

## ***How Instructional Leadership Supports and Influences Teacher Professional Development?***

### **Bagaimana Kepemimpinan Instruksional Mendukung dan Mempengaruhi Pengembangan Profesional Guru?**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates how instructional leadership supports teacher professional development and how it influences teachers' motivation and classroom performance. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three participants: a school principal, a senior teacher, and an early-career teacher. The findings show that instructional leadership is enacted through clear communication of instructional goals, participatory decision-making, consistent supervision, constructive feedback, and facilitation of professional development activities. These practices help teachers engage more deeply in professional learning and strengthen their instructional capacity. The results also reveal that supportive leadership enhances teacher motivation by providing recognition, emotional encouragement, and opportunities for autonomy, which in turn improves teachers' confidence and classroom performance. The study concludes that strong instructional leadership plays a vital role in shaping teacher learning and motivation, ultimately contributing to improved instructional quality in schools. Recommendations include enhancing leaders' coaching skills and strengthening collaborative learning structures to better support teacher development.*

**Keywords:** *Instructional Leadership, Teacher Professional Development, Teacher Motivation, Classroom Performance, Feedback, Supervision, School Leadership, Qualitative Research.*

#### **ABSTRAK**

Studi ini meneliti bagaimana kepemimpinan instruksional mendukung pengembangan profesional guru dan bagaimana hal itu memengaruhi motivasi guru dan kinerja di kelas. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tiga partisipan: seorang kepala sekolah, seorang guru senior, dan seorang guru pemula. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan instruksional diwujudkan melalui komunikasi yang jelas tentang tujuan pembelajaran, pengambilan keputusan partisipatif, supervisi yang konsisten, umpan balik yang konstruktif, dan fasilitasi kegiatan pengembangan profesional. Praktik-praktik ini membantu guru terlibat lebih dalam dalam pembelajaran profesional dan memperkuat kapasitas pengajaran mereka. Hasil penelitian juga mengungkapkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang suportif meningkatkan motivasi guru dengan memberikan pengakuan, dorongan emosional, dan kesempatan untuk otonomi, yang pada gilirannya meningkatkan kepercayaan diri guru dan kinerja di kelas. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Kepemimpinan instruksional yang kuat memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk pembelajaran dan motivasi guru, yang pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada peningkatan kualitas pengajaran di sekolah. Rekomendasi mencakup peningkatan keterampilan pembinaan para pemimpin dan penguatan struktur pembelajaran kolaboratif untuk lebih mendukung pengembangan guru.

**Kata kunci:** *Kepemimpinan Instruksional, Pengembangan Profesional Guru, Motivasi Guru, Kinerja Kelas, Umpan Balik, Supervisi, Kepemimpinan Sekolah, Penelitian Kualitatif.*

## 1. Pendahuluan

Instructional leadership is becoming an important concept in educational research. Many experts and practitioners have begun to emphasize that instructional leadership plays a crucial role in teachers' professional development, the quality of instruction, and student learning performance (Munna, 2022). Over the past decade, attention to teacher professional development has continued to increase. This is influenced by rapid changes in the curriculum, the development of digital learning, and high expectations for teaching quality. The current studies indicate that the best way to enhance teacher professional development is through the school leadership, when school leaders provide support focused on improving teaching practices rather than just on administrative oversight (Hennessy et al., 2022). This context describes instructional leadership as one of the actions taken by leaders to guide and improve the teaching and learning process (Qodiriyah, 2023), monitor teaching quality (Pujiati, 2023), and help teachers continue to develop over time. Many studies confirm that successful learning leaders usually carry out activities such as setting mutually agreed learning goals, coaching teachers, coordinating professional learning communities, utilizing data in every decision, opening up space for collaborative reflection, and developing a school culture that prioritizes improving teacher competence (Richter & Richter, 2024). These actions are in line with current professional standards, which the role of the principal is to provide teachers with the resources, feedback, and motivation necessary to keep developing their teaching competencies (Johson et al., 2024)

