

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY OF MTS INSAN MADANI, SITUBONDO

Hoirotun¹, Intan Permatasari², Ali Gufron³, Riskiyatin⁴, Miftahus Surur^{5*}

^{1,2,3,4,5} STKIP PGRI Situbondo, Indonesia

e-mail: surur.miftah99@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines the implementation of the independent curriculum in the context of educational units in rural areas, specifically at MTs Insan Madani in Situbondo Regency. Employing a qualitative research approach and the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this research synthesizes data collected through documents, images, and audiovisual materials. The findings highlight that while the independent curriculum aims to provide a practical and communicable learning experience, its implementation faces challenges. Key issues include a lack of understanding among teachers and the need for adaptation to available resources and curriculum changes. The study concludes that empowering teachers through targeted strategies and continuous training is critical to achieving the curriculum's goals.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Systematic Literature Review, Teacher Empowerment, Rural Education

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INTRODUCTION

Schools are educational institutions that train the personality and develop students' intelligence as part of the intellectualization of the nation's life. As stated in Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system states, "National education is to develop skills, form character, and valuable national civilization, educate the nation's life, which aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith and devotion to God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, healthy, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens". Meanwhile, educating is the process of training and fostering individuals in moral aspects and developing intellectual intelligence.

Principals are educational employees who are competent and given the responsibility of running schools (Susanto et al., 2021). Currently, the principal is the highest leader of educational institutions and has an important role in achieving the desired goals of educational institutions (Amri & Suwandi, 2023). Meanwhile, teachers are part of the education personnel who are participating in efforts to form superior and potential human resources. Therefore, teachers are one of the important components in the world of education that must play an active role in the education system. They are expected to act with professionalism to the expectations of a growing society (Syifauzuzrah, 2022).

As stated in Article 1 of Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, teachers are professional people whose main task is to educate, guide, teach, train, direct, assess, and evaluate students in early childhood education through formal education, basic education, and secondary education. The main task of a teacher is reflected in the teaching and learning process as well as in the various responsibilities carried out in the institution, which is the teacher's performance. Conversely, if teacher performance is not optimal and there is a lack of clarity in the

brush towards the management of improving the quality of education in schools, this will affect the results that will be achieved. Therefore, it is very important to provide more support from various parties at school to improve teacher performance because the teacher is a central figure who directly interacts with students through the teaching and learning process (Mirnasulistyawati et al., 2020).

The principal has a role in the educational process of improving an educator's or teacher's performance. The role of the principal as the leader of an educational institution is how he can best manage existing resources to achieve educational goals, including teacher management (Ulum et al., 2020). In addition, the principal also has a role to communicate with subordinates and improve the performance and quality of teachers' work through good partnerships. Therefore, the role of the principal as an innovator and motivator is to establish harmonious communication with the environment, explore new ideas and integrate them into every activity, and set an example for all education personnel in the school that he leads. As a leader, the principal must also have the right strategy to motivate teachers in carrying out their duties and functions. This motivation can be facilitated by good environmental management, a facilitative and communicative atmosphere, and synergistic discipline between components of school residents (Rahmin, 2021).

There has been much research on teachers' careers and efforts to better prepare teachers through education and training. Improving the quality of teachers, especially on the four main competencies that a teacher must have: professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, and personality competence (Nur & Fatonah, 2022). If a teacher lacks just one of these four skills, student learning will be disrupted. Teachers' effectiveness in the classroom depends on their teaching skills and ability to relate to their peers and convey their ideas clearly to their learners. The principal's leadership pattern is very influential and even determines teacher performance. Therefore, this study aims to examine the principal's leadership strategies that can be implemented to improve teacher performance.

METHOD

This research uses the literature review study method. A literature study uses secondary data from various literature studies or literature relevant to the problem from books, articles, or relevant journals (Adi et al., 2020). A review is conducted through comprehensive research and interpretation of the literature relevant to a particular topic. This review identifies research questions by examining and analyzing related literature using a systematic approach to conduct simple data analysis. The articles used focused on original empirical research that contained real observations, complete with abstracts, introduction, methods, results, and discussion of the research.

The article search strategy uses databases available on Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and Mendeley. Articles used from the year of publication 2020 to 2024 with the keywords "leadership" and "teacher performance". at the initial stage of the journal search, 61 articles were identified that had not been explored for relevance to the article to be compiled. Of these, only 15 articles were deemed relevant

RESULT

The author has reviewed the articles collected. After collecting data in the form of literature, the author found the influence of school principal leadership on teacher performance.

