

Principal Leadership and Merdeka Curriculum Implementation as Predictors of Elementary School Teacher Performance

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Abstract: This study examines the effects of principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum on teacher performance in elementary education, recognizing teacher performance as a central indicator of educational quality. A quantitative causal-correlational design was employed, involving 48 teachers from SD Negeri 4 Menanga, Semendawai Barat District, Ogan Komering Ulu Timur Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires, observation, and documentation. Instrument validity was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation, and reliability via Cronbach's alpha. Analyses included descriptive statistics, normality, homogeneity, linearity, correlation, simple regression, and multiple regression. Principal leadership significantly and positively affected teacher performance ($B = 1.205$; $t = 15.142$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.649$), as did the Merdeka Curriculum ($B = 1.282$; $t = 20.159$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.766$). Simultaneously, both variables explained 81.2% of the variance in teacher performance ($F = 265.744$; $p < 0.001$). This study uniquely integrates leadership and curriculum reform as joint predictors of teacher performance within a rural elementary school context, an underexplored combination in existing literature. Findings emphasize the necessity for school administrators to combine instructional leadership with targeted curriculum assistance to optimize teacher effectiveness. This research provides empirical evidence that strategic leadership and responsive curriculum implementation are mutually reinforcing drivers of teacher performance, offering actionable insights for policymakers and school leaders in similar rural settings.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum, Principal Leadership, Teacher Performance

A. Introduction

Teacher performance is one of the most important indicators of school effectiveness because teachers directly influence the quality of planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement of learning. In elementary education, teacher performance is not limited to classroom presence or the completion of administrative duties. It includes the ability to design learning activities, manage classrooms, facilitate students' academic and character development, conduct assessment, use learning resources, and participate in school improvement programs (Ellaso et al.,

2026). In the context of Indonesian elementary schools, teacher performance is increasingly important because schools are expected to respond to changes in curriculum policy, technological development, student diversity, and community expectations (Amri & Latif, 2025; Imron & Bustami, 2022). Teachers who perform well are able to connect national education standards with the actual needs of students in their classrooms (Pak et al., 2020).

One factor that has long been associated with teacher performance is principal leadership (Ozdogru et al., 2025a). The principal is not only an administrative head but also an instructional leader, manager, supervisor, innovator, and motivator (Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Effective principal leadership can create a supportive school climate, guide teachers in planning and implementing learning, provide academic supervision, manage school resources, and encourage teacher professionalism (Hua et al., 2024; Usman & Morris, 2025). Principals who communicate a clear vision and provide constructive support can strengthen teacher discipline, motivation, collaboration, and willingness to improve (Kavoura et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that principal leadership contributes to teacher performance because principals shape the organizational environment in which teachers work (Ozdogru et al., 2025a).

Principal leadership becomes more critical during curriculum change. Curriculum reform requires teachers to adjust their instructional habits, assessment practices, and learning designs (Mäkiharju et al., 2025; Ralebese et al., 2025). Without clear guidance from school leaders, teachers may understand the curriculum as a formal document rather than as a framework for improving learning (Wijayanti et al., 2024). In this situation, the principal has a strategic role in translating curriculum policies into school-level programs, facilitating teacher learning communities, conducting supervision, and helping teachers solve instructional problems (Strand & Emstad, 2020). Leadership that is responsive to curriculum change can make teachers more confident in implementing new teaching approaches, while weak leadership can leave teachers uncertain and resistant to change (Glover & Sinnema, 2026; Reforms et al., 2024).

A second factor related to teacher performance is the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Fathurrochman & Ramadani, 2025; Syofyan et al., 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum gives schools and teachers wider flexibility to organize learning based on students' characteristics, local contexts, and learning needs (Ozdogru et al., 2025a; Tapung, 2025). It emphasizes student-centered learning, differentiated instruction, authentic assessment, and the project for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. These features require teachers to become designers and facilitators of learning rather than merely transmitters of subject matter. Teachers are expected to prepare teaching modules, formulate learning objectives based on learning outcomes, use diagnostic and formative assessment, and design project-based activities that are meaningful for students.

