

## **The Influence of Empowering Leadership and Certified Teachers on Teachers' Performance**

**Eni Masanti<sup>1</sup>, Nila Kesumawati<sup>2</sup>, Andi Rahman<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>SMAN 1 Rantau Bayur, Banyuasin, South Sumatra, Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Universitas PGRI Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: [enimasanti1@gmail.com](mailto:enimasanti1@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the influence of empowering leadership and teacher certification on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously, within State Elementary Schools in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency. Employing a quantitative expo-facto approach, data were collected via questionnaires and documentation from 83 teachers and analyzed using SPSS. The results indicate that both factors significantly and positively affect performance. Empowering leadership partially enhances teacher performance by fostering autonomy and support. Similarly, teacher certification status independently contributes to improved performance, likely through formal recognition and financial remuneration. Most substantially, the combined effect of empowering leadership and teacher certification exerts the strongest simultaneous influence on overall teacher performance. The novelty of this research lies in its specific examination of this dual-variable model in a rural educational context, highlighting how structural policy (certification) and daily managerial practice (leadership) interact. A key practical implication is the need for integrated school policies that combine certified teacher recruitment with ongoing leadership training for principals to cultivate an empowering work environment. This study contributes to the educational management literature by providing empirical evidence from a district-level setting, underscoring that both systemic incentives and localized leadership are critical levers for enhancing teacher efficacy.

**Keywords:** Empowering Leadership, Teachers' Certification, Teachers' Performance

### **A. Introduction**

Teachers play a very important role in forming quality human resources because they work as education personnel who require special skills. Teachers carry out their professional duties by educating, teaching, and training. Teachers instill and develop life values when educating, conveying and expanding science and technology when teaching, as well as developing students' skills when practicing. Teachers develop aspects of taste, karsa, and the creation of school residents in the realization of the ideal concept of education. Educators show the main characteristics, namely their personality,

as well as an open psychology. Educators master the abilities and authority needed to carry out their profession. Because the community considers teaching activities as professional work, teachers carry out their duties with a professional attitude, both at the national and international levels.

According to Aqib (2020), the performance of a teacher can be assessed through four main measures, namely: (1) commitment to students and their learning process must be shown by teachers, (2) in-depth mastery of teaching materials and delivery methods must be possessed by teachers, (3) students' learning abilities must be monitored by teachers through various evaluation techniques, and (4) active participation in the learning community in the professional environment must be carried out by teachers. In line with this opinion, Samana (2020) emphasized that the traits and personalities that support the learning process must be possessed by teachers, such as adaptability, enthusiasm, confidence, thoroughness, empathy, and the ability to work together. In general, various tasks related to the profession as an educator must be carried out by teachers, namely: (1) in the professional field, education, teaching, and training activities must be carried out by teachers; (2) in the field of humanities, the role of a second parent who understands and assists students in recognizing and developing their identity must be carried out by teachers; and (3) in the social field, efforts to help the community in acquiring knowledge and educating the nation's life based on Pancasila values must also be realized by teachers.

A qualified teacher is an educator who is able to compile learning tools, manage the teaching and learning process well, and always develop themselves and follow the progress of the world of education so as not to be left behind in information. In addition, teachers need to have teaching material competencies that are in line with their field of ability. To get a professional teacher, it requires adequate abilities and skills. According to Zahroh (2022), the capacity of educators includes proficiency and authority when fulfilling their expertise roles. The attitude of expertise shows the quality as well as the unique character of a high-standard teacher. Educators are expected to manage the entire classroom process through reciprocal teacher-student interaction based on a focused instructional design.

To achieve the previous learning goals agreed upon by all school residents, an effective, conducive school environment is needed, and there is harmony among all education personnel, such as principals, teachers, administrative staff, and parents of students and the community. Each of these elements has an important role in realizing organizational goals (Aqib, 2020). According to Suryana (2021), teachers are a profession that requires special skills in carrying out their duties. The duties of teachers as professionals include education, teaching, and training activities. Educational activities are related to the formation and development of life values, teaching activities focus on the delivery and development of science and technology, while training activities aim to hone students' skills. In the context of education,

teacher performance can be interpreted as the extent to which an educator carries out his duties optimally according to his abilities in order to achieve the goals of the educational institution. This ability is reflected in the way teachers teach, which can be measured through the level of competence in carrying out the learning process.

