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The Impact of the Principal's Leadership on Teacher Performance in History at Palu State High School 5

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ABSTRACT

Education is a pillar of national development because it determines the quality of human resources. The leadership of school principals plays a strategic role in enhancing the motivation and performance of teachers, particularly history teachers, who play a vital role in shaping students' character and competencies. This study aims to analyze the contribution of school principal leadership to the performance of history teachers at Palu State High School 5 and to describe teachers' performance achievements in the classroom. The study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method. The research subjects included the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, history teachers, and students in grades 11–12. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods involving data reduction, narrative presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that the principal effectively fulfills a dual role as a supervisor, evaluator, and motivator. The principal guides teachers through formal and informal supervision, routinely monitors and evaluates learning, and encourages professional development by creating a conducive environment and providing recognition. This leadership contributes positively to the performance of history teachers, as evidenced by their mastery of subject matter, effective use of class time, appropriate pedagogical strategies, use of instructional media, and educational interactions with students. As a result, the principal's leadership has enhanced professionalism, discipline, creativity, and the quality of education at Palu State High School No. 5.

1. Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of national development because it determines the quality of human resources and the progress of the nation. As the country with the

fourth-largest population in the world, Indonesia has great potential for advancement if the quality of its education continues to improve. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education is a conscious and planned effort to develop the potential of students so that they possess spiritual strength, self-control, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for themselves and society (Mansir, 2021). This underscores that education is oriented toward the holistic development of character and competencies.

In efforts to improve teacher performance, the principal's role as a leader is crucial; the success or failure of a school's objectives depends on the principal's leadership (Diana, 2025). In the delivery of education, the principal's leadership plays a strategic role because it influences teacher motivation and performance. The principal's duties include planning, implementation, supervision, evaluation, and management of the school information system (Sasmita, 2023). Effective and transformational leadership can foster a collaborative work culture and improve the quality of learning (Hapipi, 2024).

Teacher performance is a synergistic element that must be developed to produce professional educators capable of creating educational processes relevant to the demands of the situation, conditions, and needs of the communities that employ graduates (Kamalia, 2022). Teacher performance, particularly that of history teachers, is crucial to the success of learning because it involves not only conveying subject matter but also shaping students' character and national consciousness. Research findings at SMA Negeri 5 Palu indicate that the principal's leadership significantly contributes to improving history teachers' performance through their roles as supervisors, evaluators, and motivators. Thus, effective principal leadership positively influences teachers' professionalism and the quality of learning at the school. Another factor influencing teacher performance is work commitment (Fitri, 2026).

According to Anne Ahira (2002), the English terms for "kontribusi" are "contribute" and "contribution," which refer to participation, involvement, engaging oneself, or a donation. In this context, a contribution can take the form of material goods or actions. By contributing, an individual also strives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their life. Contributions can be made in various fields, such as thought, leadership, professionalism, finance, and others. (Zurriyati, 2021). (Ibrahim 2020) The definition of contribution according to the scientific dictionary written by Dany H defines contribution as money or financial support merely providing support. A similar definition comes from Yandianto's entry in the general Indonesian dictionary, which defines a grant as a form of giving money or property to an organization, and so on. This definition is narrow because only people who have money or property can donate. Donations cannot be interpreted as mere formalities; there must be tangible evidence of participation for an activity to succeed.

According to Robbins, as cited by Danim and Suparno: leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals. Leadership is the ability to influence people toward the achievement of organizational goals. It is the capacity

and readiness of an individual to influence, encourage, persuade, motivate, and, if necessary, compel others to accept that influence and take action to facilitate the process of achieving predetermined objectives (Gufron 2020). According to Handayaningrat, he states that: “Leadership is the ability to convince people to pursue their goals decisively and with full enthusiasm. These people or subordinates will carry out their duties; an organizational leader will succeed if supported by the ability to direct and control the organization in achieving its objectives” (Sahadi, 2020).