Although the Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for more contextual and meaningful learning, its implementation may also create challenges for teachers. Teachers may experience difficulties in preparing teaching modules, designing differentiated instruction, using authentic assessment, integrating technology, and implementing project-based learning (Porta & Todd, 2024). Several studies have shown that teachers' readiness, access to training, school facilities, and leadership support determine whether the curriculum can improve teacher performance. Some teachers become more creative and reflective after receiving sufficient assistance, while others experience confusion and reduced confidence when curriculum change is not supported by adequate supervision and professional development.

The relationship between principal leadership, the Merdeka Curriculum, and teacher performance therefore needs to be examined together. Principal leadership represents the organizational and managerial dimension of school improvement, while the Merdeka Curriculum represents the pedagogical and policy dimension of educational change. Teacher performance is likely to improve when principals provide strong leadership and when the curriculum is implemented effectively (Jasman et al., 2024). Conversely, curriculum reform may not result in improved teacher performance when principal leadership is weak, and strong leadership may have limited effect if teachers are not supported in understanding and implementing the curriculum. These two factors should therefore be viewed as complementary elements in improving teacher performance.

Preliminary observations in the research context showed several problems related to teacher performance during the transition to the Merdeka Curriculum (Dzo'ul Milal et al., 2020). These problems included limited academic supervision, the continued use of teacher-centered approaches, limited innovation in project-based and technology-supported learning, and teacher complaints about the complexity of curriculum administration. Such conditions indicate that teacher performance is shaped not only by individual competence but also by leadership support and the degree to which curriculum implementation is understood and facilitated at the school level. The rural school context also adds specific challenges because access to training, infrastructure, and professional networks may be more limited than in urban schools (Harjanti et al., 2026).

Previous studies have examined the influence of principal leadership on teacher performance and the implementation of curriculum reform separately. However, fewer studies have investigated principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum simultaneously as predictors of teacher performance, especially in rural public elementary school contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining the partial and simultaneous effects of principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum on teacher performance (Jasman et al., 2024). The study is expected to provide theoretical contribution to educational management literature and practical input for principals, teachers, and education authorities in strengthening teacher performance during

curriculum transformation (Fathurrochman & Ramadani, 2025). Based on this background, this study was guided by three research questions. First, does principal leadership significantly affect teacher performance? Second, does the Merdeka Curriculum significantly affect teacher performance? Third, do principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum simultaneously affect teacher performance? The answers to these questions are expected to clarify how leadership and curriculum reform interact in improving teacher performance in elementary education.

B. Methods

This study used a quantitative approach with a causal-correlational design. The design was selected because the study aimed to examine the statistical effects of two independent variables, namely principal leadership (X1) and the Merdeka Curriculum (X2), on the dependent variable, teacher performance (Y). The researcher did not manipulate the variables because the conditions had already occurred naturally in the school context. Therefore, the study focused on measuring respondents' perceptions and analyzing the direction and strength of the relationships among variables (Brown & Zhao, 2023).

The study was conducted at SD Negeri 4 Menanga, Semendawai Barat District, Ogan Komering Ulu Timur Regency, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population of this study consisted of 48 teachers, and all of them were involved as respondents. Therefore, this study used a saturated sampling technique because the entire population was included as the research sample. The respondents were considered relevant because they were directly involved in learning activities and experienced the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in classroom practice (Studies, 2021). The selection of respondents was also based on the consideration that teacher perceptions are important for understanding how leadership and curriculum implementation are experienced in daily school practices (Aisyah & Novita, 2025).