Teachers are an important element in the learning process and have a central role in determining the success of teaching and learning activities. The main duties of a teacher include designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating learning. In addition, the position of teachers in the educational process is very strategic and has a great influence. It is said to be strategic because teachers play a role in determining how extensive and in the material to be taught, while its decisive nature can be seen from their ability to choose and select appropriate teaching materials (Zahroh, 2022). According to Sukadi (2023), teachers are educators who have the main responsibility for teaching, namely developing students' creative potential, taste, and *karsa* as a tangible manifestation of the ideal educational concept. The teacher's personality is characterized by flexibility in thinking and psychological openness. Teachers are expected to be able to compete and work professionally in carrying out their duties. Meanwhile, Kurniasih (2020) explained that the teaching profession is a position that requires certain skills. The role of educators as a professional position includes coaching, learning, and ability development activities; coaching focuses on the formation of attitudes and character in life, learning is directed at the delivery and deepening of knowledge along with scientific advancement, while skill development is aimed at strengthening students' skills and potential.

The success of a school certainly requires a leader who is able to manage educational institutions effectively. In the context of education, the leader in question is the principal. The duties and responsibilities of school principals are the main indicators of the success of the institution he leads, one of which is through the application of the empowering leadership style. This empowerment leadership is a leadership approach that focuses on improving the abilities and independence of subordinates, as well as encouraging them to take the initiative and take responsibility for the tasks they undertake. A leader with an empowerment leadership style not only provides authority, but also plays an active role in fostering the confidence, autonomy, and personal development of his subordinates. Thus, the principal has a strategic position as a determining factor in the success of the management of the educational institution he leads.

According to Suharsaputra (2018), school principals have several important roles, including: (1) manager, (2) administrator, (3) supervisor, (4) leader, (5) innovator, (6) motivator, and (7) entrepreneur. Suhertian (2021) emphasized that the role of school leaders has a strategic position in the sustainability of an institution, because organizational achievements and obstacles are greatly influenced by the quality of leadership applied. This opinion is strengthened by Soetopo (2022) who states that the effectiveness of school principals in carrying out their responsibilities can be seen

from their capacity to influence and encourage other individuals to collaborate in an integrated manner in one work unit to achieve the same goals. Furthermore, Sudrajat (2023) stated that the involvement of school principals in efforts to improve the quality of learning has a constructive impact on the progress of school institutions. The level of leadership effectiveness that is carried out will determine the conditions of governance and the academic climate in the school environment that it leads. In line with this view, Nawawi (2024) revealed that the achievements of educational institutions are inseparable from the meticulousness, skills, and strategic decisions taken by school principals as central figures in education. In addition, Mulyasa (2023) explained that school principals are professionals who are responsible for managing educational units, including optimizing available potential and building partnerships with various parties, such as school committees, communities, related institutions, and other stakeholders. Therefore, the head of education is required to have a comprehensive understanding of the conditions and needs of the educational unit, including the interests of educators, students, and all elements involved in school life.

In line with this view, Sagala (2021) stated that empowering leadership from a school principal will encourage all elements of the school to constantly improve their abilities and competencies, so that the quality of all school residents can grow and develop well. School principals and teachers as professionals are not only required to master the fields of science, teaching materials, and learning methods, but must also be able to provide encouragement to students to have broad skills and insights in the world of education. There are various factors that can hinder the improvement of the leadership quality of school principals, especially if it is associated with their low performance. Based on empirical findings, it is known that most school principals are still lacking in academic ability, have low self-motivation, weak work spirit and discipline, and limited educational insight (Soepandi, 2022). In line with this, Kustimi (2022) emphasized that school principals should be able to create a work environment that is supported by their subordinates to carry out their duties professionally. Leadership should not be used for personal gain, but rather directed at achieving individual goals in the organization so that the performance of subordinates increases and organizational goals can be realized efficiently and effectively.

