

## Implementation Of Instructional Leadership By School Principals In Elementary School

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**Abstract:** This study explores the influence of school principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance and student learning outcomes at SD Negeri Gilis, Sarang District, Rembang Regency. The approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and document studies. The results show that implementing the principal's instructional leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of lesson planning carried out by teachers. Although initially there were challenges related to the misalignment in the lesson plan preparation by most teachers, the principal's strategies, which included enhancing the quality of lesson planning, need-based academic supervision, and empowering teachers through the Teacher Working Group (KKG), successfully addressed these issues. After three months of implementation, 90% of teachers could prepare lesson plans aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum, and teacher involvement in KKG discussions significantly increased.

Furthermore, time management and teaching methods in the classroom also showed improvements. This study concludes that well-planned instructional leadership by the principal, based on teacher professional development, can enhance the quality of teaching and positively impact student learning outcomes. Recommendations for further development include improving the principal's competence in academic supervision and utilizing technology in teaching.

**Keywords:** Instructional Leadership, School Principals, Elementary Education, Leadership Implementation, School Management.

### Introduction

Primary education plays a crucial role in shaping the foundation of knowledge, skills, and character of students. As an educational leader, the school principal directs and manages the learning process to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. One leadership approach considered effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning is instructional leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on enhancing the teaching and learning process through teacher development, curriculum development, and creating a conducive learning

environment. According to Aslam et al.<sup>1</sup>, school principals who apply instructional leadership can improve teacher performance by developing school missions professional development, and creating a conducive learning climate. This study shows that school principals can manage schools to enhance teacher performance by using models and strategies developed to achieve organizational goals. However, implementing instructional leadership in primary schools still faces various challenges. Sapitri R.<sup>2</sup> reveals that some school principals are not optimal in guiding teachers to prepare and develop teaching materials and are less active in conducting supervision. This indicates the need to strengthen the role of school principals as instructional leaders.

Research by Fatonah<sup>3</sup> shows that instructional leadership significantly positively affects teachers' teaching performance in primary schools. Similarly, Hasibuan et al.<sup>4</sup> emphasize the importance of principals in building relationships that support teacher professional growth to improve student learning. On the other hand, Yunus et al.<sup>5</sup> found that the principal's leadership style affects teacher performance in primary schools, but there is still variation in its effectiveness. Asmiati<sup>6</sup> also noted that instructional leadership by school principals affects teachers' teaching performance, but its implementation is not uniform across all schools. A literature review by Jalal et al.<sup>7</sup> shows that various leadership styles, including instructional leadership, significantly impact

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<sup>1</sup> Aslam, A., Wahab, A. A., Nurdin, D., and Suharto, N. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru." *Jurnal Basicedu*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2022, pp. 3954–3961.

<sup>2</sup>Sapitri, Riris, 2024. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru dan Mutu Pembelajaran." *Cendekia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 2(9), 546–558

<sup>3</sup> Fatonah, N. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah terhadap Kinerja Mengajar Guru di Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2022, pp. 45–53.

<sup>4</sup> Hasibuan, R., Siregar, E., and Siregar, H. "Peran Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru." *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2022, pp. 33–44.

<sup>5</sup> Yunus, M., Suryani, N., and Hidayat, R. "Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2021, pp. 123–134

<sup>6</sup> Asmiati, Nur, "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah Terhadap Kinerja Mengajar Guru di Sekolah dasar Negeri Se-Kecamatan Sukasari Kota Bandung. Skripsi. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Jalal, F., Supriadi, D., and Maulana, A. "Dampak Gaya Kepemimpinan terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Edukasi dan Inovasi Pendidikan*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2024, pp. 100–112.

teacher performance. Still, their success is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to align leadership style with the specific needs of teachers and the context of the school. Furthermore, Werdiningsih<sup>8</sup> found that both instructional leadership by school principals and teacher professional competence affect teacher performance by 78.4%. This underscores the importance of the school principal's role in nurturing and developing teacher competence.

