# THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT SMK NEGERI 1 MAJALENGKA

# PENGARUH KEPEMIMPINAN KEPALA SEKOLAH DAN KOMUNIKASI INTERNAL TERHADAP KINERJA GURU DI SMK NEGERI 1 MAJALENGKA

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**Abstract**

The background of this research is based on the need to improve the quality of education and the demand for teacher professionalism in facing the dynamic challenges of school management. At SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka, the effectiveness of the principal's leadership and the quality of internal communication are considered two important factors that may play a strategic role in enhancing teacher performance. These conditions highlight the need for empirical analysis to determine the extent to which these two aspects contribute to the achievement of teacher performance. This study aims to examine the description of principal leadership, internal communication, and teacher performance at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka, as well as to analyze the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance, the influence of internal communication on teacher performance, and the influence of both variables on teacher performance. Thus, this research not only describes the actual conditions but also tests the relationships between the variables under study. The research employed descriptive and correlational methods. The study population consisted of all 141 teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in 104 respondents selected through proportional sampling. The research instrument was a questionnaire that had undergone validity and reliability testing. Data analysis was carried out to determine the strength of the relationships between variables and to test the research hypotheses. The results indicate that principal leadership falls into the very competent category, internal communication is carried out high effectively, and teacher performance is categorized as very high. Correlational analysis findings show that principal leadership $(X_1)$ has a significant influence on teacher performance, and internal communication $(X_2)$ also has a significant influence on teacher performance. Simultaneously, both independent variables have a meaningful effect on improving teacher performance at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka. The implications of this study show that improving teacher performance can be achieved through strengthening principal leadership and implementing effective internal communication. Therefore, schools are advised to continuously build open and collaborative communication patterns and optimize leadership roles in providing direction, support, and exemplary behavior for teachers.

**Keywords :** School Principal Leadership, Internal Communication, Teacher Performance.

**Abstrak**

Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh kebutuhan peningkatan kualitas pendidikan serta tuntutan profesionalisme guru dalam menghadapi dinamika pengelolaan sekolah. Di lingkungan SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka, efektivitas kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan kualitas komunikasi internal menjadi dua faktor penting yang diduga memiliki peran strategis dalam mendukung peningkatan kinerja guru. Kondisi tersebut mendorong perlunya analisis empiris untuk mengetahui sejauh mana kedua aspek tersebut memberikan kontribusi terhadap pencapaian kinerja tenaga pendidik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui gambaran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, komunikasi internal dan kinerja guru di SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka, serta menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah terhadap kinerja guru, pengaruh komunikasi internal terhadap kinerja guru dan pengaruh keduanya terhadap kinerja guru. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini tidak hanya menggambarkan kondisi aktual, tetapi juga menguji hubungan antar variabel yang menjadi fokus kajian. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif dan korelasional. Populasi penelitian mencakup seluruh guru di SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka yang berjumlah 141 orang. Sampel ditentukan menggunakan rumus Slovin sehingga diperoleh 104 responden yang dipilih melalui teknik proportional sampling. Instrumen penelitian berupa kuesioner yang telah melalui proses uji validitas dan reliabilitas. Analisis data dilakukan untuk mengetahui kekuatan hubungan antarvariabel serta menguji hipotesis penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah berada pada kategori sangat kompeten, komunikasi internal berlangsung sangat efektif, dan kinerja guru berada pada kategori sangat tinggi. Temuan analisis korelasional mengindikasikan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah ($X_1$) berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja guru, begitu pula komunikasi internal ($X_2$) terbukti memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja guru. Secara keseluruhan, kedua variabel bebas tersebut memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan kinerja guru di SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kinerja guru dapat dicapai melalui penguatan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan komunikasi internal yang efektif. Oleh karena itu, pihak sekolah disarankan untuk terus membangun pola komunikasi yang terbuka dan kolaboratif serta mengoptimalkan peran kepemimpinan dalam memberikan arahan, dukungan, dan keteladanan kepada guru.