The principal can be said to be successful if he is able to understand that the school is a complex organization with its own characteristics, and can carry out his role as a supervisor who is responsible for leading the running of the educational institution. The achievement of educational goals is greatly influenced by the ability and leadership policies of the principal in carrying out his supervisory function as one of the leaders in the world of education (Wahjosumidjo, 2021). Furthermore, Basri (2020) emphasized that one of the main factors that determine the success of a school is the application of empowering leadership by school principals, namely the ability to adjust leadership style to the situation and conditions faced to achieve success and

improve the quality of the school. In an effort to create harmony in the organization's work system, optimal teacher performance is needed in carrying out their duties. A teacher can be declared competent if he has met the professional qualifications according to the provisions, one of which is evidenced by the possession of an educator's certificate.

Based on the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 54 of 2022 concerning educator certificates for teachers in office, it is explained that teachers are professionals. As a professional, teachers are required to have academic qualifications of at least strata one (S-1) or diploma four (D-4) in accordance with the subject field they teach, as well as master various competencies as learning facilitators. The fulfillment of S-1 or D-4 academic qualifications is evidenced by diplomas issued by accredited universities, while the suitability of the scientific field is proven through the relevance between the study program taken and the subjects taught at school. The ability of teachers as learning agents that include pedagogic, personality, professional, and social competencies is evidenced through the ownership of educator certificates as a form of recognition of these professional competencies.

Efforts to improve the professionalism of educators are carried out by the state through the establishment of policies that regulate the feasibility of abilities and professional recognition of teaching staff, one of which is through the ratification of special regulations which are then followed by the preparation of implementing regulations at the national level regarding teachers, which are intended to improve the professionalism and competence of teachers. One of the barometers of the success of education in realizing human resources is to measure the quality of human resources. This is characterized by the development of intellectual capacity, behavior, and skills of individuals who are increasingly adaptive and have independence in social interactions, state life, and the practice of trust values in the national and global scope (Aqib, 2020). A similar view is conveyed by Trianto (2021) who states that quality educators are individuals who are able to prepare learning plans, carry out the learning process effectively, and carry out continuous professional development in order to be able to follow the dynamics of changes in the field of education. In addition, the educator is also required to have mastery of the learning substance in accordance with the scientific realm for which he is responsible. Thus, the educator profession requires the requirements of abilities and skills that must be met.

Judging from the results of initial observations, it is known that in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency, there are 18 (eighteen) State Elementary Schools that exist. In the learning process of each school, namely State Elementary Schools in Suak Tapeh District, they are assisted by several teachers, both civil servants, civil servants, civil servants and honorary teachers in carrying out their duties as educators. The results of the observation obtained by the researcher were that each

deputy principal for curriculum explained that not all teachers have an educator certificate or are certified, because they have not met the requirements set by the government. Regarding school management led by the principal, it has led to empowering leadership, but it has not been able to take a firm stance, especially at times that do require firmness, such as the frequent teachers who arrive late. School principals are more likely to use a democratic and situational leadership style pattern. Of course, this affects the performance of the teacher himself in carrying out his duties and has an impact on the learning process that is delivered.

In addition, the vice principal also explained that the teacher's performance in delivering learning materials has not fully shown optimal results. This is because there are still teachers who teach subjects that are not in accordance with their educational background or field of expertise, for example S-1 Social Sciences graduates who teach Economics and Accounting subjects. This condition occurs due to the limited number of teachers who have a compatibility between the field of knowledge and the subject being taught. In addition, some teachers have also not used media or teaching aids in the learning process. Ideally, teachers need to use relevant learning media so that the delivery of material becomes more effective and efficient, so that it can produce better learning outcomes. The next information that the researcher received, teachers at State Elementary Schools in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency, have not fully shown the expected performance. There are some educators who come to school not according to schedule and have not shown active interaction with students during the learning process, such as question and answer activities. The learning process is still dominated by teachers who explain the material, while students tend to passively only listen. This condition results in learning that should be active, innovative, and fun to be less than optimal.