According to Sri Damayanti, the term “school principal” is derived from two words: “principal” and “school.” The word “principal” can be interpreted as the head or leader of an organization or institution, while “school” refers to an institution where education is received and provided. Thus, it can be said that a school principal is the leader of a school or an institution where education is received and provided (Sunaedi, 2023). According to Danim (2010), a school principal’s leadership skills are one of the key determining factors in empowering teachers and improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes. The school principal is the person most responsible for ensuring that teachers and school staff can work optimally. School culture and learning culture are also shaped by the school principal’s leadership style in interacting with the school community.

Teacher performance refers to the results or achievements demonstrated through the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities within an organization. Performance can be defined as work achievements or performance that reflect an individual’s operational effectiveness based on established standards and criteria (Sunaedi, 2023). Thus, teacher performance illustrates how teachers fulfill their roles professionally to achieve educational goals. Work motivation and work climate have a positive impact on job satisfaction, and the performance of educational staff is positively influenced by job satisfaction and several other factors (Bela, 2025).

Teachers play a strategic role in human resource development through education. Tilaar (2003) emphasizes that teachers hold a crucial role in the educational process, although in practice they often do not receive commensurate recognition. Teachers are also viewed as role models expected to demonstrate ideal behavior in accordance with society’s normative values. Furthermore, Turang (2003) states that teachers, as learning managers, are responsible for planning, organizing, motivating, supervising, and evaluating the learning process to ensure the effectiveness and quality of learning outcomes. In the context of school principal leadership, key indicators include the roles of supervisor, evaluator, and motivator. Leadership focused on learning, academic supervision, and teacher professional development has been shown to have a significant impact on the quality of learning (Lusiani, 2025). Meanwhile, the performance of history teachers is measured through their ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning in accordance with the curriculum, as well as to develop meaningful learning and encourage critical thinking among students (Yuliani, 2020; Hidayah, 2022).

Therefore, performance indicators for history teachers include mastery of historical material, effective use of class time, and professional mastery of teaching and education. As a leader, the principal plays a crucial role in every aspect of educational implementation at the school (Rohyadi, 2025). The purpose of this study is to explain the contribution of the principal's leadership to teacher performance in history at State High School 5 Palu. Additionally, this study aims to describe teacher performance in history at State High School 5 Palu as an indication of the level of professionalism and the effectiveness of instructional implementation taking place at the school.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the contribution of the principal's leadership to the performance of history teachers at Palu State High School 5. Qualitative research is a method used in natural settings, with the researcher as the key instrument; data collection techniques are conducted through triangulation; analysis is inductive; and it emphasizes meaning over generalization (Sugiyono in Safarudin et al., 2023). This approach is descriptive-analytical; thus, the deeper the analysis process, the higher the quality of the research results obtained.

The study was conducted at State High School 5 Palu because there are indications of a positive and significant relationship between the principal's leadership and history teachers' performance. The research object is the contribution of the principal's leadership to teachers' performance in history at State High School 5 Palu, including its impact on enhancing teachers' professionalism and the quality of learning. The research object itself is the variable being studied to clearly describe a condition or situation at the research site (Supriati in Hamidah, 2023).

Research subjects are the parties who serve as sources of information in the study. Research subjects are understood as informants who provide information regarding the situations and conditions under investigation (Rahmadi in Nashrullah et al., 2023). The subjects in this study include the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, history teachers, and 33 students from Grade XII M1 and Grade XI M3. Although the history teacher teaches eight classes, the study focused on these two classes because they represent the characteristics of history learning and align with the agreed-upon schedule.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly through interviews and observations of the school principal, teachers, students, and relevant school officials (Hasan in Inadjo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from documents, school activity reports, books, journals, and relevant previous studies (Sugiyono, 2018). The data collection techniques used include observation, interviews, and document analysis. These techniques were conducted systematically to obtain valid and reliable data to address the research focus (Siti, 2024). Through this combination of techniques, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of

the principal's leadership to the performance of history teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Palu.

Observation is a data collection technique involving direct observation of the objects or events under study. Observation is conducted carefully to obtain factual information in the field and is typically documented in the form of an observation report. According to Yusa (in Pratiwi, 2024), observation is a data collection technique conducted directly in the field to understand the phenomena under study. Interviews are a data collection technique involving a question-and-answer process between the researcher and the respondent to construct meaning regarding a specific topic. Sugiyono (in Prawiyogi et al., 2021) states that interviews are used to elicit in-depth information, particularly in qualitative research, so that researchers can understand the respondents' experiences, views, and perceptions in greater detail.