Many recent findings indicate that instructional leadership has a direct influence on teachers' professional development (Li, 2023), particularly in cases where leaders are supportive and show interest in learning (Nurhisyam & Setiawan, 2024). Research conducted by (Astrup & Jerrim, 2025) Leaders who visit classrooms regularly, offer positive feedback, and promote collaboration at work are likely to inspire the teachers to become more active in pursuing self-development. Research indicates that the implementation of coaching, mentoring, and systematic collaboration enables teachers to be more competent to modify teaching practices, integrate technology, and also to differentiate learning in relation to the needs of every student (Yuh et al., 2025). It is common that professional learning communities grow well when the leaders in the schools are directly engaged in facilitating the exchange of experience and building trust among the teachers (Zamiri & Esmaili, 2024), enabling teachers to be experimental and critical about their teaching (Ma & Green, 2023). In addition, instructional leaders also ensure that various teacher training activities support the school's direction and objectives, so that efforts to improve teaching quality become more integrated (Sattin-bajaj et al., 2023). If training is designed in line with the direction and needs of the school, teachers tend to see it as more useful, and this increases their readiness to engage in continuous learning.

Recent research confirms that instructional leadership plays a role in promoting teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by providing a work environment that offers emotional support while encouraging intellectual development (Jos, 2023). Leaders' recognition of teachers' contributions makes teachers feel more empowered and involved in decision-making (Irawan et al., 2024), and feedback that is delivered constructively and without judgment makes teachers feel more appreciated and encourages them to continue improving their teaching practices (Mekheimer, 2025). Teachers are more highly motivated when leaders set clear performance expectations and ensure that development is not just administrative but aligned with the needs of teachers (Torres & Duran, 2024). After the COVID-19 pandemic, the important role of instructional leadership has been reaffirmed, as teachers face very complex teaching challenges that require continuous professional development in digital and hybrid learning, as well as strategies to increase student participation (Hamid, 2024). The Ventista & Brown, 2023) A study shows that leaders who provide training and also give emotional support can maintain teacher motivation and ensure effective teaching even when teachers face many

obstacles. These studies show that leadership behavior, teacher motivation, and classroom performance are dynamically linked and influence each other.

Instructional leadership also shapes teacher performance by influencing teachers' instructional planning, assessment practices, and student-centered learning approaches (Darwis et al., 2025). Effective instructional leaders encourage teachers to use evidence-based instructional strategies, analyze student data, and engage in reflective practice. The process implemented by the school leader was found to enrich teachers' pedagogical competencies, improve their classroom management skills, and facilitate the use of innovative learning methods. Recent international studies highlight that when leaders create high expectations for instructional quality while providing supportive structures, teachers show improved classroom performance, enhanced instructional clarity, and stronger student outcomes. Furthermore, digital transformation in education has expanded the scope of instructional leadership, as principals must now ensure that teachers receive adequate training in educational technology, data literacy, and online instructional design. In this sense, instructional leadership serves not only as a catalyst for professional learning but also as a mediating factor that connects teachers' motivation with their actual performance in the classroom.

Given these developments, this study explores how school leaders practice instructional leadership to support teacher professional development and how these practices influence teachers' motivation and classroom performance. Understanding these relationships is essential for strengthening leadership preparation programs, informing policy directions, and improving school-level strategies for teacher learning. Although prior research has extensively discussed the importance of instructional leadership, there remains a need for more up-to-date empirical insights, particularly in the post-pandemic era, where demands on teachers and leaders have significantly evolved. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do school leaders practice instructional leadership to support teacher professional development? (2) How does instructional leadership influence teachers' motivation and classroom performance? Addressing these questions contributes to contemporary discussions on improving instructional quality and sustaining effective teacher development systems in an era of rapid educational change.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how instructional leadership supports teacher professional development and influences teacher motivation and classroom performance. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to obtain detailed, contextualized insights from individuals who directly experience instructional leadership practices in their daily work. The research focused on three participants who were purposively selected based on their relevance to the study: one school leader who is responsible for supervising instruction and facilitating teacher learning, and two teachers who actively participate in professional development activities and work closely with the school leader. The presence of the researcher was essential during data collection to build rapport with participants, ensure clarity during interviews, and capture non-verbal cues that contributed to a deeper understanding. The interviews were conducted in a comfortable setting chosen by the participants, allowing them to share their experiences openly and without pressure.