Based on the previous background description, the researcher intends to examine in depth whether the implementation of empowering leadership and the existence of teacher certification have a positive and significant influence on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency. This research is titled "The Influence of Empowering Leadership and Certification on the Performance of State Elementary School Teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency." The main reason the researcher conducted this study is because the results of observations show that the implementation of empowering leadership by school principals has not fully functioned optimally in providing guidance and direction to teachers in carrying out their duties. In addition, there are still teachers in several schools who have not obtained educator certification. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide an understanding to the school about the importance of the role of the principal who implements an empowering leadership style effectively in accordance with the vision, mission, and educational goals that have been set in the school. This research is also supported by the results of relevant previous studies, which strengthen the researcher's assumption regarding the positive and significant influence between empowering leadership of school principals and teacher

certification on teacher performance both partially and simultaneously. One of the supporting studies was conducted by Anggun, et al., (2025). The results of the study show that both individually and together, empowering leadership and self-efficacy have a positive and significant effect on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Mesuji Makmur District, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency.

Previous research that discussed teacher certification and performance was conducted by Ristianey, et al., (2021). The results of the study show that teacher certification and work motivation have a significant effect on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. The findings from this previous research are the basis and strengthen the researchers' assumptions to carry out similar research. The formulation of the problem in this study is: 1) Is there an effect of empowering leadership on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency? 2) Is there an effect of Certification on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency? 3) Is there an influence of empowering leadership and Certification jointly on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency?

## **B. Methods**

This research uses a quantitative approach, which is an approach that focuses on processing numerical data to examine research findings. The quantitative approach is based on the philosophy of positivism, which places phenomena objectively and is analyzed through standardized measurement procedures. Efforts to maintain objectivity are pursued through the use of numbers, statistical analysis techniques, and variable measurements that are systematically designed so that the results of the research can be concluded more broadly without being bound by the context of specific times, places, or conditions. This approach mainly uses data in the form of numbers that can be calculated and analyzed mathematically. This study uses a quantitative method with an ex post facto approach. The selection of this approach is in accordance with the objectives of the research that wants to identify the factors that affect changes in certain variables, in this case the principal's leadership and teachers' work motivation towards the teacher's competence where all events or conditions that affect these variables have occurred before the research was conducted. Sugiyono (2022) explained that ex post facto research is research conducted after a phenomenon or event has taken place. The purpose of this approach is to explore the factors that are thought to be the cause of certain behavioral changes, symptoms, or conditions when the free variables have occurred naturally and cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The population in this study includes all State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency, as presented below.

**Table 1. Research Population**

No	School Name	Teacher		Quantity Teacher
		Certified	Non-Certification	
1	SDN 1 Suak Tapeh	9	11	20
2	SDN 2 Suak Tapeh	6	12	18
3	SDN 3 Suak Tapeh	10	16	26
4	SDN 4 Suak Tapeh	8	13	21
5	SDN 5 Suak Tapeh	6	14	20
6	SDN 6 Suak Tapeh	8	20	28
7	SDN 7 Suak Tapeh	5	9	14
8	SDN 8 Suak Tapeh	7	9	16
9	SDN 9 Suak Tapeh	4	9	13
10	SDN 10 Suak Tapeh	7	16	23
11	SDN 11 Suak Tapeh	9	8	17
12	SDN 12 Suak Tapeh	12	23	35
13	SDN 13 Suak Tapeh	6	12	18
14	SDN 14 Suak Tapeh	4	11	15
15	SDN 15 Suak Tapeh	4	12	16
Quantity		105	195	300

(Source: Suak Tapeh District Education District, Banyuasin Regency, 2025)

The sample used in this study was certified teachers. The sampling technique in this study is to use the Slovin formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{N.d^2 + 1}$$

Description:

n = Number of Samples

N = Total Population

d = Desired precision/degree of deviation

Based on the determination of the sample using the Slovin formula above, the teachers who will be used as a sample in this study are teachers from elementary and junior high schools totaling 83 teachers which can be seen in the following table.

