



Educational Leadership and Teacher Performance: Exploring the Impact of Instructional Management, Exemplary Conduct, and Staff Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Madrasah Principal Leadership; Teacher Performance; Instructional Leadership; Educational Quality

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This study aims to identify the level of madrasah principal leadership, determine the level of teacher performance, and examine the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance. A quantitative approach with a descriptive-associative design was employed. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 49 teachers using a saturated sampling technique. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, normality testing, simple linear regression, t-test hypothesis testing, and coefficient of determination analysis. The findings indicate that madrasah principal leadership was categorized as high, with a mean score of 3.77, while teacher performance was also categorized as high, with a mean score of 4.00. Simple linear regression showed a positive and statistically significant influence of principal leadership on teacher performance ($B = 0.532$, $t = 6.479$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.472$) indicates that principal leadership explained 47.2% of the variance in teacher performance, while 52.8% was attributable to other factors. These findings imply that strengthening principal leadership, particularly through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment, can serve as an important pathway for improving teacher performance and supporting educational quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental social investment because the quality of teachers and learning processes shapes human capability and national development. Madrasahs are important because they combine academic learning with religious and character formation, making teacher performance consequential for educational and social outcomes. Teachers translate institutional goals into classroom planning, instruction, assessment, and student

development; therefore, improving their performance is not merely an organizational concern but a public interest. Empirical evidence shows that instructional leadership is associated with teacher performance and professional development, indicating that leadership is an important institutional condition for educational quality (He et al., 2024; Flores, 2025; Hughes et al., 2023). The central point is that teacher quality requires organizational support. The reason is that professional work develops within institutional structures. Thus, examining principal leadership provides an important pathway for understanding how madrasahs can strengthen educational quality and social outcomes.

The relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance can be examined through instructional leadership theory and related leadership perspectives. Instructional leadership positions the principal as a leader who coordinates teaching, supervises instructional processes, and supports teachers' professional development (Bush, 2025; Rafiq-Uz-Zaman et al., 2025; Alzoraiki et al., 2023). Teacher performance concerns teachers' capacity to plan instruction, implement learning, and assess student achievement effectively. Empirical studies indicate that instructional leadership predicts professional development and is associated with teacher performance (Irwanto & Maria, 2025; Ayumi & Nasution, 2025). Leadership can also operate through empowerment, motivation, and professional participation, making these dimensions relevant to teachers' responses to school leadership (Wahyuti & Boussanlègue, 2025; Sariakin et al., 2025; Purba & Idawati, 2025). Accordingly, this study conceptualizes principal leadership through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment, while teacher performance is represented through instructional planning, implementation, and assessment.

A problem facing educational institutions is sustaining teacher performance amid changing curricular demands, technological developments, diverse learner needs, and increasing expectations for accountability. These pressures require principals to provide clear direction, credible professional examples, supervision, and opportunities for teachers to develop their capacity. However, leadership does not necessarily produce uniform effects because its influence can depend on organizational and professional conditions. Research shows that instructional leadership is related to teacher performance, while teacher efficacy and commitment can also shape this relationship (Constantia et al., 2023; Gechere et al., 2025; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). At MTsN 2 Bandung City, preliminary information indicated that the principal had conducted supervision, maintained communication, and modeled expected conduct, but staff empowerment and non-material motivation remained limited. Some teachers

showed resistance to instructional innovation. These conditions reveal a practical problem: leadership efforts may exist, yet their effects require empirical verification.

Previous research provides evidence that principal leadership is associated with teacher performance, but the literature presents different emphases and explanatory pathways. Ahmad et al. (2025) reported that instructional leadership practices influence teacher performance, while Buaja et al. (2025) characterized principal leadership as a catalyst for teacher performance improvement. Capillanes (2025) likewise identified an association between school heads' instructional leadership and teachers' work performance. However, Elfira et al. (2024) showed that teacher self-efficacy can mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and performance, while He et al. (2024) focused on professional development as an outcome of instructional leadership. These studies demonstrate that teacher performance involves multiple mechanisms. The research gap concerns the need to examine principal leadership as a focused explanatory variable rather than primarily as one component of broader leadership models, particularly in a specific madrasah context.

A further gap concerns how leadership is conceptualized and where it is investigated. Hallinger et al. (2025) synthesized decades of instructional leadership research using the PIMRS framework, demonstrating the breadth of international scholarship, while Bush (2025) emphasized the continuing relevance of instructional leadership in contemporary education. Nevertheless, existing studies frequently emphasize instructional management, transformational leadership, teacher efficacy, or professional development as separate constructs. Siahaan et al. (2023) highlighted leadership ethics and role modeling, whereas Wahyuti and Boussanlègue (2025) emphasized empowerment as a contributor to teacher motivation and performance. The present study occupies a specific position by integrating responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment within principal leadership and relating these dimensions directly to teacher performance. This gap is important because state madrasahs operate within distinctive educational, religious, and governmental structures.

