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SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP FOR IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN AN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRAK

Kinerja guru merupakan unsur utama mutu pembelajaran, tetapi otonomi sekolah tidak otomatis memperkuat profesionalisme. Penelitian ini menganalisis manajemen berbasis sekolah dan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di SMA Miftahul Khair, OKU Timur, dengan perhatian pada perencanaan, supervisi, kompetensi digital, sumber daya, dan partisipasi. Penelitian lapangan kualitatif menggunakan orientasi naturalistik-fenomenologis dan studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan dokumentasi, lalu dianalisis melalui reduksi, penyajian, penarikan kesimpulan, serta verifikasi dengan triangulasi dan member checking. Hasil menunjukkan kinerja guru relatif baik dalam disiplin, hubungan kolegial, perencanaan, media, dan metode pembelajaran. MBS memperkuat perencanaan partisipatif dan pengembangan profesional, sedangkan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah bersifat situasional, demokratis, edukatif, dan motivasional. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa otonomi sekolah perlu dipadukan dengan kepemimpinan partisipatif, pembelajaran profesional terstruktur, supervisi akuntabel, penguatan kapasitas digital, infrastruktur, kesejahteraan, MGMP, dan pelibatan pemangku kepentingan.

Keywords:
School-Based Management; Principal Leadership; Teacher Performance; Islamic Education

ABSTRACTS

Teacher performance is central to instructional quality, yet school autonomy does not automatically translate into stronger professional practice. This study examines how school-based management and principal leadership support teacher performance at SMA Miftahul Khair, OKU Timur, South Sumatra, while addressing gaps in planning, supervision, digital competence, resources, and teacher participation. A qualitative field case study used a naturalistic, phenomenological orientation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the principal, vice principal, teachers, and staff, direct observation, and document analysis, then processed through data collection, reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and verification with source-method triangulation and member checking. Findings show generally positive teacher performance in discipline, personality, collegial relations, lesson planning, use of media, and instructional methods. School-based management strengthened participatory planning, professional development, discipline, and evaluation, while principal leadership was situational, democratic, educative, and motivational. Constraints included limited infrastructure and financing, uneven digital competence, simplified planning, incomplete committee participation, and suboptimal supervision. The study concludes that teacher performance improves when school autonomy is coupled with participatory leadership, structured professional learning, and accountable supervision. Schools should strengthen evidence-based planning, teacher collaboration, MGMP participation, digital capacity, infrastructure, welfare support, and stakeholder involvement, while future studies systematically compare multiple Islamic and general secondary schools.

A. INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance is a central indicator of school quality because educational plans become meaningful only when teachers can translate them into disciplined, responsive, and professionally accountable instruction. Contemporary Indonesian studies consistently show that principal leadership is related to teacher performance, directly and through organizational culture, motivation, satisfaction, and readiness for change (Pardosi and Utari 2022; Raharja, Nashir, and Andriani 2022; Yohanah 2022; Nirmawati, Pratiwi, and Irvan 2023; Indrasari, Indyawati, and Susilo 2023; Amin and Sumiati 2023). This evidence positions teacher performance not merely as an individual attribute but as an organizational outcome shaped by professional competence, work conditions, leadership, and the structures through which schools coordinate improvement.

School-based management (SBM) is especially relevant because it gives schools greater responsibility for planning, resource use, program development, participation, and accountability. Autonomy, however, does not automatically improve teaching. Caliba (2022) found teacher performance to be associated with working conditions and SBM dimensions including professional development, stakeholder involvement, instructional support, resource management, and accountability. SBM therefore becomes productive when local authority is accompanied by information, collaborative decision-making, sufficient capacity, and follow-up. In a smaller private school, autonomy without these conditions may only transfer responsibility from higher levels to the school without resolving the constraints teachers face.

Leadership connects school autonomy to professional practice. Recent studies indicate that transformational, instructional, distributed, and participative leadership

can strengthen performance when they create clear direction, collaboration, feedback, empowerment, and professional learning. In Indonesian madrasah settings, psychological capital, principal leadership style, and job satisfaction interact in shaping teacher performance (Masdianah et al. 2023). International research similarly links distributed leadership with teacher self-efficacy, well-being, empowerment, and organizational identification (Liu, Qiang, and Kang 2023; Tucaliuc, Curșeu, and Muntean 2023). Thus, leadership effectiveness depends not only on the principal's personal influence but also on whether teachers gain ownership, confidence, and opportunities to learn.