The interview instrument used in this study was adapted from Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Model, which consists of three core dimensions:

1. Defining the school mission
2. Managing the instructional program
3. Promoting a positive school learning climate

**Table 1. Interview Instrument**

<b>Dimension of Hallinger's Model</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
1. Defining the School Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How does your school leader communicate the instructional goals or academic vision of the school</li> <li>b. In what ways are teachers involved in understanding or shaping school instructional goals?</li> </ul>
2. Managing the Instructional Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. How does the school leader supervise or monitor teaching and learning processes?</li> <li>d. What types of feedback or guidance does the school leader provide to improve teaching practices?</li> <li>e. Does your leader help you access or participate in professional development programs? If yes, how?</li> <li>f. Can you share an example of a time when the leader helped you improve your instructional skills?</li> </ul>
3. Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. How does the school leader create a supportive learning environment for teachers?</li> <li>h. In what ways does the leader motivate teachers to engage in continuous professional development?</li> <li>i. How do leadership practices influence your confidence, enthusiasm, or motivation to teach?</li> <li>j. Have leadership actions affected your classroom performance? If so, how?</li> </ul>
4. Reflective and Additional Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>k. What leadership behaviors do you consider most effective for improving teacher professional development?</li> <li>l. What challenges does your school leader face in supporting teacher learning?</li> <li>m. What suggestions would you offer to strengthen instructional leadership in your school?</li> </ul>

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility for probing deeper into participants' responses while maintaining focus on the research questions. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. Field notes were also taken to capture contextual observations, emotional expressions, and reflective insights during the interview process. In addition to interviews, informal conversations before and after the sessions were used to clarify information and validate emerging ideas. Although the study did not involve classroom observations or document analysis, participants were encouraged to provide examples from their teaching practice, professional development experiences, and interactions with instructional leaders. This approach ensured that the data reflected authentic experiences and meaningful perspectives related to instructional leadership.

The analysis of the data followed an inductive thematic approach. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were read repeatedly to identify meaningful segments of information. Coding was conducted manually, starting with open coding to capture initial ideas, followed by axial coding to organize related concepts, and finally, selective coding to formulate overarching themes. These themes were continuously refined as patterns became clearer across the three participant narratives. To ensure credibility, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with the participants to confirm that the interpretations accurately represented their experiences. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process by documenting the researcher's assumptions, potential biases, and reflections in a research journal. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. The study was conducted within a time frame that allowed for scheduling interviews at participants' convenience and provided sufficient opportunity for careful analysis and verification of the data. Through this approach, the study aimed to produce trustworthy insights into how instructional

leadership practices shape teacher professional development and influence teacher motivation and classroom performance.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Respondent 1 serves as a school principal with more than ten years of experience overseeing instructional quality and teacher development. Respondent 2 is an established teacher with over a decade of classroom practice who frequently facilitates collegial learning forums and assists novice teachers in adjusting to school culture. Respondent 3 is an early-career teacher who has been teaching for three years and participates regularly in school-based professional development programs while receiving ongoing guidance from the instructional leader. These three individuals represent different stages of professional life, leadership, senior teaching, and early-career adaptation, which collectively enrich the interpretive depth of this study. Their contrasting positions allow for a layered understanding of how instructional leadership is experienced, interpreted, and embodied in everyday school practice.