The novelty of this study lies in a context-specific examination of madrasah principal leadership and teacher performance within a state Islamic secondary school. Rather than treating leadership only as instructional supervision or as a broad leadership style, the study brings together responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment as observable dimensions of principal leadership. It simultaneously examines teacher performance across instructional planning, implementation, and learning

assessment, connecting leadership with the complete instructional cycle. The study is important because preliminary conditions at MTsN 2 Bandung City indicate a practical tension between existing leadership efforts and persistent challenges in empowerment, motivation, and instructional innovation. Addressing this tension can provide a clearer picture of whether leadership functions as an effective organizational resource for teachers. The evidence is expected to strengthen the empirical foundation for leadership development and teacher performance improvement in comparable state madrasahs.

This study addresses whether madrasah principal leadership significantly influences teacher performance at MTsN 2 Bandung City and, if so, to what extent. The study argues that stronger principal leadership, expressed through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment, should be associated with stronger teacher performance in planning, implementing, and assessing learning. This argument assumes that accountable leadership provides direction, exemplary conduct establishes professional standards, and empowerment creates conditions for teachers to develop and participate in educational improvement. The study therefore determines the levels of principal leadership and teacher performance and tests the influence between them. Its contribution is empirical evidence from a state madrasah and clarification of whether these leadership dimensions explain teacher performance. The findings are expected to support context-sensitive leadership practice while recognizing that performance may also depend on factors beyond leadership.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative causal-associative design to examine the influence of madrasah principal leadership on teacher performance. This design was selected because the study aimed to statistically examine the relationship between an independent variable, principal leadership, and a dependent variable, teacher performance. Previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of instructional leadership in explaining teacher performance and professional development (Nellitawati et al., 2024; Harianto et al., 2025). The research was conducted at MTsN 2 Bandung City, located on Jl. Antapani No. 8, Antapani, Bandung. The school was selected because it provides an appropriate context for examining principal leadership and teacher performance within a secondary Islamic educational institution.

The population comprised 49 teachers at MTsN 2 Bandung City. Since the population was fewer than 100 teachers, a saturated sampling technique was employed, involving all 49 teachers as respondents. Data were collected through a structured closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire measuring principal leadership through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment,

and teacher performance through instructional planning, implementation, and assessment. These indicators reflect dimensions examined in previous studies of instructional leadership and teacher performance (Ulit, 2025; Capillanes, 2025). Secondary data, including teacher performance appraisal records, academic supervision reports, and archived lesson plans, were also used to support the questionnaire findings. Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22 through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to calculate mean scores for each variable and indicator, which were interpreted using a five-category scale. Before hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted, including the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for normality, Deviation from Linearity test, and Glejser test for heteroscedasticity. A significance value above 0.05 indicated that the relevant assumption was satisfied. Simple linear regression was subsequently applied to determine the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance. The significance of the regression coefficient was tested using a t-test at the 0.05 level. A significance value below 0.05 indicated a statistically significant influence, consistent with quantitative studies examining instructional leadership and teacher performance (Akomodi, 2025; Nellitawati et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Hypothesis Testing

Data were obtained from 49 teachers at MTsN 2 Bandung City using a 30-item questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items measuring principal leadership (X), covering responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment, and 15 items measuring teacher performance (Y), covering instructional planning, instructional implementation, and learning assessment. Data processing and statistical analysis were conducted using SPSS version 22.

Instrument Testing

Validity Test

Item validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient (r-count) with the critical value (r-table = 0.2816; N = 49; α = 0.05). All 15 items measuring principal leadership obtained r-count values ranging from 0.588 to 0.832 and exceeded the critical value. Therefore, all items were retained for analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. Validity Test Results for the Principal Leadership Variable (X)

Indicator	Item Range	r-count Range	Result
Responsibility	1–5	0.608–0.832	Valid
Exemplary conduct	6–10	0.588–0.829	Valid
Staff empowerment	11–15	0.636–0.686	Valid

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

For the teacher performance variable, 14 of the 15 items obtained r-count values above the critical value, ranging from 0.338 to 0.837. Item 15, under the learning assessment indicator, obtained an r-count of 0.082 and was therefore classified as invalid and excluded from subsequent analysis (Table 2).