Collaboration is one pathway through which this influence operates. Longitudinal research shows that principals can promote organizational change by establishing teacher teams, allocating time for joint work, guiding collective sense-making, and involving teachers in improvement decisions (Meyer et al. 2023). Distributed-leadership studies likewise emphasize relations among principals and teacher teams rather than the actions of one office alone (de Jong et al. 2023). This perspective is closely aligned with SBM because teacher participation should extend beyond attendance at meetings to meaningful influence over planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Digital change has intensified the need for such support. The dissertation records uneven teacher familiarity with online tools during pandemic-era learning and describes school-level meetings and training to strengthen teachers' use of WhatsApp and Google Classroom. Research on technology integration shows that school leadership can support demanding digital practice by strengthening teachers' willingness, skills, and enabling conditions (Schmitz et al. 2023). The case therefore illustrates that digital weakness is not solely an individual deficit; it is also a management issue involving training, supervision, collaboration, and infrastructure.

SMA Miftahul Khair in OKU Timur, South Sumatra, presents a useful case. The dissertation documents generally positive teacher discipline, interpersonal relations, lesson planning, and use of media and varied methods, while also identifying late lesson-plan submission, uneven digital competence, limited facilities and financing, incomplete alignment between some teachers' academic backgrounds and teaching assignments, and inconsistent supervision. SBM planning was conducted through staff meetings and linked to short- and long-term programs and the RAPBS, but planning analysis and school-committee participation were not yet strong. The principal was described as situational and democratic, relying on deliberation, motivation, training, direct support, and recognition, while some decisions remained dependent on the foundation.

The research problem is therefore how SBM and principal leadership can improve teacher performance when autonomy is present but incomplete and professional and material capacity are uneven. This article addresses three objectives: to analyze teacher performance at SMA Miftahul Khair; to examine SBM practices used to improve that performance; and to analyze the principal's leadership in supporting improvement. The dissertation evidence is interpreted alongside recent research from 2022-2026 to clarify the mechanisms linking participation, professional learning, supervision, motivation, collaboration, and resource planning.

B. METHOD

The study used qualitative field research with descriptive, naturalistic, phenomenological, and case-study characteristics. It sought to interpret school policies, leadership behavior, teacher work, and organizational interaction in their natural setting rather than estimate causal effects statistically. The site was SMA Miftahul Khair, Martapura, OKU Timur Regency, South Sumatra. The dissertation lists the formal research period as February-August 2024, while several interview records reproduced in the findings are dated December 2023 and April 2024; this article retains those dates as reported rather than imposing an unsupported chronology.

Primary sources included the principal, vice principal, teachers, and school employees who possessed direct knowledge of management and instructional practice. Secondary evidence consisted of school documents, records, reports, archives, and relevant literature. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews used prepared issues while allowing open elaboration; observation examined school conditions, leadership, teacher attendance, instructional processes, and learning media; documentation was used to corroborate statements with written or electronic records.

Analysis followed an interactive process of data collection, reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Evidence was organized around three themes: teacher performance, SBM practices for improving performance, and principal leadership. Within each theme, the analysis distinguished strengths, constraints, and improvement mechanisms so that positive accounts could be checked against contrary or limiting evidence.

Trustworthiness was addressed through persistent observation, source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Interview statements were compared across school roles and against observation and documents. These procedures were important in a single-site leadership study because participants occupy different organizational positions and may interpret the same management practice differently.

The design has clear boundaries. It does not provide standardized performance scores or causal estimates of the separate contribution of SBM and leadership, and findings from one school cannot be statistically generalized. Pandemic-era teaching conditions also influenced evidence on digital media and lesson planning. The article therefore treats the results as contextual organizational mechanisms and compares them with recent scholarship without replacing the original empirical evidence.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Teacher Performance: Discipline and Instructional Practice

Teacher performance was generally perceived as good in discipline, personality, relationships with school members, and instructional practice. Attendance records and interviews indicated that teachers usually came according to schedule and that replacement arrangements were made when necessary. Performance was also associated with lesson planning, use of learning media, and varied methods. These indicators suggest that school actors understood performance as a combination of responsibility, professional preparation, interpersonal conduct, and classroom execution rather than attendance alone.

The positive picture was not uniform. The principal reported that lesson-plan submission was sometimes late, and teachers differed in their ability to use digital platforms. During online and blended learning, WhatsApp and Google Classroom were used, but some teachers needed repeated practical support. The principal responded with meetings and training before implementation. This distinction is important: some performance problems were matters of capacity rather than simple noncompliance and therefore required professional learning and technical assistance.

