



Instructional Leadership Behavior of Elementary School Principals in Bandar Lampung City

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Receive: 12/06/2025

Accepted: 02/09/2025

Published: 01/10/2025

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan perilaku kepemimpinan instruksional kepala sekolah dasar di Bandar Lampung. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Informan penelitian terdiri atas satu kepala sekolah dan enam guru kelas di SD Negeri 04 Bumiwaras Bandar Lampung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah telah melaksanakan kepemimpinan instruksional melalui tiga dimensi utama, yaitu mendefinisikan misi sekolah, mengelola program instruksional, serta membangun iklim pembelajaran yang positif. Kepala sekolah berperan aktif dalam merumuskan visi dan misi, melakukan supervisi dan evaluasi pembelajaran, mengoordinasikan kurikulum, serta memantau perkembangan siswa. Selain itu, kepala sekolah juga berupaya menjaga disiplin waktu, memberikan reward, serta mendukung pengembangan profesional guru. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan beberapa kendala, khususnya pada aspek komunikasi dan keterlambatan penyampaian informasi, yang dapat mengurangi efektivitas pelaksanaan program. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan instruksional merupakan faktor kunci dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan, sehingga diperlukan optimalisasi koordinasi dan komunikasi agar hasil yang dicapai lebih maksimal.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan instruksional, kepala sekolah, mutu pendidikan

Abstract

This study aims to describe the instructional leadership behavior of elementary school principals in Bandar Lampung. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The research informants consisted of one principal and six classroom teachers at SD Negeri 04 Bumiwaras Bandar Lampung. The results of the study show that the principal has implemented instructional leadership through three main dimensions, namely defining the school's mission, managing instructional programs, and building a positive learning climate. The principal plays an active role in formulating the vision and mission, supervising and evaluating learning, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student development. In addition, the principal also strives to maintain time discipline, provide rewards, and support teachers' professional development. However, this study also found several obstacles, particularly in terms of communication and delays in conveying information, which can reduce the effectiveness of program implementation.

These findings confirm that instructional leadership is a key factor in improving the quality of education, so optimization of coordination and communication is needed in order to achieve maximum results.

Keywords: instructional leadership, principal, education quality

Introduction

Leadership is one of the important factors for achieving organizational goals. Strong leadership is needed by an organization to achieve the success of the institution it leads (Comalasari et al., 2020; Larosa et al., 2022; Syamsibar, 2022). Leadership is often associated with the ability to influence a person. Leadership style is an important aspect for researchers to study (Aas & Paulsen, 2019b; Gawlik, 2018a). Leadership style must be in line with the goals and objectives of managing an organization (Santika, 2017). Thus, instructional principals are seen as capable of improving school performance by influencing teachers to improve their students' learning and teaching (Apkarian & Rasmussen, 2021; Hallinger et al., 2018).

Leadership is often associated with the ability to influence others. Leadership style is an important aspect for researchers to study (Aas & Paulsen, 2019b; Gawlik, 2018a). This is emphasized by policymakers as a way to improve the quality of education (Gawlik, 2018b; Goldring et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2018; Thessin, 2019) and school effectiveness (Aas & Paulsen, 2019a; Shaked, 2019; Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). In the context of education reform, the role of school leaders has become increasingly important, as they are responsible for the entire education system (Hallinger et al., 2018; Mngo & Mngo, 2018; Wallin et al., 2019). The increase in studies on instructional leadership indicates a global effort to create a sustainable education system (Anderson & Wallin, 2018; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Shaked, 2020).

Based on previous literature reviews, it is further evident that leadership in schools can improve the learning process. Principal leadership is a key part of the process of change in schools (Sunardi et al., 2019). This is because inflexible principal leadership will disrupt the running of school activities. This shows that each principal has their own way of leading their organization.

Good leadership requires knowledge of the effectiveness of the leader himself. The effectiveness of a school principal is

characterized by strong learning leadership, a focus on developing curriculum standards, and maximizing student learning time. This is related to instructional leadership style, which is leadership that can motivate and support student achievement. The instructional leadership of school principals is related to the duties of teachers as professionals to develop learning methods in schools (Aslam et al., 2022). This instructional leadership is a key factor in the development and success of education quality.