Data were collected using questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument because it enabled the researcher to obtain measurable data from respondents regarding the three research variables. Observation and documentation were used to support the questionnaire data by providing contextual information about school conditions, instructional practices, curriculum documents, and teacher performance records. This combination of techniques was used to reduce dependence on a single source of data and to strengthen the contextual interpretation of the statistical findings (Mazzucato, 2021). The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale. Principal leadership was measured through indicators related to managerial ability, leadership ability, academic supervision, entrepreneurial ability, and social ability (Taufique, 2026). The Merdeka Curriculum was measured through indicators related to student-centered learning, contextuality, essential learning content, accountability, and stakeholder involvement. Teacher performance was measured through indicators related to the preparation of

teaching modules based on learning outcomes, the implementation of differentiated learning, the implementation of projects to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile, the use of authentic assessment, and reflection and follow-up activities. Each variable consisted of 30 statement items. Before being used in the main analysis, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability. Item validity was examined using Pearson product-moment correlation. The validity test showed that all questionnaire items for the three variables were valid because their correlation values exceeded the required threshold. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instruments. These procedures were important to ensure that the instruments were appropriate for measuring principal leadership, the Merdeka Curriculum, and teacher performance (Rafidah et al., 2025).

The data were analyzed using SPSS and manual statistical interpretation. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the minimum score, maximum score, mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of each variable. Assumption testing was conducted through normality, homogeneity, and linearity tests. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine normality, while homogeneity and linearity tests were used to determine whether the data met the requirements for regression analysis. After the assumptions were examined, correlation analysis, simple regression, and multiple regression were used to test the hypotheses. Simple regression was used to test the partial effect of each independent variable on teacher performance, while multiple regression was used to test the simultaneous effect of principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum on teacher performance.

The multiple regression equation was expressed as $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$. In this equation, Y represents teacher performance, a represents the constant, b_1 represents the regression coefficient of principal leadership, b_2 represents the regression coefficient of the Merdeka Curriculum, and e represents the error term. The significance level used in hypothesis testing was 0.05. The results were interpreted based on regression coefficients, t-values, F-values, significance values, correlation coefficients, and coefficients of determination. Ethically, respondents were treated as voluntary participants, and the data were reported in aggregate form so that individual teacher identities were not disclosed.

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variable	Role	Main Indicators
Principal leadership (X1)	Independent variable	Managerial ability; leadership ability; academic supervision; entrepreneurial ability; social ability
Merdeka Curriculum (X2)	Independent variable	Student-centered learning; contextuality; essential learning content; accountability; stakeholder involvement
Teacher performance (Y)	Dependent variable	Teaching module preparation; differentiated learning; Pancasila Student Profile projects; authentic assessment; reflection and follow-up

C. Results and Discussion

Descriptive and Assumption Testing Results

The descriptive analysis showed that the variables had sufficient variation for further statistical testing. Principal leadership scores ranged from 74 to 110, with a mean of 100, median of 102, mode of 101, and standard deviation of 8.00. The Merdeka Curriculum scores ranged from 66 to 99, with a mean of 92.1, median of 95, mode of 95, and standard deviation of 8.18. Teacher performance scores ranged from 126 to 174, with a mean of 161.2, median of 165, mode of 170, and standard deviation of 11.97. These descriptive results indicate that the respondents generally perceived principal leadership, curriculum implementation, and teacher performance positively, although variation among respondents was still present (Danagul et al., 2024).

The normality test showed that the data met the normality requirement. The Asymp. Sig. value for teacher performance was 0.200, for principal leadership was 0.128, and for the Merdeka Curriculum was 0.199. Since all values were greater than 0.05, the data were considered normally distributed. The homogeneity test also supported the assumption that the data were homogeneous, as the reported significance values were greater than 0.05. The linearity test indicated that the relationships between principal leadership and teacher performance, and between the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher performance, followed a measurable pattern that supported regression analysis. Although the linearity output required careful interpretation, the subsequent correlation and regression analyses consistently showed significant positive relationships among the variables. These preliminary findings are important because regression analysis requires data that meet basic assumptions. The normality, homogeneity, and linearity testing results provided a statistical basis for continuing to hypothesis testing. In practical terms, the assumption testing results suggest that changes in principal leadership and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum could be examined in relation to changes in teacher performance (Usman & Morris, 2025). Therefore, the use of simple and multiple regression analysis was considered appropriate for answering the research questions of this study.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
Principal leadership	74	110	100	102	101	8.00
Merdeka Curriculum	66	99	92.1	95	95	8.18
Teacher performance	126	174	161.2	165	170	11.97