Table 2. Validity Test Results for the Teacher Performance Variable (Y)

Indicator	Item Range	r-count Range	Result
Instructional planning	1–5	0.338–0.787	Valid
Instructional implementation	6–10	0.451–0.806	Valid
Learning assessment	11–15	0.082–0.837	14 Valid, 1 Invalid

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

Reliability Test

The reliability test indicated high internal consistency for both variables. The principal leadership scale produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of **0.928**, while the teacher performance scale produced a coefficient of **0.894**. Both coefficients exceeded the commonly accepted minimum criterion for internal consistency.

Descriptive Analysis

Principal Leadership Variable (X)

The descriptive analysis showed that all three indicators of principal leadership were classified as high based on the predetermined five-category scale. Responsibility and exemplary conduct each obtained a mean score of 3.79, while staff empowerment obtained a mean score of 3.74. The overall mean score was 3.77, which was categorized as high (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive Results for Principal Leadership Variable (X)

No.	Indicator	Mean	Category
1	Responsibility	3.79	High
2	Exemplary conduct	3.79	High
3	Staff empowerment	3.74	High
Overall mean		3.77	High

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

Teacher Performance Variable (Y)

The descriptive results showed that instructional planning and instructional implementation were categorized as high, with mean scores of 3.91 and 3.80, respectively. Learning assessment obtained a mean score of 4.29 and was categorized as very high. The overall mean score for teacher performance was 4.00, categorized as high (Table 4).

Table 4. Descriptive Results for Teacher Performance Variable (Y)

No.	Indicator	Mean	Category
1	Instructional planning	3.91	High
2	Instructional implementation	3.80	High
3	Learning assessment	4.29	Very High
Overall mean		4.00	High

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

Classical Assumption Tests

Normality Test

The normality test indicated that the regression residuals were normally distributed. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which exceeded the 0.05 significance level. The standardized residual histogram also showed an approximately bell-shaped distribution.

Linearity Test

The linearity test indicated a linear relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance. The Deviation from Linearity significance value was 0.764, exceeding 0.05. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Linearity Test Results (ANOVA)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Linearity	863.036	1	863.036	37.154	—
Deviation from Linearity	339.062	20	16.953	0.730	0.764

Heteroscedasticity Test

The Glejser test produced a significance value of 0.362 for the principal leadership variable, exceeding the 0.05 significance level. The scatterplot also showed residuals distributed above and below zero without a systematic pattern.

Hypothesis Testing

Simple Linear Regression

The simple linear regression analysis produced an R value of 0.687 and an R Square value of 0.472. The regression coefficients are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.687	0.472	0.461

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	27.689	5.163	—
Principal Leadership	0.532	0.082	0.687

Source: Researcher's SPSS 22 output, 2026

The resulting regression equation was $\hat{Y} = 27.689 + 0.532X$. The regression coefficient for principal leadership was 0.532.

t-Test

The hypothesis test was conducted with $df = 47$ at a 0.05 significance level. The calculated t-value was 6.479, exceeding the critical t-value of 2.012, with a significance value of 0.000. Thus, the statistical test resulted in the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a . The analysis therefore indicated a statistically significant positive effect of principal leadership on teacher performance.

Discussion

The findings indicate that madrasah principal leadership at MTsN 2 Bandung City was perceived as high ($M = 3.77$), with responsibility and exemplary conduct obtaining the highest scores ($M = 3.79$), followed by staff empowerment ($M = 3.74$). This pattern is consistent with Ahmad et al. (2025), who found that instructional leadership practices were positively associated with teacher performance in secondary schools. Similarly, Elfira et al. (2024) demonstrated that principals' instructional leadership contributes to teacher performance through teacher self-efficacy. However, the present finding extends these studies by showing that leadership dimensions emphasizing ****responsibility and exemplary conduct**** were slightly more prominent than empowerment in a madrasah context. This suggests that leadership effectiveness in Islamic secondary education may depend not only on instructional direction but also on the principal's personal example and accountable conduct.

The relatively lower mean for staff empowerment ($M = 3.74$), although still categorized as high, provides an important distinction from studies emphasizing empowerment as a mechanism for improving teacher motivation and performance. Wahyuti and Boussanlègue (2025) reported that empowerment leadership contributes to teacher motivation and performance by creating opportunities for participation and professional autonomy. Likewise, Sariakin et al. (2025) highlighted leadership and management practices as important

components of a productive educational environment. The present findings suggest that empowerment is already functioning positively at MTsN 2 Bandung City but may not be as strongly perceived as responsibility and exemplary conduct. This difference indicates that leadership quality should not be assessed solely through formal empowerment practices. In a madrasah setting, **role modeling and accountable leadership may constitute equally important dimensions of teachers' perceptions of effective leadership**.