According to research (Ismail et al., 2018; Shaked et al., 2020), the main focus of instructional leadership is on achieving academic goals and improving learning. Instructional leadership has a strong influence on school success, as shown by research conducted in Western education (Hallinger et al., 2020). The principal, as an instructional leader, ensures a learning environment that is orderly, serious, and focused, yet realistic and achievable. This means that both parties respect the attitudes and achievements of teachers and students (Day et al., 2020). Therefore, instructional leadership is not easy to implement, but it is not impossible to achieve.

This strategy, implemented by the principal, includes setting academic goals for the school, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, creating professional development opportunities for teachers, and providing incentives for teaching and learning (Nurabadi et al., 2022; Shaked et al., 2020). This leadership model is a key characteristic of effective schools (Hou et al., 2019). Instructional leaders are considered strong and directive leaders (Hallinger, 2011; Qadach et al., 2019). Instructional leadership remains a leadership model that continues to be an interesting topic for researchers in the field of educational leadership (Harris et al., 2018).

The instructional leadership model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) has three dimensions, including defining the school's mission, managing instructional programs, and developing a positive school learning climate. Each dimension has several

specific functions that involve the principal's behavioral practices. Furthermore, efforts to formulate the school's mission involve leaders planning school goals together with staff and parents to determine areas for improvement in the school in addition to setting goals for each area. The dimension of managing instructional programs involves teachers' efforts in curriculum and instruction. The tasks include supervising and evaluating classroom learning, monitoring classroom learning through informal classroom visits, and coordinating classroom practices in line with the school goals set in the first dimension. The final dimension is developing a positive school learning climate by maintaining high school visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and protecting teaching and learning time.

Although there have been many studies on instructional leadership, their scope is limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the instructional leadership behavior of elementary school principals in Bandar Lampung. The researcher aims to obtain field data through interviews. Based on the data obtained, the researcher will find out the conditions in the field regarding this topic. Thus, the results of this study can be used as the latest reference related to the instructional leadership behavior of elementary school principals, which can be used as a reference for future researchers.

Method

The method used in this study was qualitative descriptive, which aims to describe the conditions of the research object naturally and understand the phenomena experienced by the subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions (Fiantika et al., 2022; Bungin, 2017). The research was conducted at SD Negeri 04 Bumiwaras Bandar Lampung, located at Jl. Yos Sudarso Gg. M. Agus No. 48, Kelurahan Bumiwaras, Kecamatan Bumiwaras, Kota Bandar Lampung, with an accreditation status of "B". The research informants consisted of one principal and six classroom teachers. The researcher acted as the main instrument involved in all stages of the research, from planning, data collection, analysis, to reporting the results (Harahap, 2020). Before implementation, the researcher submitted a

letter of permission to the school, and after obtaining approval, the research was carried out according to the predetermined focus of the problem. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification so that the data from interviews, observations, and documentation could be understood and reported systematically (Miles & Huberman in Harahap, 2020).

Result and Discussion

Results

Instructional Leadership Behavior of School Principals

The results of the study show that the instructional leadership behavior of school principals is reflected in three main dimensions, namely defining the mission and goals of the school, managing instructional programs, and promoting a positive learning culture and climate. These three dimensions are important indicators in realizing quality education in schools because they provide clear direction, ensure the effectiveness of learning implementation, and build a conducive learning environment. The description of the application of each dimension will be presented in the following section.

First, as a learning leader, the principal has a strategic role in defining and communicating the school's mission clearly and meaningfully. Based on interviews, the principal stated: "The principal adjusts the school's vision, which is to educate students based on faith and piety (imtaq). To realize this vision, programs such as reciting salawat, regular dhuha prayers, additional learning hours, and the provision of literacy books from the School Operational Assistance (BOS) were created." This was reinforced by the statement of the 1st-6th grade teachers: "The principal always coordinates with a special team in formulating objectives, which are then socialized to teachers and adjusted to the eight dimensions of the graduate profile.

School communication is also carried out consistently through official forums. The principal emphasized: "At the beginning of each school year, the principal coordinates to

invite parents to convey school policies. In addition, teachers are observed at least once every three months and the results are presented in meetings.” In line with this, teachers said: “The school's mission is communicated through parent meetings at the beginning of the year and regular meetings with teachers. The principal also

Thus, it can be concluded that the principal has made efforts to formulate and communicate the school's objectives clearly through various official forums, both parent meetings and regular meetings with teachers. These efforts demonstrate consistency in unifying the perceptions of the entire school community so that they have the same commitment to realizing the school's vision and mission.

