



## The Role of Female Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Performance at Jasinga Elementary Schools

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### Abstract

The rising number of female principals in Indonesian elementary schools has not yet been matched by equitable teacher performance, especially in rural-suburban areas such as Jasinga. This study analyzes how female principal leadership enhances teacher performance in three public elementary schools in Jasinga District, namely SDN Jasinga 03, SDN Jasinga 06, and SDN Jasinga 07. A qualitative multiple case study design was used, involving three female principals, nine teachers, and three education staff selected purposively. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, then analyzed using interactive qualitative procedures of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that female principals improve teacher performance through openness, empathy, assertiveness, responsibility, inspirational role-modelling, and participatory communication, which are implemented in professional development programs, Merdeka Curriculum workshops, MGMP activities, structured academic supervision, and continuous performance evaluation. The study concludes that female principal leadership is effective and strategic in strengthening teacher performance in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning in rural-suburban public elementary schools, and recommends ongoing leadership development, institutional support for teacher learning communities, and further comparative or mixed-methods research on gendered educational leadership in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** female principal leadership, gender leadership in education, principal leadership, public elementary schools, teacher performance

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### INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the principal is a crucial element in determining the quality of education, because it has a direct impact on the formation of work culture, organizational climate, and teacher performance in the school environment. The trend of female leadership at the primary education level in Indonesia is increasingly prominent, along with the increasing percentage of female principals at the primary school level who are trusted to lead and manage education units in various regions (Rahayu et al., 2023). Meanwhile, various contemporary studies confirm that teacher performance is a primary determining factor in strengthening the quality of education, especially in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) which requires mastery of pedagogic, professional, social, and personality competencies to realize optimal learning achievements to realize optimal learning

achievements (Mubarok et al., 2024). Empirical findings from recent studies indicate that principals' leadership, school work climate, and management support contribute substantially to teacher motivation and performance effectiveness. Therefore, the quality of the principal's leadership is the main determinant element in the strategy to improve the quality of the learning process in school institutions (Lailiyah et al., 2025).

In the realm of Indonesian education, the percentage of female school principals at the primary education level continues to increase, with many of them succeeding in bringing schools to academic and non-academic achievements through strengthening the competence and performance of teachers at various levels of education (Ali & Susilawati, 2025; Indrayani et al., 2025). In addition, teacher performance is a crucial element that directly affects the quality of education and the achievement of school goals (Berhanu, 2025). Studies on gender leadership indicate that female principals are generally effective in building inclusive communication, creating a supportive work climate, and improving teacher satisfaction and performance, although the variation in influence is influenced by the cultural context and characteristics of the school organization (Baro'ah & Pujirahayu, 2025; Siregar & Syukri, 2024). Therefore, the leadership of school principals has a significant impact on teacher performance, both directly and indirectly, especially in forming a conducive learning environment and facilitating the development of teacher performance (Elfira et al., 2024). This leadership role is increasingly relevant in the context of women's leadership, which often brings different approaches to human resource management and development in educational institutions (Siswadi et al., 2025). Previous research has indicated that the leadership style of school principals is closely correlated with the quality of teacher performance (Aisyah et al., 2022).

From the perspective of Islamic education, the leadership of the principal is not just a managerial function, but the embodiment of Islamic moral values such as amanah, 'is, and uswah hasanah. The Qur'an surah An-Nisa' verse 58 emphasizes that every leader is obliged to fulfill his mandate and act fairly, including in managing human resources in the educational environment. These values are a relevant moral foundation for analyzing the leadership practices of female principals at SDN Jasinga, considering the strong Islamic socio-cultural context in Bogor Regency where the majority of the population is Muslim. The leadership qualities shown by these female principals are very much in line with the basic values of Islam, especially the concept of rahmah from the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* which supports an empathetic and caring approach, as well as the principle of trust which underlies effective responsibility in improving teacher performance (Irawan et al., 2024; Siswadi et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context where the majority of educators operate within the framework of Muslim culture, this approach not only enriches theoretical analysis, but is also practically relevant to the realities of public primary school communities in areas such as Jasinga. Therefore, a review of the leadership style of female principals in public primary schools, which integrates Islamic teachings and Islamic feminism ethics, can provide a comprehensive understanding of their role in shaping the character of students and creating an educational environment that is in harmony with religious and social values.