Documentation study is a secondary data collection technique using written documents relevant to the research subject. Documentation is used to supplement and strengthen data from interviews and observations (Fuad & Sapto in Yusra, 2021). Data analysis is conducted using qualitative descriptive methods through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is the process of summarizing and focusing the data on key points (Sugiyono, 2018). Data presentation is done in narrative form to ensure ease of understanding. Furthermore, drawing conclusions is done gradually and may evolve based on field findings (Sugiyono, 2018).

3. Result and Discussion

Palu State Senior High School 5 was established through the initiative of the Tondo Village community, together with community leaders and local government officials, who proposed the establishment of a senior high school in the area. These efforts bore fruit with the issuance of Deed of Grant No. 594:4/945/X/T-/1990 on October 19, 1990, which served as the basis for the school's establishment. Subsequently, the government, through Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 0363/0/1991, officially established State Senior High School 5 Palu.

The school began accepting students in the 1990/1991 academic year and graduated its first class in 1993/1994. Palu State High School 5 has the vision of "Fostering outstanding human resources in the fields of science and technology (IPTEK) and religious values (IMTAQ), as well as environmental awareness." To realize this vision, the school carries out various missions, including improving the quality of learning, religious guidance, developing academic and non-academic potential, enhancing discipline, and fostering environmental awareness. These vision and mission serve as a guide for the entire school community in carrying out educational activities to create a generation that is intelligent and of good character.

Result

The data presented here was obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. The sources included the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, history teachers, and 11th-grade social studies students. This section will present the data collected. For clarity, the information is presented in detail as follows:

The Principal's Leadership Contribution to History Teachers' Performance

The Principal's Role as a Supervisor

One of the principal's key contributions at Palu State High School 5 in enhancing history teachers' performance is through his role as a supervisor. The principal, Drs. Salim, M.M., stated that he "always strives to provide guidance and direction to teachers, both formally through meetings and supervision, and informally through daily communication," and encourages history teachers to participate in training and competency development (Interview, September 15, 2025).

This statement was corroborated by history teacher Irwan Yama, S.Pd, who noted that the principal regularly holds meetings and monitors teacher attendance in the classroom to ensure that duties are carried out effectively (Interview, September 3, 2025). A similar sentiment was expressed by Lindra Septiani, S.Pd, who emphasized that the principal actively guides teacher performance and involves history teachers in important activities such as commemorations of historical events (Interview, September 8, 2025). Additionally, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, H. Abd. Razak, S.Pd., M.Pd., stated that the principal has effectively carried out managerial and supervisory functions in accordance with their primary duties and responsibilities (Interview, September 10, 2025). Based on these interview results, it can be concluded that the principal has effectively fulfilled their role as a supervisor in supporting the improvement of history teachers' performance.

The Principal's Role as an Evaluator

The principal of Palu State High School 5, Drs. Salim, M.M., fulfills his role as an evaluator by monitoring, assessing, and following up on teacher performance and school programs. He stated that evaluations are conducted based on indicators such as lesson planning, mastery of subject matter, classroom management, and student learning outcomes. In addition, he routinely observes classes and discusses the results with teachers to ensure continuous improvement (Interview, September 15, 2025).

This was reinforced by Lindra Septiani, S.Pd, who stated that the principal consistently conducts direct classroom monitoring every week to ensure learning proceeds according to standards, even substituting for absent teachers to ensure the learning process continues (Interview, September 8, 2025). In line with this, Irwan Yama, S.Pd, emphasized that evaluation is conducted not only through administrative reports but also by going directly into the field and followed up

through teacher coaching and training (Interview, September 3, 2025). The results of the observation on September 15, 2025, showed that the principal had carried out the evaluation function consistently and purposefully. Thus, it can be concluded that the principal plays an active role as an evaluator in improving teacher professionalism and the quality of learning at SMA Negeri 5 Palu.