The first interview question revealed how instructional goals are communicated across the school. Respondent 1 explained, "I always start the academic year with a meeting where I explain our instructional goals clearly and relate them to student learning needs," signaling a deliberate effort to establish directionality in instructional work. Respondent 2 described how "the principal often reminds us of the goals during weekly briefings," suggesting that repetition and consistency are strategic tools for reinforcing shared understanding. Respondent 3 noted, "As a new teacher, I feel the goals are clear because the leader repeats them during classroom supervision," demonstrating that clarity is built not only in formal settings but also in personalized supervisory encounters. These findings correspond with Hallinger's assertion that the articulation of mission is foundational for instructional leadership, as it creates coherence and anchors teacher actions. Recent research by Qodiriyah (2023) similarly indicates that persistent communication strengthens teachers' sense of direction and their commitment to instructional improvement.

The second question examined how teachers participate in shaping instructional goals. Respondent 1 said, "I usually ask teachers to share ideas, especially when designing improvement plans," reflecting a leadership stance that views teachers as co-constructors rather than passive receivers of policy. Respondent 2 added, "We are encouraged to provide input during curriculum workshops, and sometimes our suggestions become part of the official goals," indicating a collaborative culture that values teacher agency. Respondent 3 remarked, "Although I'm new, the leader still asks for my perspective," which points to an inclusive leadership approach that embraces diverse voices. These practices align closely with Hallinger's conceptualization of shared mission formation, where teacher participation enhances ownership and goal internalization.

The third question focused on supervision practices implemented by the school leader. Respondent 1 stated, "I conduct classroom observations at least twice a semester and follow up with feedback sessions," showing systematic monitoring aligned with professional expectations. Respondent 2 shared, "The principal often walks into our classrooms informally just to see how things are going," emphasizing the value of organic, everyday presence. Respondent 3 observed, "The supervision feels supportive, not judgmental," underscoring an emotional dimension often overlooked in formal frameworks. These experiences reflect the essence of managing instructional programs within Hallinger's model, where supervision is not merely evaluative but developmental. Pujianti (2023) found that teachers respond more positively to supervision when it is framed as collaborative inquiry rather than top-down control, which resonates strongly with these findings.

The fourth question explored the nature of feedback received by teachers. Respondent 1 said, "After observations, I give detailed feedback and suggest strategies teachers can try,"

highlighting a leader's responsibility to provide actionable guidance. Respondent 2 stated, "The principal doesn't just point out weaknesses; they give practical solutions," indicating a balanced, improvement-oriented feedback style. Respondent 3 remarked, "I really appreciate the feedback because it motivates me to try new approaches," showing that feedback has both cognitive and affective influence. These findings affirm Hallinger's emphasis on constructive feedback as a mechanism for instructional refinement. This similarly demonstrates that feedback framed as professional dialogue enhances teacher motivation and encourages innovation in the classroom.

The fifth question examined leader support for professional development. Respondent 1 shared, "I always recommend training that matches teachers' needs and school priorities," indicating strategic alignment. Respondent 2 said, "The principal informs us whenever there's a workshop and encourages us to join," showing active facilitation rather than passive dissemination. Respondent 3 added, "Sometimes the leader helps me register for training because I'm still new," illustrating differentiated support. These experiences embody the instructional leader's role as a broker of learning opportunities. Munna (2022) found that teacher development is most effective when leaders intentionally curate opportunities aligned with individual growth and institutional goals, a pattern clearly evident in this study.

The sixth question invited examples of leader involvement in improving instruction. Respondent 1 explained, "One teacher struggled with assessment strategies, so I coached them for several weeks," depicting sustained, personalized support. Respondent 2 shared, "The principal once demonstrated a teaching technique during a peer-sharing session," signaling a willingness to model practice. Respondent 3 said, "The leader guided me on how to manage group work more effectively," illustrating instructional scaffolding. These accounts show leaders acting as instructional partners rather than distant overseers. Li (2023) emphasizes that coaching and modeling deepen professional learning, particularly when embedded within teachers' real contexts, aligning perfectly with the data.

The seventh question explored how leaders cultivate a positive climate. Respondent 1 stated, "I try to maintain open communication so teachers feel comfortable sharing their challenges," highlighting psychological safety. Respondent 2 added, "The principal appreciates our efforts, even small achievements," showing how affirmation fosters morale. Respondent 3 said, "I feel encouraged because the leader always checks whether I'm coping with my workload," revealing pastoral care integrated into leadership practice. These findings reflect Hallinger's climatic dimension, emphasizing relational practices that sustain teacher well-being.

