

The Influence of Principal Leadership on Administrative Staff Work Motivation in Elementary Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of principal leadership on the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City. This study used a quantitative method with a descriptive approach. The study population consisted of 6 administrative staff, so the entire population was sampled using a saturated sampling technique. In this study, the data collection method was carried out through a questionnaire using a Likert scale. Data analysis used validity, reliability, normality, and simple linear regression tests with the help of SPSS. The results showed that principal leadership had a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of administrative staff. This was evidenced by a significance value smaller than 0.05 so that the research hypothesis was accepted. The better the principal's leadership, the higher the work motivation of administrative staff. This study recommends that principals improve their leadership, communication, supervision, and motivational skills to administrative staff so that their performance and work spirit are optimal.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human need that enables individuals to understand and realize their full potential, while also serving as a guide for human life. Education empowers individuals to engage in social interaction within society. Through education, human beings can achieve a more complete life and become more responsible in the context of national and civic life. Education is also an important factor in the development of human resources. Schools, as educational institutions, require effective management so that educational objectives can be achieved. In addition to teachers, administrative staff also play an important role in supporting the smooth implementation of school activities (Neni Siti Mariam & Kun Nurachadijat, 2023).

School Administrative Staff are part of educational personnel responsible for administrative affairs. Therefore, the presence of administrative staff at the primary and secondary education levels is essential in the learning process in order to create quality schools. As one component of the learning process, the duties and functions of administrative staff at the primary and secondary education levels cannot be carried out by educators. This is because their work is administrative in nature and subject to specific regulations; it constitutes a service function intended to support the smooth implementation of the learning process; it requires competencies different from those required of educators; and, in some cases, it is not directly related to students. In addition, according to civil service regulations, the duties of administrative staff at the primary and secondary education levels may not be concurrently performed by other functional personnel. Administrative staff are therefore essential to ensuring the smooth implementation of the teaching and learning process in schools. Minister of National Education

Regulation Number 24 of 2008 explains that school administrative staff consist of the head of school administration, administrative officers, and special service personnel (Pandi, 2022).

The phenomenon of work motivation among administrative staff in educational institutions is an important aspect in understanding and improving their performance. Work motivation refers to internal or external drives that encourage individuals to achieve goals, perform their duties with enthusiasm, and contribute effectively within their work environment. However, in practice, some administrative staff are still found to lack discipline, show low enthusiasm, and perform their duties less than optimally. This indicates the existence of problems related to work motivation. One factor presumed to influence the work motivation of administrative staff is the leadership of the school principal.

The school principal, as a leader, plays a role in providing direction, motivation, supervision, and in creating a conducive work environment. The principal holds a strategic position in managing and directing educational development at the school level, as the principal has a major impact on student learning outcomes. Transformational leadership is a leadership style characterized by leaders who influence their members or subordinates by inspiring, motivating, and encouraging constructive organizational change (Akbar & Imaniyati, 2019).

Several previous studies have shown that school principal leadership has a positive relationship with employee motivation and performance. Hindun and Miyono found that principal leadership and work motivation influence teacher performance (Kinerja et al., 2024). Dimas Bagus Wicaksono stated that principal leadership has a positive effect on the performance of educational personnel (Ilmiah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Ramadhani demonstrated that madrasah principal leadership and work motivation have a significant effect on the performance of administrative staff (Kepemimpinan et al., 2024). Nevertheless, studies that specifically examine the influence of school principal leadership on the work motivation of administrative staff remain limited. Therefore, this research is important to determine the extent to which school principal leadership influences the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City.

Based on the foregoing discussion, relatively few studies have specifically examined the influence of school principal leadership on the work motivation of administrative staff as the main variable. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the influence of school principal leadership on the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City. It is expected that this study will provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of school management.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a descriptive method, namely research that produces findings obtained through statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Wiratna Sujarweni, 2022). The study was conducted from August 19 to October 15, 2025. Population refers to a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess certain quantities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn (Sugiyono, 2016). The population in this study consisted of the principal and administrative staff of SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City.