Although various studies highlight the importance of instructional leadership, there remains a gap in its implementation at the primary school level. Most studies focus on secondary education or use quantitative approaches that do not deeply explore the practice of instructional leadership in primary schools. Therefore, there is a need for qualitative research to gain an in-depth understanding of how primary school principals implement instructional leadership in local contexts, including the strategies used and the challenges faced.

This study examines the implementation of instructional leadership at SD Negeri Gilis, Sarang District, Rembang Regency. The condition of instructional leadership at SD Negeri Gilis can be seen in the 2024 Education Report.

**Table 1. 2024 Education Report of SD Negeri Gilis**

No	Indicator	Achievement label 2024	Achievement score 2024	Change from Previous Year's Achievement	Achievement Score 2023
D.3	Instructional Leadership of the School Principal	Good	57,19	Increase of 1,53	55,66
D.3.1	Vision and Mission of the Educational Institution		44,16	Decrease of 5,81	49,97
D.3.2	Management of the School Curriculum		66,7	Increase of 11,90	62,21
D.3.3	Support for Teacher Reflection		60,7	Decrease of 1,51	67,97

Source: 2024 Education Report

In the 2024 Education Report of SD Negeri Gilis, the indicator of Instructional Leadership by the School Principal shows a good result with an achievement score of 57.19, reflecting an increase of 1.53 points

<sup>8</sup> Werdiningsih, E. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah dan Kompetensi Profesional Guru terhadap Kinerja Guru." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2022, pp. 33-42

compared to the previous year (55.66). However, there was a decline in several related indicators. The Vision and Mission of the Educational Institution showed a significant decrease of 5.81 points, from 49.97 to 44.16, indicating challenges in the implementation of the school's vision and mission. On the other hand, the Management of the School Curriculum showed a significant improvement of 11.90 points, from 62.21 to 66.7, demonstrating progress in curriculum and teaching management. However, the Support for Teacher Reflection indicator experienced a slight decrease of 1.51 points, from 67.97 to 60.7, indicating the need for increased support in the teacher reflection process. Despite progress in several areas, attention should be given to improving the vision and mission and supporting teacher reflection to optimize instructional leadership.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the implementation of instructional leadership by school principals in elementary schools and exploring the strategies and challenges faced. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the development of effective instructional leadership practices at the elementary school level.

## Literature Review

According to Usman<sup>9</sup>, instructional leadership is a leadership model focused on the process and outcomes of student learning through the professional empowerment of teachers. Bossert et al.<sup>10</sup> define instructional leadership as the actions and strategies employed by school principals to influence the school's instructional organization and learning climate to improve student learning outcomes. Bush (as cited in Usman, 2015<sup>11</sup>) asserts that instructional leadership focuses on teaching activities and teacher behavior in serving students. According to Damayanti & Asbari<sup>12</sup>, instructional leadership is a leadership model oriented toward the process and outcomes of student learning through

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<sup>9</sup> Usman, M. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional: Model Kepemimpinan Berorientasi pada Pembelajaran Siswa." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2015, pp. 45-60.

<sup>10</sup> Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., and Lee, G. V. "The Impact of Leadership on Teacher Learning and Student Achievement: A Comprehensive Review." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2015, pp. 320-338.

<sup>11</sup> Usman, M. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional: Model Kepemimpinan Berorientasi pada Pembelajaran Siswa."

<sup>12</sup> Damayanti, M., and Asbari, M. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional sebagai Pemberdayaan Profesional Guru." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kepemimpinan*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2024, pp. 78-94.

the professional empowerment of teachers. Rahmasari & Windasari<sup>13</sup> state that the instructional leadership of school principals positively and significantly affects the quality of teacher performance.

Instructional leadership focuses on improving the quality of teaching through the active role of school principals in guiding teachers professionally. Research by Hutasoit<sup>14</sup> shows that effective school principals can enhance teacher performance through support and good communication. This instructional leadership encourages teachers to plan their lessons more purposefully and improve their pedagogical competencies. This finding aligns with Susanti et al<sup>15</sup>, who state that the quality of instructional leadership by school principals directly impacts the quality of teaching provided by teachers.