**Kata Kunci :** Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Komunikasi Internal, Kinerja Guru.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Schools today are required to create learning that is efficient, flexible, and oriented toward improving student competencies, considering that education is the foundation of human resources development (Joko & Nugraha, 2023). In the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK), the role of teachers has become increasingly strategic because they are not only responsible for delivering academic instruction but also guiding students to acquire vocational skills that align with industry needs. During the 2021–2024 period, SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka—recognized as one of the largest vocational education institutions—experienced dynamics related to teacher performance, demonstrating variations in the quality of task implementation and adaptability toward the ever-evolving demands of vocational learning (Syahlan et al., 2025).

The complexity of the educational environment that constantly changes and demands continuous innovation, along with individual competencies, forms the overall depiction of the teacher's role within the SMK ecosystem. These dynamics reflect the need for stronger evaluation and professional capacity-building efforts so that teacher performance aligns with

the vision of producing graduates who are ready to face challenges in the modern workforce. Learning supervision results indicate that some teachers still rely on traditional methods, underutilize learning technology, and have not yet optimized the development of teaching materials or authentic assessments (Rifai et al., 2024). This condition shows that quality improvement in learning has not been consistently achieved.

Previous studies assert that although various quality improvement initiatives have been implemented, the principal's leadership and the quality of internal communication remain the main significant determinants of teacher success in carrying out their professional responsibilities (Rachmadio et al., 2024). However, a research gap emerges in two aspects. First, many earlier studies tend to focus on general secondary schools, rather than vocational schools which possess distinct characteristics and learning demands. Second, studies combining leadership variables and internal communication to explain fluctuations in teacher performance within vocational school settings are still relatively limited. In addition, supervision findings at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka reveal inconsistencies between managerial policies, communication patterns, and daily learning practices, thus requiring more contextual investigation.

Considering these conditions, this study aims to identify the extent to which those two factors contribute to improving learning quality and teacher professionalism in the school.

The theoretical foundation of this research refers to educational leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of the school principal's capacity to manage, direct, and optimize human resources to ensure effective learning processes and a school environment that supports professional teacher development. Additionally, organizational communication theory is used to explain how information flow, coordination, and internal interaction influence teacher work effectiveness. Teacher performance in this study is understood through the lens of performance management theory, which includes aspects such as lesson planning, implementation, evaluation, and professional commitment.

This study holds significant relevance for the development of vocational education quality. The research findings are expected to provide empirical insights into managerial and communication factors that most strongly influence teacher performance, and serve as a foundation for school policy formulation and teacher competency enhancement. Consequently, in addition to contributing to the development of educational management theory, this research also offers practical benefits for improving teaching quality at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka and other similar institutions.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD
### a. Type of Research

The quantitative approach was selected for its capability to objectively test models and hypotheses (Indrawati, 2015:184). By employing this approach, the study examines how internal communication and principal leadership influence teacher performance at SMKN 1 Majalengka (Amelia et al., 2023). A descriptive and correlational method is used to provide a

comprehensive understanding of empirical conditions and the relationships among the variables. This study applies a cross-sectional survey design in which the researchers do not intervene in the process, with the school organization as the unit of analysis.

### b. Operational Definition of Variables

Principal Leadership ($X_1$), consisting of dimensions such as Telling, Selling, Participating, and Delegating, and Internal Communication ($X_2$), consisting of dimensions such as vertical communication, horizontal communication, information quality, communication openness from superiors, and communication reliability, function as the independent variables in this study. Meanwhile, Teacher Performance (Y) serves as the dependent variable, covering key aspects of instructional practices including planning, implementation, evaluation, and classroom teaching skills.

### c. Measurement Scale

A Likert Scale is developed to assess the respondents' level of agreement toward each statement using a five-point continuum, as articulated by Sekaran & Bougie (2017:19). The Likert Scale allows variables to be transformed into measurable indices.

### d. Population

The population in this study consists of teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Majalengka. Based on the school's staffing data, there are 141 teachers registered as part of the institution. All teachers are included as the population as they are considered to represent the actual condition being examined.