Teachers were also given room to develop students' creativity while remaining subject to monitoring. The school valued alignment between academic background and teaching assignment, although the dissertation acknowledged that this was not complete across all personnel. Enrollment growth and graduates' continuation to further education were sometimes viewed by participants as signs of institutional confidence, but the stronger evidence of teacher performance came from attendance, lesson planning, instructional media, observed teaching routines, and convergence across interview sources.

2. School-Based Management: Participation, Planning, and Development

SBM was visible in staff participation, planning, evaluation, budgeting, professional development, discipline, and supervision. The principal reported that programs were discussed with teachers and periodically reviewed to determine implementation progress. Short- and long-term planning was connected to the school's vision, mission, and RAPBS. This created a local cycle of needs identification, discussion, resource consideration, implementation, and review, giving teachers a role in decisions that affected instructional work.

Professional development was a second mechanism. The school used seminars, training, internal guidance, and encouragement to participate in MGMP, including support for digital-platform use. Supervision and discipline were also part of SBM; one account described teaching supervision occurring at least twice a month during the pandemic period. Yet the dissertation also judged supervision as not fully optimal, showing that the practice existed but required greater regularity and follow-up.

SBM remained incomplete. Planning could be too simple, was not always supported by adequate analysis, and did not sufficiently involve the school committee. Interviews also identified inadequate facilities, limited financing, and uneven teacher willingness to develop professional capacity. Some decisions depended on the foundation, creating layered authority in which the principal held operational responsibility but not complete decision autonomy. Effective SBM in this setting therefore depends on clearer decision rights, stronger participation, and realistic resource planning.

3. Principal Leadership: Situational, Democratic, and Developmental

The principal was characterized as situational and democratic. Observations described flexible interaction with teachers, collaboration in solving tasks and conflicts, deliberation in decision-making, and attention to teacher interests. Authority was exercised through consultation, direct communication, persuasion, and role modeling rather than through harsh correction. This relational approach was particularly visible when teachers faced problems with changing instructional arrangements.

The principal also performed the roles of educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator. In practice, educator and motivator roles were prominent through guidance on lesson plans and media, professional coaching, seminars, training, MGMP participation, and recognition for achievement. Motivation included verbal encouragement, personal approaches, learning opportunities, and trust in teacher creativity, which are important developmental resources when financial resources are limited.

Leadership nevertheless operated within organizational constraints. Facilities and financing restricted support; some teachers showed limited initiative for self-development; supervision was not optimal; some teaching assignments did not fully match academic backgrounds; and foundation approval could affect decisions. The evidence therefore indicates that the principal was a key improvement actor but not a sufficient explanation for teacher performance. Sustainable improvement required leadership to be institutionalized through professional learning, supervision, planning, and shared governance.

Table 1. Synthesis of Empirical Findings

Domain	Evidence from the Case	Main Strength	Improvement Priority
Teacher performance	Discipline, lesson planning, media and varied methods; uneven digital skills and RPP punctuality.	Professional discipline and adaptability.	Digital-pedagogical development and follow-up.
School-based management	Participatory planning, RAPBS, evaluation, training, discipline and supervision.	Local responsiveness and teacher involvement.	Evidence-based planning, committee participation and resources.
Principal leadership	Situational/democratic approach; educator, manager, supervisor, leader and motivator roles.	Consultation, coaching, MGMP and recognition.	Systematic supervision and clearer authority with the foundation.

Source: Synthesized from interview, observation, and documentation evidence in the dissertation.

Analysis/Discussion

The findings support a relational understanding of teacher performance. At SMA Miftahul Khair, discipline, planning, media use, and professional behavior were shaped by participation, support, supervision, and work conditions. This is consistent with research showing that leadership often influences performance through motivation, job satisfaction, culture, and self-efficacy rather than through command alone (Nirmawati, Pratiwi, and Irvan 2023; Indrasari, Indyawati, and Susilo 2023; Masdianah et al. 2023). The case adds process detail: motivation was enacted through encouragement, seminars, MGMP, recognition, and teacher autonomy, while constraints were visible in infrastructure, digital readiness, and supervision.

