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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance on Educational Quality in Junior High Schools (SMP/MTs) in Pematangsawa Subdistrict

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership and teacher performance on educational quality in junior high schools (SMP/MTs) throughout Pematangsawa District, Tanggamus Regency. A quantitative method was employed, with a sample of 54 respondents and multiple linear regression analysis for data analysis. The results of the assumption tests indicated that the data were normally distributed, linear, and free from multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity.

The findings revealed that principal leadership and teacher performance simultaneously had a significant effect on educational quality ($F = 88.913$; $\text{sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$). Partially, principal leadership did not have a significant effect ($t = 1.232$; $\text{sig. } 0.224 > 0.05$), while teacher performance had a positive and significant effect ($t = 6.220$; $\text{sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$). The Adjusted R Square value of 0.768 indicates a contribution of 76.8% from the two variables.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that teacher performance is the dominant factor in improving educational quality, while principal leadership has not yet had a significant direct impact. However, both variables together still contribute significantly to improving educational quality. Therefore, enhancing educational quality needs to focus on strengthening teacher performance supported by effective principal leadership.



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan kinerja guru terhadap mutu pendidikan di SMP/MTs se-Kecamatan Pematangsawa, Kabupaten Tanggamus. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif, dengan sampel sebanyak 54 responden, dan data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda. Hasil uji asumsi menunjukkan bahwa data berdistribusi normal, linear, serta bebas dari multikolinearitas, autokorelasi, dan heteroskedastisitas.

Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan kinerja guru secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap mutu pendidikan ($F = 88,913$; sig. $0,000 < 0,05$). Secara parsial, kepemimpinan kepala sekolah tidak berpengaruh signifikan ($t = 1,232$; sig. $0,224 > 0,05$), sedangkan kinerja guru berpengaruh positif dan signifikan ($t = 6,220$; sig. $0,000 < 0,05$). Nilai Adjusted R Square sebesar $0,768$ menunjukkan kontribusi sebesar $76,8\%$ dari kedua variabel tersebut.

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kinerja guru merupakan faktor dominan dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan, sementara kepemimpinan kepala sekolah belum menunjukkan dampak langsung yang signifikan. Meskipun demikian, kedua variabel secara bersama-sama memberikan kontribusi yang substansial terhadap peningkatan mutu pendidikan. Oleh karena itu, upaya peningkatan mutu pendidikan perlu difokuskan pada penguatan kinerja guru yang didukung oleh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang efektif.

Keywords: *Leadership, Teacher Performance, Educational Quality*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in determining the quality of human resources and the direction of a nation's civilization. In the context of Islamic education, schools serve not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a vehicle for character building, moral values, and the integration of religious teachings with modern developments. Consequently, improving educational quality becomes an essential agenda in producing graduates who are competent, morally upright, and competitive.

However, educational quality in schools still faces various challenges, particularly in institutional management and teacher professionalism. The UNESCO perspective affirms that educational quality is determined not only by curriculum and infrastructure but is also strongly influenced by principal leadership and teacher performance as key actors in the learning process. Thus, strengthening leadership and enhancing teacher performance are critical factors in efforts to improve educational quality.

Principal leadership is a strategic element in directing, managing, and optimizing all educational resources. The principal functions not only as an administrator but also as a visionary leader capable of fostering a quality culture, encouraging innovation, and increasing teacher work

motivation. Several studies have shown that transformational and visionary principal leadership significantly contributes to improving learning quality and educational outcomes (Rahmawati & Lestari, 2021; Prasetyo, 2020; Fitriani & Kurniawan, 2022). On the other hand, teacher performance is a determining factor in the success of the learning process. Professional teachers are expected to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively, as well as guide students in developing knowledge, skills, and character. Previous research indicates that teacher performance has a significant relationship with educational quality and student learning outcomes (Wijaya, 2019; Nela et al., 2021; Sulastri et al., 2020). This confirms that improving educational quality cannot be separated from systematic efforts to enhance teacher performance.

Educational quality itself refers to the institution's ability to manage inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes effectively and efficiently. Quality is measured not only by academic achievement but also by the attainment of the institution's vision and mission, community satisfaction, and the quality of graduates who are competitive and possess strong character. Within this framework, principal leadership and teacher performance are two main variables that interact in creating a conducive and high-quality learning environment (Hidayat & Ibrahim, 2020; Gunawan & Cahyani, 2021; Siskawati et al., 2022).

Although various studies have examined the influence of principal leadership and teacher performance on educational quality, the findings show varied results and remain limited to specific contexts and locations. In particular, studies integrating these two variables at the junior high school level (SMP/MTs) in Pematangsawa Subdistrict, Tanggamus Regency, are still scarce. This condition indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation, especially to obtain contextual empirical evidence in accordance with the characteristics of educational institutions in that area.