Meanwhile, research by Fernando<sup>16</sup> emphasizes the importance of the principal's strategy in enhancing teacher professionalism as the foundation of quality education. Cited from the study by Sutrisno<sup>17</sup>, principals focused on learning can encourage teachers to continue innovating in their teaching processes, thereby promoting and improving teaching quality. Furthermore, research by Muhammad et al.<sup>18</sup> also found that principals who actively provide support and feedback to teachers can improve teacher motivation and work enthusiasm in performing their duties. This can contribute to creating a more productive learning environment.

Good teacher performance will undoubtedly have a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Research by Hutasoit<sup>19</sup> also reveals that school principals' leadership influences teacher performance, affecting student learning outcomes. This is supported by findings from Iskandar

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<sup>13</sup> Rahmasari, W., and Windasari, S. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah terhadap Kinerja Mengajar Guru." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2023, pp. 101-118.

<sup>14</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kepemimpinan*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2024, pp. 67-85.

<sup>15</sup> Susanti, R., Sari, D. P., & Aini, N. Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(3), 2023, 3954–3961

<sup>16</sup> Firnando, H. "Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2023, pp. 45-60.

<sup>17</sup> Sutrisno, H. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional dalam Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2022, pp. 23-39.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad, R., Suryana, A., and Hidayat, S. "Dukungan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru." *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Inovasi*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2021, pp. 88-101.

<sup>19</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

et al.<sup>20</sup>, which show that when school principals provide clear direction and support teacher professional development, classroom teaching improves, leading to better student learning outcomes. Leithwood et al.<sup>21</sup> state that school leadership is the second most influential factor in student achievement after classroom teaching quality. This study suggests that principals need to pay more attention to teacher motivation and empowerment, which will ultimately positively impact student learning outcomes. Blasé & Blasé<sup>22</sup> also argue that principals who provide coaching, feedback, and recognition for good teacher practices can improve the quality of teaching, which in turn impacts student learning outcomes. Therefore, the principal's role in guiding and providing constructive feedback is critical in creating an optimal learning experience for students.

Principals need to establish a clear vision and mission to improve the quality of teaching. Hutasoit<sup>23</sup> emphasizes the importance of the principal's role in setting a vision that can enhance teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Research by Firnando<sup>24</sup> shows that principals with a clear vision can encourage collaboration among teachers and staff, creating a more productive and innovative work environment. Additionally, studies by Kurniawan and Rahmawati<sup>25</sup> indicate that principals with a clear vision accepted by the entire school community can facilitate change and improve teaching quality. A clear vision is key to achieving more effective learning goals in this context.

Academic supervision is one of the strategies principals employ to improve teaching quality. Research by Sutrisno<sup>26</sup> shows that academic supervision conducted by the principal can improve teacher

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<sup>20</sup> Iskandar, H., Fauzi, M., and Rahman, Z. "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dan Hasil Belajar Siswa." *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, vol. 9, no. 5, 2022, pp. 201-215.

<sup>21</sup> Leithwood, K., Harris, A., and Hopkins, D. "Systematic Review of School Leadership: A Decade of Research." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2020, pp. 151-179.

<sup>22</sup> Blasé, J., and Blasé, J. "Building Instructional Leadership: A Practical Guide for School Leaders." *Educational Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2020, pp. 341-356.

<sup>23</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>24</sup> Firnando, H. "Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru."

<sup>25</sup> Kurniawan, A., and Rahmawati, I. "Visi dan Misi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pembelajaran." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2020, pp. 134-148.

<sup>26</sup> Sutrisno, R. "Pengaruh Supervisi Akademik terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2021, pp. 34-47.

performance and student learning outcomes. Systematic and continuous academic supervision has been proven to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, ultimately improving teaching quality in the classroom. This aligns with Ningsih's findings, which emphasize the importance of classroom observation and providing constructive feedback to enhance the quality of teaching.