Despite the substantial body of literature on female principal leadership in Indonesia, a critical research gap remains unaddressed, as the majority of existing studies have concentrated on private Islamic educational institutions such as

SD Muhammadiyah 01 Pekanbaru (Andriani, 2019), SD Muhammadiyah 3 Ikrom Sidoarjo (Mulyawan, 2023), MI Muhammadiyah 1 Kasegeran Banyumas (Puryani, 2020), MTs NU Banat Kudus and SMP Muhammadiyah Semarang (Janah, 2022), or SD Islam located in urban or semi-urban settings with relatively adequate infrastructure, leaving public state elementary schools in rural-suburban peripheral areas substantially underexplored (Haritani et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2023). This imbalance is especially pronounced in Kecamatan Jasinga, Bogor Regency a predominantly agrarian sub-district located approximately 50 km west of Bogor city center, bordering Lebak Regency, Banten with 58 SDN institutions across its villages constituting the primary and often the only formal basic education providers, yet operating under markedly different conditions including limited infrastructure, high rates of classroom damage, constrained access to digital and professional development resources, SPM attainment of only 92.85% per Bogor Regency Education Office data with ongoing needs for school facility rehabilitation particularly in outlying areas (Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Bogor, 2024), and teacher qualification data discrepancies reaching 40% as found in a YAPPIKA-ActionAid survey of primary schools in Bogor Regency including Jasinga (YAPPIKA-ActionAid, 2017), reflecting structural limitations of professional development monitoring in remote areas. No prior study has examined in depth how female principals at SDN Jasinga specifically SDN Jasinga 03, SDN Jasinga 06, and SDN Jasinga 07, all led by women navigate these structural constraints to drive improvements in teacher performance across the full cycle of planning, academic supervision, and learning evaluation, as existing studies tend to examine leadership style or strategy in isolation without tracing complete contributions. This study therefore fills a concrete empirical and contextual gap by investigating female principal leadership practices in public elementary schools in Jasinga, offering both theoretical contributions to women's educational leadership scholarship and practical recommendations for education policymakers serving Indonesia's peripheral rural communities.

Based on this description, three main problems can be identified: first, there is still a gap in the quality of performance of public elementary school teachers especially in rural-suburban areas with limited access to resources, such as Jasinga a predominantly agrarian sub-district located approximately 50 km from the center of Bogor Regency, bordering Lebak Regency, Banten, with constrained educational infrastructure, which demands the strengthening of the leadership role of school principals at the level of education units. Second, although many studies have proven the positive influence of female school principal leadership on improving the quality of educators, studies that specifically examine the role of female school principals in improving teacher performance in public elementary schools in Jasinga are still very limited. Third, empirical data on the strategies, communication patterns, and managerial practices of female principals in the local context, especially related to their contribution to changes in teacher performance in the aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning, is still poorly documented. Therefore, the research "The Role of Female Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Performance at Jasinga Elementary Schools" is important and novel because it fills the empirical study gap in this specific area, as well as providing a theoretical contribution to the development of women's leadership studies in primary schools as well as practical recommendations for policymakers and primary education stakeholders at the local and national levels.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design to investigate in depth the phenomenon of female principal leadership and its relationship to teacher performance at public elementary schools in Jasinga, Bogor Regency, West Java (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019; Sugiyono, 2021). A multiple case study design was selected because the research sought to understand complex leadership phenomena in their real-world, bounded context namely the specific socio-cultural and geographic setting of Jasinga's peripheral rural-agrarian environment across three purposively selected case sites (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The study was conducted at three purposively selected public elementary schools: SDN Jasinga 03, SDN Jasinga 06, and SDN Jasinga 07, all located within Kecamatan Jasinga, Kabupaten Bogor, West Java. These three schools were selected from a total of 58 SDN in Kecamatan Jasinga based on the following purposive criteria: (1) the school was actively led by a female principal at the time of data collection; (2) the principal had served in the position for a minimum of two years, ensuring sufficient leadership experience to observe; and (3) the school represented variation in size and student population to allow for comparative case analysis; and (4) the principal and school staff were willing to participate in the study. Data collection was conducted over four months, from October 2025 to Januari 2026. Research participants were determined using purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the study's focus. The total number of participants was 15 informan, comprising: (1) three female principals, each serving as the primary informant for their respective school; (2) 3 teachers per school, selected based on having taught under the current principal's leadership for at least one academic year and representing varied teaching experience levels (both novice and senior teachers with >3 years of service); and (3) 3 education support staff (*tenaga kependidikan*) who could provide supplementary perspectives on school management and work climate. Participants were recruited through direct communication with school principals following the issuance of formal research permission from the relevant authorities.