The Role of the Principal as a Motivator

The principal of Palu State High School 5, Drs. Salim, M.M., plays an active role as a motivator by encouraging history teachers to participate in MGMPs, workshops, seminars, and training sessions, as well as providing supporting resources such as books, projectors, digital resources, and other learning media. This initiative aims to ensure teachers are better prepared to meet curriculum demands and capable of creating creative and relevant learning experiences (Interview, September 15, 2025). Similarly, H. Abd. Razak, S.Pd., M.Pd., stated that at the start of each week, particularly on Mondays, the principal provides guidance and motivation to boost teachers' work ethic, performance, and sense of responsibility in the learning process (Interview, September 10, 2025). Irwan Yama, S.Pd, added that the principal consistently emphasizes the importance of teachers' responsibility toward students and instills the awareness that educating students is a calling of the heart (Interview, September 3, 2025).

Additionally, Mu'Minin, S.Pd.Gr, emphasized that the principal also provides rewards and recognition to high-performing teachers, whether in the form of praise, public acknowledgment, or formal awards, thereby fostering motivation and work ethic among other teachers (Interview, September 10, 2025). Observations conducted on September 8, 2025, showed that the principal actively provided encouragement, advice, and praise to teachers and staff—particularly while leading assemblies—to boost the work ethic and professionalism of the entire school community. Thus, the principal has proven effective in fulfilling his role as a motivator at Palu State High School No. 5.

Performance of History Teachers at Palu State High School 5

The performance of history teachers at Palu State High School 5 has improved thanks to the principal's contributions as a supervisor, evaluator, and motivator. The teachers' performance achievements are shown in Figure 1 below and in the following aspects:

a. Mastery of Course Content

History teachers have a solid grasp of the material before teaching, making the learning process dynamic. Ms. Haerana Sanusi, S.Pd, stated that teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies need to be continuously improved, including the use of modern media to support learning (Interview, September 4, 2025). This is supported by student Nadin, who noted that the teacher presents the material in an engaging way and actively involves students (Interview, September 16, 2025). Observations in Class XII M1 showed that the teacher conducts thorough

preparation, uses methods appropriate to the material, and fosters a conducive learning environment (Observation, September 15, 2025).



Figure 1. History Lessons in the Classroom

b. Use of Teaching Time

History teachers make optimal use of class time to ensure effective and efficient learning. Mu'Minin, S.Pd.Gr., stated that every time they enter the classroom, teachers immediately begin the lesson according to the schedule (Interview, September 10, 2025). Student Fatimah adds that the teacher always arrives on time and manages time well (Interview, September 16, 2025). Observations in class XI M3 demonstrate the teacher's discipline in utilizing time, creating a focused learning atmosphere (Observation, September 16, 2025).

c. Mastery of Teaching Professionalism and Education

History teachers demonstrate a high level of professionalism, including administrative preparedness, teaching methods, and the use of instructional media. Irwan Yama, S.Pd, emphasized that teachers can request instructional support materials based on the needs of their classes (Interview, September 3, 2025). The principal, Drs. Salim, M.M., stated that teachers possess professional and pedagogical competencies in accordance with standards (Interview, September 15, 2025). Mrs. Lindra Septiani, S.Pd., added that teachers utilize subject-matter teacher communities (MGMP), supplementary resources, and training to enhance their professionalism (Interview, September 8, 2025). Observations on September 15 showed that teachers mastered the subject matter, learning strategies, and teaching materials, and engaged in positive interactions with students, reflecting a high level of professionalism (Observation, September 15, 2025). Thus, the performance of history teachers at Palu State High School 5 was proven to be good in terms of mastery of subject matter, time management, and educational professionalism, supported by supervision, evaluation, and motivation from the principal.

Discussion

The principal conducts both formal supervision (regular meetings, classroom observations) and informal supervision (daily communication), enabling teachers to receive guidance in a more open manner and making improvements in the quality of learning more effective. The principal encourages teachers to participate in training, workshops, and professional development activities, and grants them the freedom to choose teaching methods and media for history lessons. This supervision practice aligns with Coaching-Based Supervision (Glickman, 2021) and Collaborative Supervision (Burns, 2022), in which teachers are involved in activity planning and decision-making. Supervision is conducted continuously, including monitoring attendance, instructional materials, and weekly meetings, in accordance with the principles of the Developmental Supervision Model (Daresh, 2006).