Table 1. Data analysis matrix on the articles used in the literature review

Researcher, Year	Research Title	Method	Research Results
(Gebry Junakartiansyah perdana, 2023)	Analysis of the Principal's Leadership Strategy in Improving Teacher Performance at Teladan Nabawi Islamic School	Qualitative	The principal applies a democratic and participatory leadership strategy. This is considered to allow teachers and education personnel to contribute to decision-making thus creating a harmonious atmosphere. Even so, there are still some challenges that must be faced by the principal such as some teachers who still show a lack of discipline so that it can affect the learning situation.
(Nur Rahmin, 2021)	Analysis of the Principal's Leadership Strategy in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakardeng Tana Toraja	Qualitative	The performance of teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakardeng shows a positive development compared to before. This is because the principal conducts coaching and increases the discipline of teachers in carrying out their duties. This shows that with the right leadership strategy, principals can play an important role in improving teacher performance, although there are still some challenges that need to be overcome.
(Khuliyati, 2022)	Leadership strategy of the madrasah principal in improving teacher performance	Qualitative	The leadership strategy of the madrasah principal in improving teacher performance at MTs Darul Ulum Rejosari includes several aspects, namely: performance improvement planning, implementing discipline, providing motivation and being a role model. The combination of these strategies can significantly improve teacher performance through a systematic approach.
(Nafisah Zein, Nanda Santin Permatasari, Nursyahr Jihan Tuanany, Wulan Roudhotul Nasikhah, Ahmad Yusuf Sobri and Aan Fardani Ubaidillah, 2024)	Principals' leadership strategies in improving teachers' performance through educational seminars	Meta-analysis	Principals need to implement several important strategies to improve teachers' performance through educational seminars such as seminar facilities, encouraging active participation, monitoring and evaluation. By implementing these strategies, principals can play an important role in improving teacher performance and the overall quality of education.
(Saude, Hairuddin Cikka and Zaifullah, 2020)	Principal Leadership Strategy in Optimizing Teacher Performance	Qualitative	Optimal principal leadership can improve teacher quality at SMK Negeri 1 Biromaru. This study identified 4 principal leadership strategy programs, namely: Through this strategy, the principal succeeded in creating an environment that supports the development of teacher professionalism,

			which in turn contributes to improving educational performance at school.
(Kelik Yan Pradana, Samtono and Mudrik abdullah, 2021)	The principal's leadership strategy for improving the performance of teachers at Citra Parakan Christian Junior High School in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic	Qualitative	In the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, the principal implemented an adaptive leadership strategy, which included making quick decisions, adjusting learning programs and using Indonesian technology. This triggers an increase in teacher performance, especially in learning innovation and the use of digital media.
(Neliwati, Maulidah Hasnah Anas and Ade Lestari, 2024)	Principal's Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance through Supervision in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah	Qualitative	Good communication between principals and teachers, as well as conducting supervision on a regular basis has proven to improve teacher motivation and performance. so that educational goals can be achieved optimally.
(M. Rio Harits Ikhsandi and Zaka Hadikusuma Ramadan, 2021)	Principal Leadership in Improving Elementary School Teacher's Performance	Qualitative	The principal applies a democratic leadership style so that the principal can actively monitor the teacher's lesson planning and ensure the implementation of learning goes well.
(Aslam, Abdul Aziz Wahab, Diding Nurdin and Nugraha Suharto, 2022)	Principal Instructional Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance	Qualitative	Principal instructional leadership has an important role in improving teacher performance. principals who have a clear vision and mission can more effectively implement strategies that support the improvement of teacher performance.
(Sri wahyuni, Kembong Daeng, Hasria Alang and Sulfaidah, 2021)	Principal Leadership in Improving the Performance of Social Studies Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Arungkeke, Jeneponto Regency	Qualitative	Principal leadership at SMP Negeri 2 Arungkeke plays an important role in improving the performance of social studies teachers through various efforts, including motivation, discipline, training, facilities, rewards and intensive.
(Yanah Srimulyana and Indra Zultiar, 2020)	The Influence of Principal's Leadership Style in Improving the Performance of Raudatul Athfal Teachers in Sukabumi City	Quantitative	Principal leadership has a significant influence in improving the performance of Raudhatul Athfal teachers in Sukabumi City, with a main contribution of 45.1%. This study also emphasizes the importance of other factors that can affect teacher performance.