Professional development is essential for improving teacher quality. Fernando<sup>27</sup> stresses that the principal's strategy for improving teacher professionalism can enhance teaching quality and student learning outcomes. According to Mulyasa<sup>28</sup>, teacher professional development involves various activities, such as continuous training, internal Teacher Working Groups (KKG)/Subject Teacher Consultation (MGMP), and group discussions. Research by Sutrisno<sup>29</sup> also shows that principals who support teacher professional development through training and seminars can improve teachers' pedagogical competencies. This directly impacts the quality of teaching provided by teachers in the classroom.

Monitoring and evaluation of learning are conducted to ensure the quality of education students receive. Research by Hutasoit<sup>30</sup> shows that effective principals can improve teacher performance through support and good communication. Ongoing evaluations help principals monitor teaching effectiveness and identify areas that need improvement. A favorable school climate can enhance teacher motivation and performance. Research by Hutasoit<sup>31</sup> also indicates that school principals' leadership influences teacher performance, impacting student learning outcomes. Research by Blasé and Blasé<sup>32</sup> emphasizes that principals who successfully create a favorable school climate can boost teacher morale and encourage students to study harder. Research

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<sup>27</sup> Firnando, H. "Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru."

<sup>28</sup> Mulyasa, E. *Standar Kompetensi dan Sertifikasi Guru*. Jakarta: PT Remaja Rosdakarya. 2020

<sup>29</sup> Sutrisno, R. "Pengaruh Supervisi Akademik terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>30</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>31</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>32</sup> Blasé, J., and Blasé, J. "Building Instructional Leadership: A Practical Guide for School Leaders."

by Kurniawan<sup>33</sup> also found that a climate supporting collaboration and innovation among teachers can improve teaching quality, ultimately affecting student achievement. A favorable school climate influences teacher and student motivation to engage in learning actively.

The empowerment and motivation of teachers are essential to improving the quality of teaching. Bass & Avolio<sup>34</sup> state that recognition given by leaders to their subordinates is one form of transformational leadership that can significantly improve performance. In the context of schools, principals can motivate teachers through formal and informal rewards, offering opportunities for innovation and creating an environment that supports the growth of innovation in schools.

Principals often face challenges in implementing instructional leadership due to limited pedagogical, managerial, and supervisory competencies. According to Hallinger<sup>35</sup>, the success of instructional leadership depends mainly on the principal's ability to design a learning vision and manage the process of improving teaching quality. Moreover, research by Kurniawan et al.<sup>36</sup> also shows that principals who lack sufficient competence in managerial and supervisory areas often struggle to manage and improve the quality of teaching in schools.

Principals are often preoccupied with administrative tasks that consume time, reducing their ability to serve as instructional leaders effectively. Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon<sup>37</sup> state that administrative burdens can reduce the time and energy of principals to engage directly in instructional development. This presents a significant challenge in the effective implementation of instructional leadership. The limitations in infrastructure, supporting technology, and school operational budgets also pose obstacles to implementing quality improvement programs.

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<sup>33</sup> Kurniawan, A. "Visi Kepala Sekolah dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran." *Jurnal Pendidikan*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2021, pp. 12-30.

<sup>34</sup> Bass, B. M., and Avolio, B. J. "Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2020, pp. 271-289.

<sup>35</sup> Hallinger, P. "Leadership for Learning: A Framework for the Role of the Principal in Educational Improvement." *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2021, pp. 124-145.

<sup>36</sup> Kurniawan, R., and Asbari, M. "Evaluasi Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Perubahan Kinerja Guru." *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2022, pp. 199-212.

<sup>37</sup> Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., and Ross-Gordon, J. M. *Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach*. 9th ed., Pearson Education, Inc., 2014.



Research by Sutrisno<sup>38</sup> finds that principals often face difficulties in providing facilities that support teaching innovation, which impacts teaching and learning quality in schools. Principals often face challenges in mentoring teachers who are less enthusiastic or resistant to change. Blasé and Blasé<sup>39</sup> state that principals must build a favorable collaborative work climate to address this. Research by Hutasoit<sup>40</sup> also emphasizes the importance of the principal's support in enhancing teacher motivation to achieve desired educational goals.

## Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of instructional leadership by the school principal at SD Negeri Gilis, Sarang District, Rembang Regency. This type of research was chosen because it focuses on understanding the phenomenon in a broader context, and the qualitative approach allows the researcher to delve deeper into the meanings derived from the experiences of the subjects involved in the study<sup>41</sup>. The study focuses on how the school principal implements instructional leadership that impacts teacher performance and student learning outcomes, as well as the strategies applied by the principal to improve the quality of teaching. The research location was chosen at SD Negeri Gilis, Sarang District, Rembang Regency, which has experience implementing instructional leadership. This location was selected because the school has implemented policies and programs to improve educational quality and provides sufficient access for direct observation of instructional leadership implementation in the field.

The informants in this study consist of the school principal, teachers, and education supervisors. The principal plays the role of instructional leader, responsible for directing and guiding teachers in the learning process. The teachers involved in this study directly interact with the principal's policies and are influenced by the implementation of instructional leadership. Education supervisors were also involved to provide a more objective perspective on the effectiveness of the

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<sup>38</sup> Sutrisno, H. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional dalam Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>39</sup> Blasé, J., and Blasé, J. "Building Instructional Leadership: A Practical Guide for School Leaders."

<sup>40</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>41</sup> Creswell, J. W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed., Sage Publications, 2014.

principal's instructional leadership.

Data for this study was collected through interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide designed to obtain in-depth information about the instructional leadership practices implemented by the principal. Observations were made to observe implementing policies and teaching strategies in the classroom directly. Document studies were conducted by collecting documents related to school policies, the school's vision and mission, and relevant learning outcome reports. According to Sugiyono<sup>42</sup>, data triangulation, involving various data collection techniques, is crucial to ensure the validity of the research results. The data analysis technique used was thematic analysis, where data from interviews, observations, and documents were categorized and analyzed based on themes relevant to the research objectives. This analysis followed steps such as transcribing interviews, coding data, and grouping the emerging themes. This technique helps the researcher identify patterns emerging from the data collected. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation techniques were performed by comparing data from various sources to verify its consistency<sup>43</sup>.

This study was conducted over four months, from January 2025 to April 2025. The designated time was sufficient to obtain adequate data and perform in-depth analysis. However, this study has several limitations, including restricting the research location to only one school and the time constraints that affect the depth of the data collected. Nevertheless, this study is expected to contribute meaningfully to understanding instructional leadership at the elementary school level despite these limitations.

## Results and Discussions

Instructional leadership is a type of leadership that focuses on efforts to improve the quality of teaching in schools through the management of instruction, curriculum development, and support for the professional development of teachers. As an instructional leader, the school principal ensures that every aspect of teaching is carried out effectively and can improve student learning outcomes. According to

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<sup>42</sup> Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung. Alfabetha. 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Flick, Uwe. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. 6th ed., SAGE Publications, 2018.

Hasibuan<sup>44</sup>, there are several key dimensions in instructional leadership, namely: (1) a clear vision and mission, which provide direction and motivation for the entire school community. The principal must communicate a clear vision to achieve educational goals effectively. (2) Learning management, emphasizing the role of the principal in managing and monitoring the quality of teaching and ensuring the implementation of the curriculum according to standards. This is essential to create an effective learning environment. (3) Teacher professional development, a crucial dimension. The principal must support teachers to develop their skills through training and reflection on their teaching practices. (4) Management of evaluation and assessment, enabling the principal to monitor teaching performance and student learning outcomes. Structured evaluation provides valuable feedback for continuous improvement.

Observational data shows that around 60% of teachers at SD Negeri Gilis have not prepared lesson plans (RPP) completely and by the Merdeka Curriculum. This condition reflects teachers' low understanding and skills in creating effective lesson plans. This aligns with the findings of Setyowati and Miyono<sup>45</sup>, who state that the quality of instructional leadership by the school principal significantly affects teacher performance. Syarifudin's research also shows that principal instructional leadership influences teacher performance through the work environment and job satisfaction at primary schools. The principal needs to enhance their role in providing direction and academic supervision to improve the quality of lesson planning by teachers.