The principal conducts structured and consistent evaluations through weekly classroom observations, lesson plan assessments, and monitoring of instructional implementation. Feedback is provided directly, emphasizing mastery of content, variety of methods, classroom management, and the relevance of history instruction. This approach aligns with Continuous Instructional Feedback and Evidence-Based School Leadership (Sharratt, 2022). The evaluation results have a positive impact: teachers become more disciplined, focused in designing lessons, and develop innovative methods. The principal also substitutes for teachers when they are unable to teach to ensure the continuity of learning while assessing teacher discipline.

The principal plays an active role in boosting the motivation of history teachers through various strategies. First, he encourages teachers to participate in subject-specific teacher working groups (MGMP), workshops, seminars, and training sessions to develop their professional and pedagogical competencies. Second, the principal fosters a conducive work environment through effective communication, the provision of supportive facilities, and recognition of teachers' achievements. Third, the provision of non-material rewards, such as public recognition and praise, serves as a means to boost teachers' enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and self-confidence. This encouragement and support make teachers more creative in their teaching, actively participate in training, and are more committed to improving the quality of learning. These practices by the school principal align with the findings of Ibrahim (2020), who emphasizes the importance of motivation and support for improving teacher performance.

History teachers at Palu State High School 5 have a strong command of the subject matter and are able to present it in a contextual and engaging manner. Competency development is carried out through the Teachers' Working Group (MGMP), peer discussions, and the use of digital media. Students reported that learning does not consist solely of lectures but also involves participatory activities such as quizzes and educational games. Observations reveal thorough preparation, comprehensive references, methods appropriate to the material, and a conducive classroom atmosphere. These findings align with the theory of Teacher Professional

Competence (Nurhayati, 2021) and Pedagogical Content Knowledge. This can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Mastery of History Content in the Classroom

History teachers utilize class time effectively and with discipline. Lessons begin on time, start with an introductory activity, and cover the material thoroughly without disrupting the continuity of the next session. Transitions between activities are planned, creating a conducive and productive classroom environment. History teachers demonstrate a high level of professionalism: they have a deep mastery of the subject matter, apply pedagogical strategies suited to student characteristics, and make optimal use of media and learning resources. The principal emphasized that teachers are able to connect historical material to modern contexts, making learning more engaging and relevant. Observations also showed that teachers actively encourage student participation, use digital media, and pursue professional development through training and innovation.

It can be concluded that the principal of Palu State High School 5 effectively serves as a supervisor, evaluator, and motivator. This approach enhances the professional competence, discipline, creativity, and motivation of history teachers, thereby directly impacting the quality of learning and fostering a positive work environment at the school. History teachers at Palu State High School 5 demonstrate strong subject mastery, effective time management, and a high level of professionalism, which positively impact the quality of learning and student engagement.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the leadership of the principal of SMA Negeri 5 Palu has a significant influence on the performance of history teachers. The principal fulfills a dual role as a supervisor, evaluator, and motivator. As a supervisor, he provides guidance and direction in all aspects of teaching and learning, including the development of teachers' competencies. As an evaluator, the principal routinely conducts weekly monitoring

and evaluation to ensure that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly. Meanwhile, as a motivator, he consistently provides support and recognition, as well as delivers messages of encouragement both in meetings and at assemblies, thereby fostering teachers' enthusiasm and sense of responsibility. This leadership has a direct impact on the performance of history teachers. Teachers are able to master the subject matter well, use relevant methods and media, and create an active and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Class time is also utilized efficiently, with teachers starting and ending lessons on time according to the established schedule. Furthermore, professional teaching competence is evident in teachers' ability to apply appropriate pedagogical approaches, engage in educational interactions with students, and actively participate in training to enhance their competencies. Thus, the principal's leadership has proven to exert a strong positive influence on the professionalism, discipline, and quality of educational interactions among history teachers, ensuring that the learning process at Palu State High School 5 is effective and of high quality.

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