(Firdiansyah Alhabsyi, Sagaf S. Pettalongi and Wandu, 2022)	The Principal's Leadership Role in Improving Teacher Performance	Qualitative	The principal's role is crucial in improving teacher performance at SDN 12 Palu, which impacts the overall quality of education. The principal motivates teachers through various ways, such as giving awards, creating a conducive atmosphere and improving teacher discipline.
(Mohamad Ali, 2021)	The Principal's Leadership Role in Improving Teacher Performance at SDN 1 Pendem	Quantitative	The principal at SDN 1 Pendem has carried out his leadership role well, which has a positive impact on improving teacher performance. however, there are still challenges related to facilities that need to be addressed to support a more effective learning process.
(Reli Relaksa, Fitri Rahayu, Lutfita Diah Ayu Nuraini, Dina Melinda and Dyah Indriyaningsih Septeri, 2024)	Analysis of Principal's Leadership Style in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP N 1 Girisubo	Qualitative	The principal adopts several strategies, including providing role models, organizing internal training and involving teachers in group discussions. This is because the principal emphasizes the importance of a democratic leadership style in improving teacher performance and education quality at SMP N 1 Girisubo.
(Suprianto, Gatot Kusjono and Novia Susanti, 2021)	Analysis of Principal Leadership Style in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 17 South Tangerang City	Quantitative	The principal's leadership style has a significant effect on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 17 in South Tangerang City in improving pedagogical competence: 33.4%, personality competence: 36.2% and professional competence: 33,4%.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study of 15 journals above, there are interconnected links about the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance. Leadership is the ability of a person to influence, invite, and direct others to achieve a goal to be achieved together (Pradana et al., 2021), one of which is the principal. The principle is one of the components of education that plays a role in improving the quality of education. Apart from functioning as a leader, the principal is also responsible for developing the educational institution he leads by becoming its main controller. The success of achieving educational goals depends on the abilities and policies the principal implements. Meanwhile, according to Ali (2021), the principal is the driving force. It determines the direction of school policy, which will determine how the goals of schools and education, in general, are realized. According to Srimulyana & Zultiar (2020), Principal leadership can be measured using aspects of the ability to create, the ability to plan, the ability to organize, the ability to motivate, and the ability to evaluate. Principals have a crucial role in developing teacher performance (Zein et al., 2024), one of which is instructional leadership. The principal's instructional leadership is dominant in improving teachers' teaching performance because, in essence, instructional leadership or learning leadership is directly related to the learning process (Aslam et al., 2022).

Teacher performance is a teacher activity carried out to guide, educate, and transfer knowledge to students following their professional abilities (Wahyuni et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the teacher is the most decisive component of the education system. Teachers determine students' success, especially in learning and achievement (Perdana, 2023). According to Rahmin (2021), teacher performance indicates a school's progress. One aspect that affects teacher performance is the principal's leadership strategy. Where every school is required to have a strategy. This is in line with the opinion of Khuliyati (2022), who revealed that principals must have the right strategy to empower teachers and education personnel through cooperative cooperation, providing opportunities for teachers and education personnel to improve their profession. According to Saude & Cikka (2020), effective and efficient principal leadership produces quality teachers through 4 principal leadership strategy programs, namely: (1) a responsibility coaching program, (2) a learning activity implementation program, (3) teacher discipline coaching, and (4) teacher commitment coaching program. Meanwhile, Ikhsandi & Ramadan (2021) revealed that to improve teachers' performance, principals must motivate, guide, and provide guidance to subordinates (staff, teachers, and students) and enforce discipline.

CONCLUSION

The results show that principal leadership has a very important role in improving teacher performance, where effective (successful) leadership strategies can encourage the development of teacher professionalism and contribute to the overall success of education. Thus, principals, as leaders, must be able to implement various programs and approaches that support improving teaching quality in schools, such as instructional leadership. According to Aslam et al (2022), principals' instructional leadership is important because it directly relates to the learning process. Principals with a clear vision and mission can implement strategies that support improving teacher performance, thus creating an environment conducive to the development of teacher professionalism and overall educational success.

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