The sampling technique used in this study was saturated sampling, a sampling technique in which all members of the population are used as the sample. This technique is commonly applied when the population size is relatively small, namely fewer than 30 individuals. Based on

this consideration, since the population was relatively small, or fewer than 100 individuals, the sampling technique used in this study was total sampling, with a total of six respondents.

The data collection techniques used in this study included questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The instrument was developed based on the indicators of each research variable. Before being used, the instrument was first tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to determine the accuracy of each statement item, while the reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the level of instrument consistency. The instrument was considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value was greater than 0.6.

Data analysis was conducted quantitatively with the assistance of SPSS version 26 for Windows. The data analysis included a normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, simple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, a t-test to determine the significance of the partial effect, and the coefficient of determination (R Square) to determine the extent of the contribution of school principal leadership to the work motivation of administrative staff.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the results of the analysis conducted using SPSS version 26 for Windows regarding the influence of school principal leadership on the work motivation of administrative staff, with a sample consisting of six respondents, the following results were obtained:

Table 1. Validity Test

Variable	Item	Calculated r-value	r-table value	Description
School Principal Leadership (X)	P1	0.969	0.621	Valid
	P2	0.940	0.621	Valid
	P3	0.969	0.621	Valid
	P4	0.794	0.621	Valid
	P5	0.969	0.621	Valid
	P6	0.940	0.621	Valid
	P7	0.691	0.621	Valid
	P8	0.867	0.621	Valid
	P9	0.969	0.621	Valid
Work Motivation of Administrative Staff (Y)	P1	0.970	0.621	Valid
	P2	0.970	0.621	Valid
	P3	0.920	0.621	Valid
	P4	0.970	0.621	Valid
	P5	0.920	0.621	Valid
	P6	0.915	0.621	Valid
	P7	0.906	0.621	Valid
	P8	0.906	0.621	Valid
	P9	0.915	0.621	Valid

Source: SPSS 26 for Windows

Table 2. Summary of the Validity Test

Variable	Item	Valid Item	Percentage of Valid Items
School Principal Leadership (X)	9	9	100%
Work Motivation of Administrative Staff (Y)	9	9	100%

Source: SPSS 26 for Windows

Based on Tables 1 and 2, it can be seen that all items in the variables of School Principal Leadership (X) and Work Motivation of Administrative Staff (Y) are valid. This is indicated by the item-total correlation values, which are greater than the r-table value (0.621). Each variable consists of nine statement items, all of which are valid; therefore, the validity percentage reaches 100% for both variables. Thus, the research instrument is appropriate for use in data collection because it can accurately measure the intended constructs in accordance with the theoretical indicators of each variable.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability (%)	Category	N of Items
School Principal Leadership (X)	0.972	97%	Sangat Tinggi	9
Work Motivation of Administrative Staff (Y)	0.978	97%	Sangat Tinggi	9

Source: SPSS 26 for Windows

Based on the results of the data processing presented in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha value for the Principal Leadership variable (X) is 0.972 (97%), while the value for the Administrative Staff Work Motivation variable (Y) is 0.978 (97%). Both values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.6, indicating that the two instruments fall into the category of very high reliability. Therefore, it can be concluded that all instruments are reliable, consistent, and appropriate for further analysis, as they meet the requirements of internal consistency.

**Table 4. Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Unstandardized Residual
N		6
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	0,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,78764420
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0,200
	Positive	0,189
	Negative	-0,200
Test Statistic		0,200
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Source: SPSS 26 for Windows

Uji normalitas adalah langkah pertama dalam pengujian regresi untuk menentukan apakah data residual dalam model terdistribusi normal. Distribusi normal residual adalah salah satu asumsi penting dalam analisis regresi linier klasik (Dardick & Weiss, 2020).

Berdasarkan hasil perhitungan uji normalitas dengan menggunakan metode uji sampel One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov, nilai signifikansi muncul sebesar 0,200. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai signifikansi $>0,05$. Dari hasil tersebut, maka dapat diambil kesimpulan bahwa uji normalitas residual penelitian berdistribusi normal.