Second, the principal has an important responsibility in managing the learning program so that it runs effectively and in accordance with the school's objectives. Based on interviews, the principal stated: “The principal always checks the condition of the classroom randomly before conducting observations for a minimum of 30 minutes. In addition, he checks the results of the teachers' work and adjusts them to the learning outcomes. Supervision is also carried out regularly as a form of monitoring and guidance.” This was reinforced by the statement of a grade 1–6 teacher: “The principal conducts supervision to evaluate teachers during learning, and even conducts surprise inspections. If there are any discrepancies, the principal immediately gives a warning so that they can be corrected immediately.”

In addition to supervision, the principal also coordinates the curriculum to align with the school's vision and mission and the needs of students. The principal said: “The principal works with parents to overcome learning obstacles. If problems are found, parents are called in and given an explanation. Additional learning assistance such as tutoring is also suggested.” In line with this, the teacher said: “The principal actively inquires about the progress of student learning. For example, if a second grader cannot read yet, the principal suggests tutoring or additional guidance.”

Thus, the principal has exercised instructional leadership through learning

management, supervision, evaluation, curriculum coordination, and monitoring student progress. These efforts demonstrate the principal's commitment to improving the quality of education, supporting teacher performance, and ensuring optimal learning services for every student.

Third, the principal has a strategic role in coordinating the curriculum so that learning is focused and consistent with the school's vision and mission. The principal emphasized, “The principal always tries to arrive early to maintain high visibility, prohibits vendors from entering so that learning time is not disrupted, and ensures that the bell rings on time.” This is supported by the statement of teachers in grades 1-6: “The principal arrives on time or even early, but sometimes there is still miscommunication when teachers are assigned to be out during class hours.”

In addition, the principal also strives to increase teacher and student motivation by providing incentives. The principal said, “The principal provides rewards for innovative teachers and high-achieving students, which are usually announced during ceremonies.” Teachers added, “Incentives are given in the form of meals during meetings or transportation allowances for teachers who accompany competitions, while rewards for high-achieving students are already in place.”

In terms of professional development, the principal is committed to providing support through training. The principal explained: “The principal collaborates with relevant agencies and encourages teachers to actively participate in various training programs or learning communities.” However, teachers expressed a concern: “Information about training activities is sometimes delivered late, so it cannot always be utilized.”

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the principal has made efforts to maintain the quality of learning through curriculum coordination, time discipline, rewards, and professional development support. However, communication still needs to be improved so that program implementation can be more effective and optimal.

Discussion

1. Application of Dimensions Defining the School Mission in the Instructional Leadership of the Principal

As leaders of learning, principals have a strategic role in formulating and communicating the vision, mission, and goals of the school. The interview results show that principals not only set goals based on the school's vision, which is grounded in faith and piety, but also implement them through various concrete programs such as sholawat activities, performing the dhuha prayer, adding learning hours, and providing literacy facilities. This is in line with the results of research by Sutisna et al. (2023), which states that principals must be able to translate the school's vision and mission into concrete programs that support the improvement of education quality.

Teacher involvement in formulating school goals is also an important aspect. Based on information from teachers, the principal coordinates with a special team before socializing the goals to teachers. This involvement creates a sense of ownership of the formulated goals, so that teachers can be more committed to implementing them in the classroom. According to Mohzana et al. (2024), participation in decision-making can increase motivation and job satisfaction because individuals feel valued and involved in the organization's strategic processes.

From a communication perspective, the principal consistently conveys the school's objectives to teachers, students, and parents through official forums, such as parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the school year, regular meetings with teachers, and through school policies that are implemented continuously. Communication is not only one-way but also provides space for observation and feedback. This practice supports the theory of instructional leadership, which emphasizes the importance of continuous supervision and monitoring in order to maintain the quality of learning (Hallinger et al., 2018).

However, the interview results also showed challenges related to communication effectiveness. Although the principal had tried to convey the objectives clearly, the effectiveness of information reception by teachers and parents was highly dependent on

the consistency and openness of two-way communication. This is important considering that suboptimal communication can lead to miscommunication, which has the potential to hinder the achievement of educational goals.

2. Application of the Dimension of Managing Learning Programs in the Instructional Leadership of Principals

The results of the study show that principals have carried out their instructional leadership roles comprehensively, including managing learning programs, supervising and evaluating the teaching and learning process, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. This role is in line with the instructional leadership framework proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), which emphasizes the importance of principal involvement in designing, implementing, and evaluating learning activities to ensure they are in line with educational objectives.