To address the challenges in lesson planning, the principal at SD Negeri Gilis implemented several strategies, including: (1) Developing the School Work Plan: The principal prioritizes improving the quality of lesson planning in the school's Annual Work Plan (RKT). This aligns with the views of Damayanti and Asbari<sup>46</sup>, who state that instructional leadership focuses on enhancing the learning process and outcomes through the professional empowerment of teachers. (2) Needs-Based Academic Supervision: The principal schedules academic supervision based on the needs of each teacher. According to Setyowati and

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<sup>44</sup> Hasibuan, R., Siregar, E., and Siregar, H. "Peran Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru."

<sup>45</sup> Setyowati, A., and Miyono, H. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2024, pp. 45-60.

<sup>46</sup> Damayanti, M., and Asbari, M. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional sebagai Pemberdayaan Profesional Guru."

Miyono<sup>47</sup>, adequate academic supervision can improve the quality of teacher performance. (3) Mentorship through Teacher Working Groups (KKG): Senior teachers are mentors in KKG to guide other teachers in preparing lesson plans in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. According to Syarifudin<sup>48</sup>, teacher empowerment through KKG can enhance the quality of teaching at primary schools. (4) Training and Workshops: The principal organizes workshops on preparing thematic lesson plans based on the Merdeka Curriculum with school supervisors to improve teachers' understanding of creating effective lesson plans. This aligns with research by Setyowati and Miyono (2024), which shows that training can improve the quality of teacher performance.

After three months of implementing the instructional leadership strategies, teachers significantly improved the quality of lesson planning. Data shows that 90% of teachers could independently prepare lesson plans per the latest format set by the Merdeka Curriculum. Additionally, teacher involvement in KKG discussions significantly increased, indicating that a culture of collaboration among teachers had begun to form. Classroom observations also showed improvements in time management and the use of more active teaching methods. This is in line with findings from Setyowati and Miyono<sup>49</sup>, which state that instructional leadership by the school principal significantly affects the quality of teacher performance.

The school principal plays a strategic role in improving teacher performance through instructional leadership. According to Setyowati and Miyono<sup>50</sup>, effective principals can improve teacher performance by providing continuous empowerment and guidance. Additionally, Syarifudin<sup>51</sup> states that instructional leadership by the school principal influences teacher performance through the work environment and job satisfaction at primary schools, which can improve student learning outcomes. The principal needs to continue enhancing their competence in conducting academic supervision, providing constructive feedback, and creating a school climate that supports teacher professionalism.

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<sup>47</sup> Setyowati, A., and Miyono, H. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru."

<sup>48</sup> Syarifudin, A. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>49</sup> Setyowati, A., and Miyono, H. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru."

<sup>50</sup> Setyowati, A., and Miyono, H. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru."

<sup>51</sup> Syarifudin, A. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah di Sekolah Dasar."

Improvement in the quality of lesson planning by teachers can potentially improve student learning outcomes. According to Setyowati and Miyono<sup>52</sup>, improving teacher performance quality can positively impact student learning outcomes. Additionally, Syarifudin<sup>53</sup> also shows that instructional leadership by the principal influences teacher performance through the work environment and job satisfaction at primary schools, which ultimately can improve student learning outcomes.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations for developing instructional leadership at SD Negeri Gilis include: (1) Enhancing the Principal's Competence: The principal should attend training and workshops focused on developing competence in academic supervision and providing constructive feedback to teachers. (2) Strengthening Teacher Working Groups (KKG): KKG needs to be well-facilitated as a platform for teachers to share experiences and best practices in teaching. (3) Increasing Parental and School Committee Involvement: The principal should involve parents and the school committee in improving the quality of teaching to create synergy in supporting student development. (4) Utilizing Technology in Teaching: The principal should encourage using technology in the teaching process to increase student engagement and learning effectiveness. According to research by Kenning<sup>54</sup>, educational technology can enrich students' learning experiences and provide alternative ways to deliver more engaging and compelling content.

