita, & Nurkolis. (2025). Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah dalam Membangun Budaya Sekolah yang Aman, Nyaman, dan Inklusif. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, *14*(3), 5867–5876. https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.2598

Muksalmina, M., Istiarsyah, I., Kamarullah, K., & Sabaruddin, S. (2024). How Effective is Differentiated Instruction Model for Special Needs Students? Perspectives of Inclusive Teachers. *Proceeding of International Conference on Special Education in South East Asia Region*, *3*(1), 220–231. https://doi.org/10.57142/picsar.v3i1.586

Nadeem, M. (2024). Distributed leadership in educational contexts: A catalyst for school

improvement. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *9*, 100835. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100835

Nugroho, P. (2024). The Impact of Teacher Training and Experience on Performance. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Education*, *3*(3), 101–106. https://doi.org/10.63120/jise.v3i3.46

Nurfadillah, R., & Mustika, D. (2024). Peran guru penggerak dalam pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal EDUCATIO: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, *10*(1), 329. https://doi.org/10.29210/1202424205

Pont, B. (2020). A literature review of school leadership policy reforms. *European Journal of Education*, *55*(2), 154–168. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12398

Shaked, H. (2025). How principals' instructional leadership impacts schools' middle leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *53*(5), 977–990. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432241238888

Shal, T., Ghamrawi, N., Abu-Tineh, A., Al-Shaboul, Y. M., & Sellami, A. (2024). Teacher leadership and virtual communities: Unpacking teacher agency and distributed leadership. *Education and Information Technologies*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-12446-5

Siagian, N., Amin, H., Munawati, S., Syafruddin, & Suprihatin. (2025). School Principal Supervision and Teacher Professionalism: A Study on Leadership in Islamic Schools. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, *6*(2), 223–237. https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i2.1765

Surbakti, A., & Siti Aisyah. (2024). The Impact of Principal Leadership on Teacher Quality and Performance: A Mixed-Methods Study in Deli Serdang Regency. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, *9*(4), 589–600. https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2024.94-02

Sutanto, S. (2024). Transformasi Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar: Peran Guru dalam Mengimplementasikan Kurikulum Merdeka di Indonesia. *Jurnal Guru Sekolah Dasar*, *1*(1), 69–76. https://doi.org/10.70277/jgsd.v1i1.0009

Thessin, R. A. (2019). Establishing productive principal/principal supervisor partnerships for instructional leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *57*(5), 463–483. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-09-2018-0184

Yakob, M., Sahudra, T. M., & Sukirno, S. (2025). Transformational Leadership of Principals: Driving Excellence in Education Quality. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, *17*(1). https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v17i1.6887

Yunus, M. R., Mustafa, M. N., & Marhadi, H. (2025). Peran Penggerak Komunitas Belajar dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pembelajaran Kurikulum Merdeka di SMP. *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, *8*(6), 6620–6625. https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v8i6.8190