**Table 5. t-Test
Coefficients^a**

Model				Standardized	t	Sig.
		Beta		Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	1,591	5,621		0,283	0,791
	School Principal Leadership	1,011	0,147	0,960	6,876	0,002

a. Dependent Variable:
Work Motivation of
Administrative Staff

Source: SPSS 26 for Windows

The partial t-test aims to evaluate the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable separately, in order to determine whether the contribution of each independent variable is statistically significant in the regression model.

Based on Table 5, it is known that the Principal Leadership variable has a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.05), with a calculated t-value of 6.876 $>$ t-table value of 1.943. This indicates that Principal Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Administrative Staff Work Motivation. Therefore, principal leadership influences the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.960 ^a	0,922	0,902	1,999

a. Predictors: (Constant),
 School Principal
 Leadership

b. Dependent Variable:
 Work Motivation of
 Administrative Staff

Sumber: SPSS 26 *For Windows*

Based on Table 6, the coefficient of determination value (R Square) is 0.922. This value indicates that the Principal Leadership variable influences Administrative Staff Work Motivation by 92.2%. Meanwhile, the remaining 7.8% is influenced by other factors.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, it is evident that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City. This is supported by the simple regression test, which showed a significance value of 0.002, lower than 0.05, and a calculated t-value of 6.876, greater than the t-table value of 1.943. Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the better the principal's leadership, the higher the work motivation of administrative staff.

This finding indicates that the principal plays a strategic role as a leader in enhancing the work enthusiasm of administrative personnel. The principal is not only responsible for managing educational activities but also functions as a motivator, supervisor, and mentor for all educational staff. Effective leadership is demonstrated through the ability to provide clear direction, establish effective communication, serve as a role model, appreciate employee performance, and create a comfortable working environment. Such conditions encourage administrative staff to work with greater discipline, responsibility, and productivity (Minsih et al., 2019).

The magnitude of the influence of principal leadership on work motivation is also reflected in the coefficient of determination value (R Square) of 0.922. This means that 92.2% of administrative staff work motivation is influenced by principal leadership, while the remaining 7.8% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study, such as compensation, work environment, organizational culture, relationships among employees, and personal factors. This value indicates that principal leadership is a dominant factor in improving the work motivation of administrative staff.

This research finding is consistent with work motivation theory, which states that motivation arises from both internal and external drives that influence individuals to work optimally. In the context of school organizations, the principal is one of the main external factors that can influence employee motivation through policies, attention, appreciation, and harmonious working relationships.

This study also supports previous research findings. Hindun and Miyono found that principal leadership and work motivation affect teacher performance. Furthermore, Dimas Bagus Wicaksono stated that principal leadership has a positive effect on the performance of educational staff. Ramadhani also found that madrasah principal leadership and work motivation have a significant effect on the performance of administrative staff. These findings strengthen the view that principal leadership has a broad impact on employees' work behavior, both among teachers and administrative staff.

In addition, the research instruments met the requirements of validity and reliability. All statement items were declared valid with a percentage of 100%, while the Cronbach's Alpha values for both variables were above 0.97, falling into the very high category. This indicates that the instruments used were able to measure the research variables consistently and accurately.

Nevertheless, this study has a limitation in terms of the number of respondents, which consisted of only six individuals because the entire population was used as the sample. The small number of respondents means that the research findings only represent the conditions at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City, and cannot yet be widely generalized. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more schools and a larger number of respondents so that the findings will be more comprehensive.

Practically, the findings of this study imply that principals need to continuously improve the quality of their leadership through open communication, regular guidance, recognition and appreciation, as well as the involvement of administrative staff in certain decision-making processes. In this way, employees' work motivation will increase and contribute to better quality school administrative services.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study entitled "The Effect of Principal Leadership on the Work Motivation of Administrative Staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City" indicates that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of administrative staff at SD Inpres 3 Talise, Palu City. This is evidenced by a significance value of $0.002 < 0.05$ and a coefficient of determination of 92.2%. The better the principal's leadership, the higher the work motivation of administrative staff.

The limitation of this study lies in the small sample size. Future research is recommended to increase the number of respondents and examine other factors, such as work environment, compensation, and organizational culture.

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