**Table 2. Research Sample**

No	School Name	Sample Teacher
1	SDN 1 Suak Tapeh	6
2	SDN 2 Suak Tapeh	6
3	SDN 3 Suak Tapeh	8
4	SDN 4 Suak Tapeh	8
5	SDN 5 Suak Tapeh	4
6	SDN 6 Suak Tapeh	6
7	SDN 7 Suak Tapeh	3
8	SDN 8 Suak Tapeh	7
9	SDN 9 Suak Tapeh	4
10	SDN 10 Suak Tapeh	6
11	SDN 11 Suak Tapeh	3
12	SDN 12 Suak Tapeh	12

13	SDN 13 Suak Tapeh	4
14	SDN 14 Suak Tapeh	4
15	SDN 15 Suak Tapeh	2
Quantity		83

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The data collection techniques used are questionnaires and documentation. In this study, hypothesis testing was carried out using regression analysis techniques, both simple regression and multiple regression. Regression analysis is used to assess the relationship between dependent variables and one or more independent variables. Hypothesis testing is carried out through three stages, namely partial test (t-test) using simple regression, simultaneous test (F test) through multiple regression, and determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ) test.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

Based on the results of research and hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that Empowering Leadership and certification each have an influence on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency, both individually and simultaneously.

#### **First Hypothesis**

The results of the t-test in the first hypothesis showed a calculated t-value of 3.440. At a significance level of 0.05 with a degree of freedom of 81, a table t-value of 2.199 was obtained. Since t is greater than t of the table ( $3.440 > 2.199$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. This confirms that Empowering Leadership has a significant effect on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency.

The results of the determination coefficient analysis in the first hypothesis showed an R value of 0.457, which indicates a strong relationship between Empowering Leadership ( $X_1$ ) and teacher performance (Y) at SD Negeri Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency. A Standard Error of the Estimate value of 0.17800 indicates that the regression model has a good level of prediction accuracy. Meanwhile, an R Square ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.227 indicates that Empowering Leadership contributes 22.7% to the variation in teacher performance, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the study.

The theory underlying the study of Empowering leadership is explained by Basri (2020) that one of the important factors that determine the success of a school is the implementation of empowerment-oriented leadership. School principals who implement this leadership style are able to adjust to the conditions and situations faced in order to achieve success and improve the quality of the school. In order to create harmony in the work system of educational organizations, optimal teacher performance is needed in carrying out their duties. Teachers can be considered

competent if they have met professional requirements, one of which is evidenced by the possession of an educator's certificate.

Empowering leadership or empowerment-based leadership is a leadership style that focuses on giving trust and authority to subordinates to make decisions and be responsible for their duties. Leaders with this style usually provide delegation of authority, freedom of work, and access to relevant information, so that they can increase the motivation and performance of their subordinates (Ariska, 2024). In the context of this research, empowering leadership refers to the leadership of school principals in managing the educational institutions they lead. Nawawi (2024) explained that a leader needs to have the ability to influence, direct, guide, and mobilize other individuals involved in education and training activities so that all activities can run effectively and efficiently to achieve the learning goals that have been set. In line with this, Hendarman & Rohanim (2022) emphasized that leadership is the process of influencing the behavior of others, both individually and in groups, so as to be able to encourage them to act in accordance with organizational goals.

Furthermore, Mulyasa (2023) stated that empowering leadership or leadership style is a way that a leader uses to influence his followers. Leadership style reflects the behavioral norms that leaders apply when trying to direct the behavior of others according to their perception of the situation at hand. In line with this opinion, Syafaruddin & Asrul (2021) emphasized that leadership style reflects the typical behavior pattern of a leader in influencing his subordinates; What the leader does, how he acts, and the strategies he or she applies in guiding group members shape his or her leadership style.

According to Nawawi (2024), the success of educational institutions in achieving their goals is largely determined by the ability and wisdom of the principal's leadership as the main figure in education management. In line with this, Mulyasa (2018) stated that the principal is a professional official who is responsible for managing all aspects of the school organization, including human resources, facilities, and cooperative relations with the community, school committees, and various other stakeholders. An effective school principal must understand the needs of the school comprehensively, both the needs of teachers, students, and all other school residents.