Given the multiple case study design of this study, data analysis followed Yin, (2018) two-stage framework. First, each case (SDN Jasinga 03, 06, and 07) was analyzed independently using pattern matching to compare empirical findings against theoretical propositions, and explanation building to construct iterative causal explanations of how female principal leadership enhances teacher performance at each site. Second, cross-case synthesis was applied to inductively compare and integrate findings across all three cases, generating cross-case propositions that were iteratively evaluated against site-level evidence until conceptual saturation was achieved (Warsino, 2017; Yin, 2018). This two-stage approach strengthens the robustness and transferability of findings by revealing both shared patterns and meaningful contextual variations across cases (Yin, 2018).

Data were collected through three complementary methods. First, participatory observation was conducted across all three schools over multiple visits per site. The researcher took the role of a non-participant observer during school activities, academic supervision sessions, and staff meetings. Field notes were recorded systematically using a structured observation checklist and reflective journal. Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted individually with all 15 participants. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. With participants' informed consent, all interviews were audio-

recorded and subsequently transcribed. An interview guide was developed based on the study's research questions, covering themes of leadership character, leadership style, teacher performance development strategies, and encountered challenges. Third, document analysis was conducted on school administrative documents including teacher performance evaluation records, school work programs (Program Kerja Sekolah), supervision logbooks, MGMP activity reports, and principal's daily logbooks (Aurilia et al., 2025; Sugiyono, 2021).

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings in this study, four main validation strategies that are integrated with each other are used. First, source *triangulation* is carried out through cross-checking data from various data collection techniques, including observation, interviews, and document studies to minimize subjective bias. Second, the *transferability* aspect is achieved by compiling the report through a deep and systematic thick description, thus allowing the findings to be considered to be applied to other contexts or backgrounds that have similar characteristics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Third, *dependability* is pursued through auditing all stages of research to ensure that the process of collecting and analyzing data is carried out consistently and traceable (Lincoln et al., 1985). Finally, *confirmability* is applied to ensure the objectivity of the research results by ensuring that the conclusions drawn are purely sourced from field data and informant voices, not prejudices or subjective opinions of researchers (Miles et al., 2014).

## RESULTS

This study identified four thematic findings concerning female principal leadership and teacher performance at SDN Jasinga 03, 06, and 07: (1) distinctive leadership characteristics grounded in empathy, openness, and accountability; (2) synergistic application of transformational, situational, and participatory leadership styles; (3) structured teacher performance improvement strategies comprising professional development, academic supervision, and continuous evaluation; and (4) contextually adaptive responses to infrastructure and pedagogical constraints.

Female principals at the three SDN demonstrated consistent leadership characteristics including empathy, openness, assertiveness, responsibility, the ability to inspire, and participatory communication. These qualities shaped a warm yet disciplined work climate that contributed directly to teachers' intrinsic motivation and professional commitment.

Teacher informants across the three schools affirmed this pattern. At SDN Jasinga 06, a teacher stated: *"The Head always took the time to listen to us before the meeting started. If anyone has difficulty making the lesson plan, he does not immediately reprimand but instead sits with us and helps find a solution."* At SDN Jasinga 03: *"He knows the condition of each teacher. If someone has family problems, work is not immediately demanded but is still reminded in a good way."* At SDN Jasinga 07: *"Every Monday morning we always have a special time to share stories about each class. Mrs. Head listens and gives input, not judgment."* To provide a structured and comparative overview of how these characteristics were manifested across the three case schools, Table 1 presents a thematic matrix.

**Table 1. Thematic Matrix of Female Principal Leadership Characteristics**

Leadership Theme	SDN Jasinga 03	SDN Jasinga 06	SDN Jasinga 07
Empathy & Openness	Open consultation sessions; personal follow-up with teachers facing difficulties	Informal morning discussions; personally monitors teacher well-being	Weekly reflective meetings; principal as first responder to teacher concerns
Assertiveness & Accountability	Clear assignments; deadline with awareness	duty firm enforcement with mutual	Structured work schedule with shared accountability system
Supervision Strategy	Class visits 2×/month; written, verbal feedback	Academic supervision combined with peer-observation model	Bi-weekly class visits; structured follow-up documentation
Performance Development	Competency certification support; coaching sessions	Group training, individual coaching; teaching method diversification	MGMP participation; Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) workshop facilitation
Infrastructure Challenge	Limited digital media addressed via teacher-made learning aids	BOS prioritization for learning procurement	Insufficient classroom facilities mobilized BOS funds, Dinas Pendidikan proposal

As shown in Table 1, all three female principals demonstrate a shared pattern. This cross-case consistency indicates that their leadership characteristics are not incidental but reflect an internalized leadership orientation.