### e. Sample

A sample, as described by Indrawati (2015:164), refers to a subset of the population selected for observation, treatment, or to provide perceptions related to the research topic. When a population is too large to be analyzed comprehensively due to resource, time, or personnel limitations, a sampling technique is applied. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total of 104 respondents.

### f. Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were collected through questionnaires completed by the teachers, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and relevant websites.

### g. Data Analysis Techniques

According to Indrawati (2015), the validity of an instrument is directly proportional to its accuracy in measuring the intended target. A more valid instrument not only aligns closely with its measurement objectives but also enhances clarity in the aspects being evaluated. To examine the relationships among latent variables based on their indicators, data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS SEM. The analysis employed the Inner Model, including coefficient of determination ($R^2$), effect size ($f^2$), and predictive relevance ($Q^2$), as well as the Outer Model, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's Alpha.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### a. Findings and Analysis

Based on the research results and data analysis, the variables of principal leadership, internal communication, and teacher performance were found to be valid and reliable. Overall, the findings indicate that the leadership component demonstrates a highly effective level of competence, internal communication is highly effective, and teacher performance is at a very high level.

Referring to the t-test results in Table 4.12, the t-statistic value for the path *Principal Leadership → Teacher Performance* is 4.270 with a p-value of 0.000, where the t-statistic exceeds the t-table value of 1.96 and the p-value is lower than $\alpha = 0.05$. This indicates that Principal Leadership has a significant influence on Teacher Performance.

Similarly, the t-test results show that the path *Internal Communication → Teacher Performance* has a t-statistic of 4.239 with a p-value of 0.000, also exceeding the t-table value of 1.96 and lower than $\alpha = 0.05$. This demonstrates that Internal Communication significantly affects Teacher Performance.

### b. Discussion

The research findings show that both principal leadership and internal communication determine teacher performance at SMKN 1 Majalengka.

1) Leadership and Internal Communication

   Both variables mutually reinforce each other; effective leadership facilitates smooth communication, while effective internal communication supports the implementation of leadership practices. This influence improves teacher confidence, work direction, and achievement of performance targets.

2) Statistical Hypothesis Confirmation

   ✓ Hypothesis 1 is accepted: Leadership significantly improves teacher performance.

   ✓ Hypothesis 2 is accepted: Internal communication significantly improves teacher performance.

Overall, teacher performance quality is driven by effective leadership and internal communication within the school.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### a. Conclusion

1) Conclusion

   ✓ Principal leadership is proven to improve teacher performance.

   ✓ Effective internal communication also significantly enhances teacher performance.

### b. Suggestions

1) For the Principal

   The principal is advised to strengthen leadership quality through competency development programs such as instructional leadership training, teacher coaching, and school management training. Considering the significant influence observed, aspects

related to guidance, academic supervision, and motivation should be continuously improved.

2) For the School Management

The school should reinforce internal communication through more structured mechanisms, such as regular coordination meetings, the use of digital communication platforms, and clear and transparent dissemination of policy information. Ensuring two-way, accessible information flow is essential to enhance teacher performance.

3) For Teachers

Teachers are encouraged to utilize the school's leadership and communication systems as means for professional enhancement. Teachers should actively provide feedback, follow guidance in professional development activities, and engage in communication forums to optimize performance and learning quality.

4) For Future Research (Practical Development)

Future studies may incorporate additional variables such as work direction, school culture, and job satisfaction to provide a deeper analysis.

### c. Theoretical Implications

1) For Future Researchers

Further research is recommended to expand the research model by adding other potential predictors of teacher performance such as work motivation, job satisfaction, school culture, or academic supervision to produce a more comprehensive model.

2) Research Method Development

Upcoming studies may adopt a mixed-method approach or expand the study population to other schools for broader generalization. Additionally, the use of covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) is recommended to strengthen theoretical validation.

3) Strengthening Theoretical Foundation

As this study supports the theory that effective leadership and strong internal communication enhance teacher performance, further theoretical exploration is needed on how these variables reinforce one another in educational contexts, especially within adaptive and participatory leadership models.

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