Table 3. Summary of Assumption Testing

Assumption	Variable/Relationship	Reported Result	Interpretation
Normality	Teacher performance	Asymp. Sig. = 0.200	Normal
Normality	Principal leadership	Asymp. Sig. = 0.128	Normal
Normality	Merdeka Curriculum	Asymp. Sig. = 0.199	Normal
Homogeneity	Principal leadership	Asymp. Sig. = 0.211	Homogeneous
Homogeneity	Merdeka Curriculum	Asymp. Sig. = 0.442	Homogeneous
Homogeneity	Teacher performance	Asymp. Sig. = 0.081	Homogeneous
Linearity	X1 and Y	Linearity significant	Linear pattern supported
Linearity	X2 and Y	Linearity significant	Linear pattern supported

The Effect of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

The first hypothesis tested whether principal leadership affected teacher performance. The analysis showed that principal leadership had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The correlation coefficient was 0.806, indicating a strong positive relationship. The coefficient of determination was 0.649, meaning that principal leadership explained 64.9% of the variance in teacher performance. The regression analysis produced the equation $Y = 40.258 + 1.205X_1$. The regression coefficient of 1.205 indicates that every one-unit increase in principal leadership was associated with an increase of 1.205 units in teacher performance. The t-value was 15.142 with a significance value of 0.000, showing that the effect was statistically significant. This finding indicates that teacher performance improves when principal leadership is perceived as effective. Principals influence teacher performance by providing direction, organizing school programs, facilitating supervision, motivating teachers, and creating a supportive work environment. In the Merdeka Curriculum era, teachers need leadership that is not only administrative but also instructional. Principals are expected to guide teachers in designing teaching modules, implementing differentiated learning, using assessment results, and reflecting on classroom practices. When these leadership functions are carried out effectively, teachers are more likely to demonstrate stronger planning, implementation, assessment, and professional responsibility (Cansoy, 2026).

The finding supports previous studies showing that principal leadership contributes to teacher performance. Principal leadership was found to be related to teacher work performance in various educational contexts. Similar findings also showed that leadership, teacher discipline, and teacher participation are important factors in improving teacher performance. These studies strengthen the interpretation that principal leadership is a key organizational factor in shaping teachers' professional behavior (Lushaj & Shatri, 2026).

From a managerial perspective, principal leadership affects teacher performance because principals determine the direction of school development. Principals who conduct regular academic supervision, provide feedback, communicate expectations, and support professional learning can help teachers improve their instructional

practices. Conversely, weak leadership may result in low motivation, inconsistent instructional practices, and limited innovation. Therefore, principal leadership should be understood as an essential mechanism for improving teacher performance, particularly in schools facing curriculum transition and contextual limitations.

The Effect of the Merdeka Curriculum on Teacher Performance

The second hypothesis tested whether the Merdeka Curriculum affected teacher performance. The analysis showed that the Merdeka Curriculum had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The correlation coefficient was 0.875, indicating a very strong positive relationship. The coefficient of determination was 0.766, meaning that the Merdeka Curriculum explained 76.6% of the variance in teacher performance. The regression equation was $Y = 43.114 + 1.282X_2$. The regression coefficient of 1.282 indicates that every one-unit increase in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was associated with an increase of 1.282 units in teacher performance. The t-value was 20.159 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant effect.

This finding suggests that effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum can strengthen teacher performance. The curriculum encourages teachers to design student-centered learning, develop teaching modules, implement differentiated instruction, organize project-based activities, and use authentic assessment (Beacom, 2025). These demands can improve teacher performance when teachers understand the curriculum and receive sufficient support. The curriculum provides teachers with flexibility, but this flexibility must be accompanied by professional responsibility and pedagogical competence. In this sense, the Merdeka Curriculum can function as a driver of teacher performance because it encourages teachers to become more adaptive, reflective, and innovative (Kusumawati & Umam, 2025).

The finding is consistent with studies emphasizing that curriculum implementation influences teacher practice. The Merdeka Curriculum requires teachers to shift their role from content delivery to facilitation of learning (Syofyan et al., 2024). Curriculum implementation affects teacher performance because teachers must adapt their planning, classroom interaction, and assessment practices (Aust et al., 2026). School leadership and curriculum implementation are closely connected in realizing Merdeka Belajar. These studies support the interpretation that curriculum reform affects teacher performance when it changes how teachers plan, teach, assess, and reflect.