Leadership can be interpreted as the overall effort made to influence and move others in achieving common goals, including providing direction, examples, and facilities that facilitate the implementation of tasks in a formal organizational structure (Wahjosumidjo, 2019). In the world of education, leadership has a very strategic role. School principals are expected to be able to create opportunities for teachers to interact and collaborate in a conducive atmosphere. A school leader is said to be effective if he is able to build educators' work motivation through a

humanist approach, shown by a friendly, appreciative attitude, and concern for teaching staff both personally and collectively (Hendarman & Rohanim, 2022).

A relevant previous study was conducted by Kusumawati (2016) by examining the contribution of school leaders' management skills and achievement encouragement to the work achievements of elementary school teachers in the Rowosari area, Kendal. The findings of the study revealed that managerial capacity contributed 15.7%, motivation to achieve 23%, and the combination of the two showed a significant influence of 26.5% on teacher performance. The similarity with this study lies in the attention to the role of school leadership and the supporting elements of the quality of educators' work. The difference lies in the focus of variables and the scope of the study area, where this study emphasizes the leadership aspects of school principals and teacher professionalism at State Elementary Schools in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency.

Darmiati et al.'s research, (2020) examined the influence of principals' leadership and work motivation on teacher discipline. The results showed that both variables, both partial and simultaneous, had a significant effect on teacher discipline. The similarity with this study lies in the focus of the study on the leadership of school principals and work motivation, while the difference is in the bound variables, where this study focuses on the performance of elementary school teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency.

## **Second Hypothesis**

The results of the second hypothesis test showed a calculated t-value of 2.377. With a significance level of 0.05 on the double-sided test and a degree of freedom of 81, a table t-value of  $\pm 2.42$  was obtained. Since the value of t is greater than the t value of the table,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that certification has a partial significant effect on the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency.

The results of the determination coefficient analysis showed an R value of 0.455, which indicates that there is a strong relationship between certification and the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency. A Standard Error of Estimate value of 0.18425 indicates that the regression model has a good level of accuracy. Meanwhile, an R Square ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.265 indicates that certification contributes 26.5% to teacher performance variation, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the study.

The provisions for teacher certification are regulated in Permendikbud Number 54 of 2022, which states that teacher competence includes four aspects, namely personality, pedagogic, professional, and social. These competencies reflect personal

abilities, mastery of learning, mastery of teaching materials, and the ability to interact effectively with the educational environment and society.

According to Samani (2018), certification aims to assess the professional feasibility of teachers, improve the quality of learning, improve welfare, and strengthen the dignity of the educator profession. Teachers' professional competence can be proven through academic qualifications, teaching experience, learning implementation, achievements, and professional development work, with a certification mechanism through portfolio assessment or training. Furthermore, Kartini & Kristiawan (2019) stated that educator certificates are formal recognition of the teaching profession, while Tilaar (2019) emphasized that certification is a process of recognizing competencies through feasibility tests, which plays an important role in improving performance, motivation, and quality of education.

Teacher certification is seen as a strategic effort to improve the quality of education, because competent and prosperous teachers are expected to be able to show better performance so that it has a positive impact on the learning process and the quality of education. Certification functions to assess the feasibility of teachers as learning agents as well as provide professional recognition for teachers who meet the requirements, with the aim of improving quality and professionalism in order to achieve national education goals.

Previous research by Meiliyani, et al., (2021) showed that there is a significant influence of teacher certification and performance, both partially and simultaneously, on student learning achievement. The similarity with this study lies in the use of certification variables, while the difference lies in the focus of the study and the object of the research. In addition, research by Aripin, et al., (2020) proves that principal supervision and certification together affect teacher performance. These studies serve as supporting and comparative references in strengthening the foundation of ongoing research.