Implementing instructional leadership by the school principal positively impacts the quality of teaching at SD Negeri Gilis. The results achieved, such as the increased ability of teachers to prepare lesson plans by the Merdeka Curriculum and the increased involvement of teachers in KKG discussions, prove that the principal's strategies in guiding and supporting teachers are highly effective in improving teacher professionalism.

Although the research findings indicate that the instructional leadership implemented at SD Negeri Gilis can have a positive impact, some challenges still face its implementation. The main challenge

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<sup>52</sup> Setyowati, A., and Miyono, H. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru."

<sup>53</sup> Syarifudin, A. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah di Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>54</sup> Kenning, M. "Technological Innovations in Education: Enabling Active Learning and Student Engagement." *Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2018, pp. 237-249.

identified is the limited competence of the principal in conducting data-based academic supervision. Glickman et al.<sup>55</sup> reveal that excessive administrative burdens can reduce the time principals can focus on their role as instructional leaders, which in turn hinders teaching quality in schools. The lack of resources and facilities also challenges the principal in supporting teaching innovation. As found by Sutrisno<sup>56</sup>, limitations in infrastructure and school budgets often become obstacles in implementing educational policies that focus on the quality of teaching. The principal needs to find solutions to optimize available resources to maintain the quality of education.

One of the main goals of instructional leadership is to improve student learning outcomes. This study shows that the instructional leadership carried out by the principal at SD Negeri Gilis has a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Improving the quality of teacher lesson planning and classroom management can create an environment that supports effective learning. This study is also in line with the findings of Hutasoit<sup>57</sup>, which shows that implementing instructional leadership focused on improving teaching quality in the classroom can significantly improve student learning outcomes.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the instructional leadership implemented at SD Negeri Gilis can improve teacher performance in planning and delivering quality teaching. The strategies employed by the principal, such as organizing workshops, needs-based academic supervision, and empowering teachers through KKG, have been shown to impact the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes positively. Although there are several challenges, such as limited principal competence and administrative burdens, efforts to improve and strengthen the role of the principal as an instructional leader must continue to achieve sustained improvements in educational quality.

## Conclusion

This study aims to explore the impact of the implementation of instructional leadership by the school principal on teacher performance

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<sup>55</sup> Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., and Ross-Gordon, J. M. *Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach*. 9th ed.,

<sup>56</sup> Sutrisno, H. "Kepemimpinan Instruksional dalam Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>57</sup> Hutasoit, M. "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional terhadap Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar."

and student learning outcomes at SD Negeri Gilis, Sarang District, Rembang Regency. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the instructional leadership implemented by the school principal has a significant positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Most teachers' incomplete preparation of Lesson Plans (RPP) was the main issue identified. Around 60% of teachers at SD Negeri Gilis had not prepared lesson plans by the applicable curriculum, specifically the Merdeka Curriculum. This indicates a deficiency in teachers' understanding and skills in planning effective teaching.

The school principal implemented various strategies to address these challenges, including improving lesson planning quality in the Annual Work Plan (RKT), creating needs-based academic supervision schedules for teachers, and conducting thematic lesson plan workshops based on the Merdeka Curriculum. Empowering teachers through Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and increasing teacher involvement in collaborative discussions were also part of the principal's strategies. After three months of implementation, a significant improvement in the quality of lesson planning was observed, with 90% of teachers able to prepare lesson plans independently according to the latest format. Additionally, teacher involvement in KKG discussions increased, fostering a positive culture of collaboration among teachers. Classroom observations showed improvements in time management and the use of more active teaching methods.

The principal is crucial in enhancing teacher performance through planned and consistent instructional leadership. The principal's support through supervision, constructive feedback, and continuous mentoring can improve teachers' teaching performance. This, in turn, affects the quality of teaching in the classroom and positively impacts student learning outcomes. The improvement in teaching quality by teachers, influenced by the principal's instructional leadership, can potentially enhance student learning outcomes. Effective instructional leadership, involving resource management and teacher support, creates conditions supporting optimal learning objectives.

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