The SBM evidence reinforces the importance of meaningful participation. Caliba (2022) links performance with stakeholder involvement, resources, professional development, instructional support, and accountability. In the case, teacher meetings, planning, RAPBS, evaluation, and professional learning provided concrete channels for school-level participation, but weak committee involvement and foundation-dependent decisions showed that distributed authority was incomplete. This aligns with research emphasizing collaborative and distributed leadership in school improvement (Meyer et al. 2023; de Jong et al. 2023; Bıyık and Şahin 2024). Mature SBM therefore requires clear decision rights and reliable pathways for teacher and stakeholder input.

Collaboration also depends on school climate. Hammar Chiriac, Forsberg, and Thornberg (2024) show that teacher teams can provide shared responsibility, help, safety, and openness, while Veletić, Price, and Olsen (2023) connect leadership style with perceptions of organizational quality. These perspectives illuminate the principal's respectful and consultative approach. Polite, direct communication can reduce the social cost of admitting difficulty and asking for help, which is especially important when teachers face unfamiliar technology or instructional problems.

The principal's practices can further be interpreted through instructional leadership. Hammad, Hilal, and Bellibaş (2024) connect instructional leadership with teacher collaboration and self-efficacy; He, Guo, and Abazie (2024) link it with professional development; and Karakose et al. (2024) show that collective efficacy can mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher self-efficacy. Indonesian evidence similarly finds that instructional leadership shapes performance partly through self-efficacy (Elfira et al. 2024). In this case, seminars, coaching, MGMP, and feedback become consequential when they address real instructional needs and are followed by supervision.

Resource conditions are equally important. Mukaromah, Fuadi, and Daryono (2024) place leadership and teacher performance within a broader quality-management relationship, and Atiyyah et al. (2024) show that leadership, work environment, and motivation jointly shape performance. The case's persistent limitations in facilities and financing therefore should not be treated as peripheral. Instructional leadership includes prioritizing resources that enable teachers to plan, teach, assess, and learn professionally.

The school's use of seminars, coaching, MGMP, and recognition is consistent with recent Indonesian studies that emphasize supportive leadership strategies for performance improvement (Setiawati et al. 2024; Sudarti, Su'ad, and Setiadi 2024; Fauzi, Maimun, and Yasin 2024). The next step is to connect these activities into a continuous cycle: supervision identifies a specific instructional need, professional learning addresses it, teachers collaborate and practice, and follow-up supervision examines whether practice changes. Such a cycle would convert episodic motivation into an accountable professional-learning system.

Supportive leadership and rigorous supervision should be treated as complementary. Ali and Susilawati (2025) associate communication, supportive guidance, equitable task distribution, and participation with teacher performance, while Sufriadi, Kasmini, and Musdiani (2025) show the importance of principal leadership alongside academic supervision. Aditya, Novianto, and Prasojo (2025) also describe transformational leadership as a catalyst for performance improvement, and Hilga and Wibowo (2025) show that leadership interacts with school culture and

teacher performance in shaping school quality. These studies support institutionalizing the principal's relational strengths through scheduled supervision, teacher learning communities, transparent professional-development criteria, and documented follow-up.

Yunita, Lian, and Suherman (2026) provide especially relevant evidence from OKU Timur by showing that SBM and pedagogical competence predict teacher performance in another school context. The present qualitative case explains how those domains can interact: SBM supports performance when it organizes participation, professional learning, supervision, and resources around teacher needs. Conversely, weak analysis, limited infrastructure, and incomplete stakeholder participation reduce the practical value of autonomy. For Islamic education management, the implication is to translate deliberative leadership into evidence-based participatory governance, continuous professional learning, transparent resource priorities, and clearer coordination between school and foundation.

D. CONCLUSION

Teacher performance at SMA Miftahul Khair was generally positive in discipline, interpersonal relations, lesson preparation, media use, and varied instructional methods, but remained uneven in timely planning, digital competence, supervision, and the alignment of some assignments with academic background. SBM supported improvement through participatory meetings, RAPBS-linked planning, evaluation, professional development, discipline, and supervision, yet its effectiveness was limited by weak planning analysis, incomplete committee participation, scarce resources, and layered authority with the foundation.

The principal strengthened teacher performance through situational and democratic leadership, direct communication, motivation, coaching, seminars, MGMP participation, recognition, and the roles of educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator. These strengths should be institutionalized through more consistent academic supervision and documented follow-up. The school and foundation should jointly link supervision findings with targeted training, digital-capacity development, peer collaboration, infrastructure priorities, teacher welfare, and meaningful stakeholder participation.

Future research should compare multiple Islamic and general secondary schools and combine qualitative process evidence with measurable indicators of teaching quality and student learning.

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