First, in terms of learning supervision and evaluation, the principal routinely conducts supervision, classroom observations, and surprise inspections to assess teacher performance and the effectiveness of learning methods. Teachers also receive feedback delivered at official forums. This practice shows that the principal has acted as a learning supervisor, as explained by Hajani et al. (2022), that the supervisory function is not only to assess but also to guide teachers in improving the quality of learning.

Second, in terms of coordinating the curriculum, the principal ensures the achievement of basic competencies through collaboration with teachers and parental involvement. When students are found to be falling behind, the principal actively provides recommendations for follow-up, such as taking additional lessons. These findings support the results of research by Dwiyono et al. (2022), which emphasizes that curriculum coordination is one of the core functions of instructional leadership in order to align the school's vision, student needs, and education policy.

Third, regarding monitoring student progress, the principal actively inquires about the learning outcomes of students. Special attention is given to students who experience obstacles, such as students who are not yet

fluent in reading by the second grade. This shows the principal's concern for the individual learning achievements of students. According to Triana et al. (2025), continuous monitoring of student development is an important step to ensure appropriate intervention so that all children have fair learning opportunities.

3. Application of the Dimension of Coordinating the Curriculum in the Instructional Leadership of Principals

In general, the results of this study show that the principal has tried to carry out the role of instructional leadership in accordance with existing theories and frameworks. However, field findings also indicate several obstacles, especially in the aspect of communication. Although the principal is disciplined, arrives early, and is active in school activities, suboptimal communication sometimes causes miscommunication between the principal, teachers, and parents. This condition supports the results of Gafur's (2020) research, which states that the effectiveness of school leadership is not only determined by assertiveness and supervision but also by open and collaborative communication skills.

In addition, the principal also plays a role in protecting instructional time so that teaching and learning activities are not disrupted by irrelevant activities, for example by prohibiting vendors from entering the school environment, ensuring that the bell rings on time for class and recess, and assigning teachers to maintain order in the classroom. The principal also strives to maintain high visibility by arriving early, being directly involved in school activities, and setting an example for teachers and students (Mardizal, 2025). These efforts demonstrate positive discipline and exemplary behavior, although there are still obstacles in the form of suboptimal communication, which sometimes leads to miscommunication and slightly disrupts the learning process.

In an effort to improve the quality of education, the principal also plays a role in motivating teachers and students by providing incentives. Rewards are given to teachers who have special skills or show innovation in learning, as well as to students who excel in various competitions, such as FLS2N. Another form of appreciation is shown by providing refreshments at meetings, or transportation and

meal allowances for teachers who accompany students in competitions. However, based on information from teachers, incentives for educators are still limited, so they do not fully motivate them to improve their work.

Selanjutnya, kepala sekolah juga menunjukkan perannya dalam mempromosikan pengembangan profesional dengan mengirim guru mengikuti pelatihan, workshop, maupun komunitas belajar. Kerja sama dengan dinas terkait telah dilakukan untuk memperluas kesempatan guru dalam meningkatkan kompetensi dan wawasan. Meski demikian, dalam praktiknya, beberapa guru menyampaikan bahwa informasi terkait kegiatan pelatihan terkadang disampaikan kurang cepat sehingga peluang untuk mengikuti kegiatan tersebut tidak selalu dapat dimanfaatkan secara optimal.

Secara keseluruhan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kepala sekolah telah menunjukkan komitmen dalam mengoordinasikan kurikulum, melindungi waktu instruksional, memberikan insentif, serta mempromosikan pengembangan profesional. Akan tetapi, hambatan berupa komunikasi yang belum optimal dan keterlambatan penyampaian informasi masih menjadi tantangan yang perlu diperbaiki. Perbaikan pada aspek ini penting agar kepemimpinan instruksional dapat berjalan lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran dan hasil belajar siswa.

Conclusion

This study shows that the instructional leadership of elementary school principals in Bandar Lampung has been reflected in three main dimensions, namely defining the school's mission, managing instructional programs, and building a positive learning climate. Principals play a strategic role in formulating vision and mission, communicating goals consistently, supervising and evaluating learning, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student learning progress. In addition, efforts to maintain time discipline, provide incentives, and support teacher professional development also strengthen the effectiveness of instructional leadership. However, the study also found obstacles, particularly in the areas of communication and delays in information delivery, which have the potential to cause

miscommunication. Therefore, improving communication openness and optimizing coordination are necessary for instructional leadership to be more effective in improving the

quality of learning, teacher performance, and student learning outcomes.

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