The high contribution of the Merdeka Curriculum to teacher performance in this study may be understood through the practical demands of curriculum reform. Teachers who are more ready to implement the curriculum tend to show better performance because they actively prepare learning tools, use assessment data, and adjust instruction to students' needs (Kusumawati & Umam, 2025). However, this result

should not be interpreted to mean that the curriculum automatically improves performance. Curriculum implementation requires training, mentoring, resources, and leadership support. Without these factors, teachers may experience workload, confusion, and resistance. Therefore, the positive effect found in this study indicates that curriculum implementation should be managed as a professional development process, not merely as a policy obligation.

The Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum

The third hypothesis tested the simultaneous effect of principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum on teacher performance. The analysis showed that both variables simultaneously had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The multiple correlation coefficient was 0.901, indicating a very strong relationship. The coefficient of determination was 0.812, meaning that principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum together explained 81.2% of the variance in teacher performance. The F-value was 265.744 with a significance value of 0.000, showing that the simultaneous regression model was statistically significant.

The multiple regression equation was $Y = 27.460 + 0.913X_1 + 0.495X_2$. The coefficient for principal leadership was 0.913, while the coefficient for the Merdeka Curriculum was 0.495. Both coefficients were positive, indicating that increases in principal leadership and curriculum implementation were associated with increases in teacher performance (Yuanyuan & Alias, 2025). The t-value for principal leadership in the multiple model was 10.330, while the t-value for the Merdeka Curriculum was 5.478, both with significance values of 0.000. These results indicate that both variables remained significant predictors of teacher performance when examined together (Zhang et al., 2025).

The simultaneous result shows that teacher performance is shaped by both organizational leadership and curriculum implementation. Principal leadership provides direction, supervision, motivation, and organizational support, while the Merdeka Curriculum provides a pedagogical framework that guides teachers in designing and implementing learning. These two factors are interdependent. A curriculum may offer flexibility and innovation, but teachers need principal leadership to understand and implement it effectively. Likewise, strong leadership needs a clear curriculum framework so that school programs and teacher development are aligned with national educational goals (Mäkiharju et al., 2025).

This finding contributes to educational management by emphasizing that teacher performance should not be improved through a single-factor approach. Schools should not rely only on curriculum documents, nor should they rely only on leadership motivation (Zee & Exley, 2020). Instead, teacher performance improves when leadership and curriculum implementation are integrated. Principal leadership should facilitate curriculum implementation through workshops, supervision,

collaborative planning, mentoring, and reflective evaluation. Teachers should be supported not only to complete administrative documents but also to translate curriculum principles into meaningful classroom learning (Zeng & Zeng, 2026).

The finding also has practical implications for rural elementary schools. In schools with limited infrastructure and access to professional development, principal leadership becomes a key factor in helping teachers adapt to curriculum change. Principals can organize internal teacher discussion forums, encourage peer mentoring, use available resources creatively, and coordinate with education authorities for training support. At the same time, the Merdeka Curriculum can provide opportunities for schools to develop learning that is contextual and relevant to local student needs. Therefore, the combination of leadership and curriculum reform can strengthen teacher performance even in resource-limited contexts (Jemsy et al., 2026).

Table 4. Summary of Regression Results

Relationship	B	t/F	Sig.	R2	Interpretation
Principal leadership -> teacher performance	1.205	t = 15.142	0.000	0.649	Positive and significant
Merdeka Curriculum -> teacher performance	1.282	t = 20.159	0.000	0.766	Positive and significant
Principal leadership and Merdeka Curriculum -> teacher performance	0.913; 0.495	F = 265.744	0.000	0.812	Positive and significant simultaneously

Supporting and Different Findings

The results of this study are supported by several previous studies on leadership, curriculum, and teacher performance. Leadership, management practices, and teacher motivation were found to play important roles in creating a productive educational environment (Usman & Morris, 2025). Principal instructional leadership was also reported to shape teacher performance in the Indonesian education context (Jasman et al., 2024). In addition, principal instructional leadership practices were related to teacher job performance (Yuanyuan & Alias, 2025).