Based on the above elaboration, this study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership and teacher performance on educational quality in SMP/MTs in Pematangsawa Subdistrict, Tanggamus Regency. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education management studies, as well as practical contributions for policymakers in formulating strategies for improving educational quality based on real conditions in the field.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This approach aims to analyze the relationship and influence between the independent variables principal leadership (X1) and teacher performance (X2) and the dependent variable, educational quality (Y). Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test both partial and simultaneous effects among variables.

The research was conducted in public and private SMP and MTs in Pematangsawa Subdistrict, Tanggamus Regency. The selection of the location was based on the heterogeneity of institutional characteristics. The study took place during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The research population consisted of all teachers in SMP/MTs in Pematangsawa Subdistrict, totaling approximately 100 individuals. The sample comprised 54 teachers, determined using proportional stratified random sampling and cluster sampling techniques, ensuring that the sample represented the characteristics of each school.

The research variables consisted of two independent variables and one dependent variable. Principal leadership (X1) was measured through aspects of the ability to influence, motivate, and direct the organization. Teacher performance (X2) was measured through aspects of planning, implementation, guidance, and evaluation of learning. Meanwhile, educational quality (Y) was measured through aspects of input, process, and output of education. All variables were measured using a questionnaire instrument with a Likert scale (1–5).

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents directly and through online media. The research instrument had been tested for validity and reliability. Validity was tested using the product-moment correlation with a significance criterion of < 0.05 , while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a criterion of $\alpha > 0.70$. The results showed that all instrument items were declared valid and reliable.

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe data characteristics through mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was performed to test the research hypotheses using multiple linear regression with the help of SPSS software.

Before hypothesis testing, prerequisite tests were conducted, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation tests. Hypothesis testing was carried out through the t-test to determine partial effects, the F-test to determine simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

3.1 Research Results

Classical Assumption Tests

The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a significance value of 0.238 (> 0.05), indicating that the residual data were normally distributed.

The linearity test showed that the relationship between principal leadership (X1) and educational quality (Y) had a deviation from linearity significance value of 0.376 (> 0.05). Similarly, the

relationship between teacher performance (X2) and educational quality (Y) had a significance value of 0.875 (> 0.05). These results indicate that both variables have a linear relationship with the dependent variable.

The multicollinearity test showed Tolerance values of 0.298 (> 0.10) and VIF values of 3.353 (< 10), indicating that the regression model was free from multicollinearity.

The autocorrelation test using the Durbin-Watson statistic yielded a value of 1.601, which falls within the range indicating no autocorrelation.

The heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser method showed significance values for X1 of 0.226 and for X2 of 0.067 (both > 0.05), leading to the conclusion that there was no heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

Thus, all classical assumptions were met, and the regression analysis could proceed.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 5.673 + 0.097X1 + 0.564X2$$

This equation indicates that:

1. The constant of 5.673 indicates that educational quality has a baseline value even without the influence of the independent variables.
2. The regression coefficient for principal leadership (X1) of 0.097 shows a positive but relatively weak relationship.
3. The regression coefficient for teacher performance (X2) of 0.564 indicates a stronger positive effect on educational quality.

Hypothesis Testing

1. Simultaneous Test (F-test)

The F-test results showed an F-value of 88.913 with a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05). This means that principal leadership and teacher performance simultaneously have a significant effect on educational quality.

2. Partial Test (t-test)

Principal leadership (X1) had a significance value of 0.224 (> 0.05), indicating no significant effect on educational quality.

Teacher performance (X2) had a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a significant effect on educational quality.

Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination test showed an Adjusted R Square value of 0.768 (76.8%). This means that the variables of principal leadership and teacher performance together are able to explain 76.8% of the variation in educational quality, while the remaining 23.2% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Influence of Principal Leadership on Educational Quality

The results show that principal leadership does not have a significant effect on educational quality (sig. 0.224 > 0.05). This finding indicates that, empirically, principal leadership has not been able to make a direct contribution to improving educational quality in SMP/MTs in Pematangsawa Subdistrict.

Although descriptively principal leadership falls into the good category (mean > 4.00), this result suggests that good administrative leadership does not necessarily translate directly into educational quality. Indicators such as providing clear work directions scored high, but motivational aspects such as giving rewards and strengthening teamwork were relatively lower. This indicates that leadership tends to be administrative and has not optimally touched the aspect of professional teacher development.

Empirically, this condition is reinforced by the fact that teachers tend to work independently with limited academic supervision intensity. As a result, principal leadership is not directly internalized into classroom teaching practices. In other words, leadership has not yet functioned as an instrument for improving the quality of the learning process.