Teacher performance was categorized as high overall ($M = 4.00$), with learning assessment achieving the highest mean ($M = 4.29$), followed by instructional planning ($M = 3.91$) and implementation ($M = 3.80$). This result corresponds with Nellitawati et al. (2024), who identified a significant relationship between instructional leadership, work commitment, and teacher performance. It also supports Capillanes (2025), who reported a relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and teachers' work performance. Nevertheless, the stronger performance in learning assessment represents a distinctive pattern in the present study. Rather than showing uniform strength across instructional stages, teachers demonstrated their greatest competence in assessment. This finding suggests that teacher performance at MTsN 2 Bandung City may be particularly strengthened in the evaluative stage of instruction, potentially reflecting institutional emphasis on monitoring student learning and

The significant regression result ($B = 0.532$; $t = 6.479$; $p < 0.001$) confirms that principal leadership positively influences teacher performance. The finding is consistent with Ahmad et al. (2025), who reported an influence of instructional leadership practices on teacher performance, and with Bandol (2026), who identified an association between instructional leadership and teachers' performance. It also aligns with Buaja et al. (2025), who positioned principal leadership as a catalyst for teacher performance improvement. However, the present study contributes a more specific finding by quantifying the relationship within a **madrasah secondary-school context in Indonesia**, where principal leadership is examined through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment. Thus, the result demonstrates that leadership remains statistically relevant to teacher performance even within an institutional environment characterized by Islamic educational values and organizational structures.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.472$) indicates that principal leadership explains 47.2% of the variance in teacher performance, while 52.8% remains associated with other factors. This result is compatible with Elfira et al. (2024), who showed that the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance can operate through teacher self-efficacy, indicating that leadership does not function in isolation. He et al. (2024) similarly identified

instructional leadership as a predictor of teachers' professional development rather than an exclusive determinant of professional outcomes. The present finding therefore supports a ****multifactorial understanding of teacher performance****. Its contribution lies in demonstrating that principal leadership has substantial explanatory power while simultaneously confirming that teacher performance cannot be fully explained by leadership alone. This distinction prevents an overly deterministic interpretation of the regression result.

The findings also correspond with Hallinger et al. (2025), whose systematic review of PIMRS-based instructional leadership research demonstrates the continuing relevance of principal instructional leadership across educational contexts. However, the present study differs in its emphasis on three leadership dimensions—responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment—rather than relying exclusively on conventional instructional-management dimensions. This distinction is particularly relevant to madrasah leadership, where leadership effectiveness may involve both managerial and relational responsibilities. Siahaan et al. (2023) similarly emphasized the importance of principal leadership ethics and role modeling in educational settings. The present findings therefore contribute to the literature by connecting ****ethical and exemplary leadership characteristics with measurable teacher-performance outcomes****, rather than treating instructional leadership solely as a technical management function.

Overall, the study contributes empirical evidence that principal leadership is a significant predictor of teacher performance in an Indonesian madrasah, with a relatively substantial explanatory contribution of 47.2%. Its novelty lies in integrating ****responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment**** as leadership dimensions and examining their relationship with the complete instructional cycle of planning, implementation, and assessment. This complements previous research that has primarily emphasized instructional leadership, professional development, or transformational leadership separately (Wahyuti & Boussanlègue, 2025; Franklin et al., 2023). The findings suggest that effective madrasah leadership is not limited to directing instruction but also involves modeling professional conduct and enabling teachers to perform their responsibilities effectively. Thus, the study extends existing evidence by providing a context-specific leadership-performance model for secondary Islamic education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that madrasah principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance at MTsN 2 Bandung City ($\beta = 0.532$, $t = 6.479$, $p < 0.001$), with leadership explaining 47.2% of the variance in

teacher performance. The key lesson is that effective madrasah leadership is not limited to administrative direction but is reflected through responsibility, exemplary conduct, and staff empowerment, which collectively support teachers' professional performance. The principal contribution of this study is its empirical evidence from an Indonesian madrasah context, extending the literature by connecting these three leadership dimensions with teachers' performance across instructional planning, implementation, and assessment. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its single-institution setting, relatively small population, cross-sectional design, and reliance primarily on questionnaire-based data, which restrict broader generalization and causal interpretation. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, and additional variables such as teacher competence, motivation, organizational culture, academic supervision, and job satisfaction to develop a more comprehensive explanation of teacher performance in madrasah education.

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