The eighth question addressed teacher motivation for professional development. Respondent 1 said, "I motivate teachers by showing how training directly improves student results," linking PD to meaningful outcomes. Respondent 2 shared, "When the leader highlights success stories, it makes us want to learn more," revealing the power of professional storytelling. Respondent 3 explained, "The leader motivates me by recognizing my progress," underscoring the value of personalized encouragement. These responses indicate a multidimensional motivational strategy. This study found that recognition and demonstrated relevance significantly increase teacher engagement in professional learning, which aligns with these findings.

The ninth question focused on confidence and motivation. Respondent 1 stated, "Teachers feel more confident when they know I support their improvement efforts," showing how emotional reassurance shapes efficacy. Respondent 2 said, "I feel motivated because the leader trusts us to experiment with new methods," linking autonomy to motivation. Respondent 3 added, "The encouragement I receive boosts my confidence to teach challenging topics," emphasizing the impact of relational validation. These findings argue that teacher motivation is strengthened when leaders combine support with autonomy.

The tenth question explored leadership influence on classroom performance. Respondent 1 explained, "I see improvements when teachers apply the feedback I provide," linking feedback to tangible change. Respondent 2 mentioned, "My teaching performance has

improved because the leader pushes us to reflect more often,” indicating reflexive growth. Respondent 3 said, “I apply new strategies after training recommended by the leader,” showing translation of PD into practice.

The eleventh question explored effective leadership behaviors. Respondent 1 noted, “Clear communication and consistent supervision are the most effective,” emphasizing clarity and consistency. Respondent 2 said, “Feedback and appreciation matter the most,” highlighting emotional and cognitive support. Respondent 3 added, “Guidance during difficult times makes a big difference,” pointing to empathy as a core leadership quality.

The twelfth question addressed challenges leaders face. Respondent 1 said, “Time constraints make it difficult to supervise everyone equally,” identifying structural barriers. Respondent 2 stated, “Sometimes teachers resist change,” pointing to cultural resistance. Respondent 3 remarked, “Teachers may feel overwhelmed by too many initiatives,” revealing cognitive overload.

The final question invited suggestions for enhancing leadership practice. Respondent 1 suggested, “Leaders should receive more training in coaching,” highlighting the need for leader capacity-building. Respondent 2 recommended, “Schools need more collaborative spaces for sharing practices,” emphasizing structural support. Respondent 3 stated, “New teachers need extra support during their first years,” pointing to differentiated scaffolding. These recommendations align with Darwis et al (2025), who assert that strengthening instructional leadership requires targeted leader training and structured collaborative systems.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that school leaders support teacher professional development by clearly communicating instructional goals, supervising classroom practices, providing constructive feedback, and facilitating access to relevant training. These actions demonstrate how instructional leadership is practiced in daily school operations and show that leaders play an active role in shaping teachers’ professional learning experiences. The findings also indicate that instructional leadership positively influences teachers’ motivation and classroom performance. Teachers reported feeling more confident, valued, and encouraged to improve their practice when leaders offered support, recognition, and opportunities for growth. As a result, teachers were more willing to adopt new instructional strategies and engage in reflective teaching. Overall, the study affirms that strong instructional leadership enhances teacher development, motivation, and performance, thereby contributing to improved instructional quality in schools.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings, two key recommendations are proposed. First, school leaders should strengthen their instructional leadership practice by ensuring regular, high-quality supervision and feedback, and by aligning professional development opportunities with teachers’ actual needs so that support for teacher learning becomes more targeted and meaningful. Second, leaders should intentionally cultivate teacher motivation by providing consistent recognition, emotional support, and opportunities for autonomy, as these practices have been shown to improve teachers’ confidence and enhance their classroom performance. Through these efforts, instructional leadership can more effectively promote both teacher professional development and improved instructional outcomes.

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