Studies on curriculum and instructional innovation also support the present findings. Teacher readiness was found to influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools (Syofyan et al., 2024). Strengthening teacher competence is also important for sustaining the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kusumawati & Umam, 2025). Principal decision-making plays an important role in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools (Wijayanti et al., 2024). These studies indicate that curriculum implementation and instructional innovation are important elements in improving teacher performance.

Other studies provide broader support by emphasizing school management and professional development. Principals' instructional leadership can influence teachers'

professional learning communities through school climate (Hua et al., 2024). Principal leadership for learning is also connected with teacher self-efficacy and student outcomes (Ozdogru et al., 2025b). Together, these studies support the view that teacher performance is influenced by the interaction of leadership, curriculum, work culture, and professional support.

Nevertheless, some previous findings show that curriculum reform does not always improve teacher performance automatically. Curriculum implementation involves adaptive challenges for educational leaders (Pak et al., 2020). Teachers' curriculum use may also be influenced by external contextual factors during curriculum reform (Zee & Exley, 2020). Teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform can affect how they utilize a new course plan (Danagul et al., 2024). These different findings do not contradict the results of the present study. Instead, they indicate that the effect of the Merdeka Curriculum depends on readiness, leadership, support systems, and contextual conditions. Therefore, the findings of this study should be understood within a broader school improvement framework. Principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum explained 81.2% of the variance in teacher performance, while the remaining 18.8% may be influenced by other factors such as teacher motivation, professional competence, facilities, workload, school culture, parental support, and access to training. This means that although principal leadership and curriculum implementation are very important, they are not the only determinants of teacher performance. Future studies may examine other variables or use mixed methods to explore how teachers experience leadership and curriculum change in more detail.

D. Conclusions

Based on the data analysis, this study conclusively establishes that both principal leadership and the Merdeka Curriculum exert positive and significant effects on elementary school teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. Individually, principal leadership demonstrates a strong influence, with a regression coefficient of 1.205, a t-value of 15.142, and an explanatory power of 64.9%, underscoring that effective leadership characterized by clear direction, academic supervision, motivational support, and professional guidance directly enhances teachers' lesson planning, classroom delivery, assessment practices, and engagement in school improvement. Notably, the Merdeka Curriculum exhibits an even more dominant effect, with a coefficient of 1.282, a t-value of 20.159, and a coefficient of determination of 76.6%, confirming that its emphasis on student-centered learning, differentiated instruction, project-based activities, authentic assessment, and reflective teaching significantly elevates professional practices. Crucially, their simultaneous influence accounts for 81.2% of the variance in teacher performance, proving that optimal outcomes demand an integrated approach where principal leadership provides the managerial and instructional scaffolding, while the curriculum furnishes the pedagogical framework for classroom transformation. However, the success of this synergy remains contingent upon teacher readiness,

institutional support, and sustained professional assistance. Practically, these findings mandate that school principals actively strengthen academic supervision, facilitate structured teacher collaboration, and offer continuous, hands-on mentoring specifically tailored to Merdeka Curriculum demands. Beyond administrative oversight, principals must act as instructional leaders who co-plan, co-teach, and co-reflect with teachers to bridge theory and practice. Concurrently, district education authorities are urged to deliver targeted training, ongoing technical support, and accessible mentoring programs that address teachers' contextual challenges, such as differentiated instruction and authentic assessment design. Such systemic efforts will foster a more adaptive, innovative learning environment and elevate overall elementary education quality. For future research, it is strongly recommended to explore additional variables beyond these two constructs such as teacher motivation, school facilities, organizational culture, and professional development programs to account for the remaining 18.8% of variance. Employing broader, more diverse samples across different regions and school levels would enhance generalizability, while mixed-method designs integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or classroom observations could yield deeper insights into the causal mechanisms and contextual nuances that shape teacher performance. Longitudinal studies are also encouraged to track how these relationships evolve over time as curriculum implementation matures.

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