### **Third Hypothesis**

The results of the third hypothesis test through multiple linear regression showed an F value of 8.660. At the significance level of 0.05 with the degree of freedom of numerator 2 and denominator 82, the table F is obtained of 0.523. Since the value of F is calculated to be greater than the F of the table, an alternative hypothesis is accepted. This confirms that Empowering Leadership and teacher certification simultaneously affect the performance of State Elementary School teachers in Suak Tapeh District, Banyuasin Regency.

The results of the determination coefficient showed an R value of 0.522, which indicates a fairly strong relationship between variables X1 and X2 with Y. The Standard Error of the Estimate value of 0.17386 indicates the accuracy of the

regression model. Meanwhile, an R Square ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.278 indicates that Empowering Leadership and certification simultaneously contribute 27.8% to teacher performance, while the remaining 72.2% is influenced by other factors outside the study.

Teacher performance is understood as the implementation of professional duties that include learning activities, administration, guidance, and evaluation of learning outcomes, which are realized through work behavior to achieve optimal educational goals. Teachers are also positioned as professional educators as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2018, with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, training, assessing, and evaluating students, thus requiring special competencies and expertise in carrying out their professional roles.

Buchori (2020) stated that teacher performance is influenced by various aspects, including individual factors such as ability and motivation, principals' leadership factors, teamwork factors between teachers, and school system factors that include organizational governance, facilities, procedures, and work culture. According to Supardi (2023), teacher performance can be improved through the right orientation for new teachers, assignments according to competencies, the formation of KKG, academic and administrative supervision, continuous career coaching and development, the provision of training, proportional awards and sanctions, relevant additional assignments, and strengthening social relations between teachers.

The results of this study are in line with the study of Maryani et al., (2020) which stated that organizational culture, competence, and teacher certification have a significant effect on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. The similarity lies in the focus of the teacher's performance study, while the difference lies in the object and location of the research. Research by Maryani et al., (2020) shows that the principal's leadership style and organizational culture have a significant effect on teacher performance, both individually and together. The similarity with this study lies in the focus of the study of the principal's leadership and teacher performance, while the difference lies in the supporting variables used. Furthermore, research by Mardalena et al., (2020) proves that academic supervision and professional competence have a significant effect on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. The similarity with this study lies in the focus of the study of teacher performance, while the difference lies in the object, variable, and location of the research.

#### **D. Conclusion**

this study empirically confirms that both empowering leadership and teacher certification are significant determinants of teacher performance at State Elementary Schools in Suak Tapeh District. The key finding is that these factors operate both independently and synergistically. Individually, empowering leadership

characterized by the delegation of authority, encouragement of innovation, and supportive supervision directly enhances teachers' professional efficacy and engagement. Simultaneously, teacher certification, as a formal policy intervention, independently contributes to improved performance, likely through its mechanisms of professional validation, financial incentive, and mandated competency standards. Most significantly, the combined influence of these variables yields the strongest effect, suggesting that structural policy (certification) and daily managerial practice (empowering leadership) are complementary forces. Optimal teacher performance is achieved not by either factor alone, but through their integration, where a supportive, autonomy-granting school leadership amplifies the positive professional impact of certification. The practical implication of this finding is substantial for educational policymakers and school administrators. It argues against a one-dimensional approach to improving teacher quality. District offices and school principals should develop integrated strategies that concurrently strengthen leadership capabilities and uphold certification standards. Specifically, leadership development programs for principals and senior teachers should focus on cultivating empowering behaviors, such as shared decision-making and trust-building. Concurrently, the certification process should be maintained as a quality gateway, but its impact can be maximized by ensuring certified teachers operate within an empowering school culture that allows them to utilize their enhanced skills and motivation fully. For future research, several avenues are recommended. First, a longitudinal study would help establish the causal relationships and long-term sustainability of these effects. Second, employing a mixed-methods approach could uncover the qualitative nuances of how empowering leadership is enacted and experienced by teachers in this specific context. Third, expanding the research to compare urban and rural districts, or different regions, would test the generalizability of this model. Finally, investigating potential mediating or moderating variables such as school culture, teacher collaboration, or resource availability could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the pathways through which leadership and certification ultimately influence performance outcomes.

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### **References**

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