Theoretically, this finding can be explained through the contingency leadership perspective, which states that leadership effectiveness is highly determined by the fit between leadership style and organizational conditions. In this context, the mismatch between leadership style and teacher needs causes its effect to be insignificant. Moreover, principal leadership tends to exert an indirect effect on educational quality, for instance through improved teacher performance, organizational culture, or work motivation.

These results differ from several previous studies that found significant effects of leadership on educational quality. This discrepancy is presumably due to contextual factors such as school characteristics, organizational culture, and the level of academic supervision implementation. Thus, this finding underscores a gap between the ideal concept of educational leadership and field practices. Therefore, principal leadership needs to be directed toward substantive leadership—leadership that can drive teacher performance, consistently conduct academic supervision, and build a quality culture oriented toward improving learning quality.

2. The Influence of Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The results show that teacher performance has a positive and significant effect on educational quality (sig. $0.000 < 0.05$) with a regression coefficient of 0.564. This indicates that teacher performance is a primary determinant in improving educational quality.

Descriptively, teacher performance falls into the very good category, with high mean scores on almost all indicators, especially in aspects of improving student learning achievement, professional responsibility, and the ability to implement learning effectively. This suggests that teachers have been able to carry out their core functions optimally.

Empirically, this finding confirms that teachers are the main actors in the educational process who interact directly with students. Therefore, the quality of learning is highly determined by the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning. The higher the teacher's performance, the better the quality of the learning process, which ultimately impacts the improvement of educational quality.

These results are consistent with various previous studies showing that teacher performance has a strong relationship with educational quality. This strengthens the argument that educational quality is more determined by process factors (learning processes) than by structural factors alone.

Moreover, in the context of Islamic education, teacher performance is oriented not only toward academic aspects but also toward character building and religious values in students. Therefore, high-performing teachers will produce graduates who are not only intellectually competent but also possess noble character.

Consequently, improving educational quality is highly dependent on efforts to enhance teacher performance through competence strengthening, learning innovation, and continuous evaluation.

3. The Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The simultaneous test results show that principal leadership and teacher performance together significantly affect educational quality (sig. $0.000 < 0.05$), with a contribution of 76.8%. This indicates that both variables play important roles in determining educational quality.

However, when viewed from the contribution of each variable, teacher performance provides a more dominant influence (approximately 64.1%) compared to principal leadership (approximately 12.7%). This finding suggests that educational quality is more directly influenced by teacher performance as the primary implementer of the learning process.

Conceptually, principal leadership serves as a supporting factor that creates conducive conditions for improving teacher performance. The principal functions as a director, motivator, and facilitator who determines policy direction and work culture in the school. Thus, leadership contributes indirectly through the enhancement of teacher performance.

This finding aligns with the concept of transformational and instructional leadership, which emphasizes the principal's role in empowering teachers. When leadership and teacher performance work synergistically, an effective and quality-oriented learning system can be created.

Empirically, educational quality at the research location falls into the good category; however, several aspects still require improvement, such as the quality of student input and non-academic achievements. This shows that educational quality is also influenced by other factors outside the research variables.

Therefore, improving educational quality cannot be done partially but requires synergy between principal leadership and teacher performance. Although teacher performance is the dominant factor, principal leadership still plays a strategic role in creating a supportive environment for improving learning quality.

The implication is that efforts to enhance educational quality should focus on strengthening teacher performance through continuous training, academic supervision, and learning innovation, balanced with reinforcing principal leadership to be more oriented toward improving the quality of the learning process.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results and discussion regarding the influence of principal leadership and teacher performance on educational quality in SMP/MTs throughout Pematangsawa Subdistrict, Tanggamus Regency, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, principal leadership does not have a significant effect on educational quality (sig. 0.224 > 0.05). This finding indicates that principal leadership has not been able to make a direct contribution to improving educational quality. The contribution of this variable is relatively small, at 12.7%, thus it is not a determining factor in improving educational quality.

Second, teacher performance has a positive and significant effect on educational quality (sig. 0.000 < 0.05), with a contribution of 64.1%. This shows that teacher performance is the main factor determining educational quality. The higher the teacher performance, the higher the resulting educational quality.

Third, principal leadership and teacher performance simultaneously have a significant effect on educational quality (sig. 0.000 < 0.05), with a contribution of 76.8%. This indicates that both variables together can explain most of the variation in educational quality, although teacher performance is the most dominant variable.

Thus, improving educational quality is more effectively achieved through strengthening teacher performance as the main implementer of the learning process, supported by principal leadership oriented toward enhancing learning quality.

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