Female principals applied three complementary leadership styles: transformational, situational, and participatory with school-specific emphases. At SDN Jasinga 06, transformational leadership was dominant, with the principal explicitly linking teachers' duties to long-term school vision: *"I often associate teachers' duties with the school's long-term vision and the impact on students' futures, so they are pushed beyond the routine."* At SDN Jasinga 07, an appreciative-facilitative model was employed: *"When there is a positive change, I bring it up in the forum as an example."* At SDN Jasinga 03, a coaching-exemplary blend was applied: *"My strategy starts with example, then continues with mentoring. So that teachers feel helped, not burdened."*

Situational leadership was most evident at SDN Jasinga 03, where supervision was adapted to teacher maturity and programme planning was data-driven: *"I collected data on supervision, student learning outcomes, and performance scores. From there, the weakest areas can be seen."* Participatory leadership was institutionalized across all three schools. At SDN Jasinga 07: *"I formed a school development team consisting of cross-grade teachers. I involve them in the formulation of literacy programs, P5 projects, and annual activities, so that the decisions taken reflect the voice of teachers."* The interplay between the three leadership styles is captured in Table 2, which maps the specific practices associated with each style across the three case sites.

**Table 2. Leadership Styles Applied by Female Principals across Case Schools**

Leadership Style	SDN Jasinga 03	SDN Jasinga 06	SDN Jasinga 07
Transformational	Blended exemplary coaching model; daily tasks consistently linked to school vision; teachers feel “helped, not burdened”	Vision-driven leadership; internal training, assessment clinics, and structured reflection to push teachers beyond routine	Appreciative facilitative approach; positive changes highlighted publicly as models; continuous space for sharing good practices
Situational	Supervision adapted to teacher maturity; evidence-based programming from supervision and learning outcome data; focus on process and creativity	Shifts between formal meetings and one-on-one supportive discussions based on teacher condition and workload	Flexible responses to classroom needs; differentiated coaching aligned with teachers’ strengths
Participatory	Teachers involved from the outset in program planning; small coordinator teams formed to lead literacy and P5 projects	Teachers co-develop RKAS, extracurricular programs, and P5 themes; roles allocated according to interest and expertise	Cross-grade school development team institutionalizes teacher voice in literacy programs, P5 projects, and annual activities
Dominant Emphasis	Situational transformational blend centred on coaching and data-based decision-making	Transformational participatory blend anchored in shared vision and collective planning	Participatory transformational blend emphasizing appreciation, recognition, and collaborative development

Table 2 illustrates that while all three principals combined, the dominant blend differed meaningfully across schools, indicating that effective female principal leadership is not a rigid formula but a flexible, context-responsive repertoire.

All three principals implemented integrated performance improvement strategies covering professional development, structured academic supervision, coaching, and continuous evaluation. These strategies were operationalized through Merdeka Curriculum workshops, MGMP activities, pre-observation and post-observation supervision cycles, and performance evaluations conducted at school-specific intervals. To document the specific forms these strategies took across the three schools, Table 3 summarizes the key performance development activities by category and site.

**Table 3. Summary of Teacher Performance Development Activities**

Activity	SDN Jasinga 03	SDN Jasinga 06	SDN Jasinga 07
Professional development programs	Internal MGMP Merdeka Curriculum workshops, and clinics on lesson planning and authentic assessment	Internal training on teaching modules, assessment clinics, and MGMP-based workshops with sub-district resource persons	Internal Merdeka Curriculum workshops, teacher learning communities, and sharing sessions on good practices
Academic supervision pattern	Scheduled pre-observation, and post-observation cycles focusing on process and creativity	Structured pre-observation, and post-observation with written and oral feedback	Classroom supervision using clear instruments followed by practical oral and written feedback
Coaching and mentoring	Individual coaching and peer mentoring provided based on identified teacher needs	Individual coaching linked to lesson study and teacher learning groups	Coaching through internal clinics and placement of teachers according to their strengths
Teacher collaboration forums	Internal MGMP and regular discussion meetings focused on lesson improvement	Teacher learning communities and coordination meetings for classes requiring special attention	Cross-grade school development team and collaborative planning for literacy and P5 projects
Performance evaluation schedule	End-of-semester performance reviews based on supervision data, student outcomes, and administrative completeness	Ongoing monitoring with scheduled reviews, including weekly evaluation meetings for specific classes and end-of-semester assessments	Quarterly evaluation meetings and end-of-semester reviews linked to documented changes in classroom practice

As Table 3 shows, the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation cycle was consistently implemented. The most notable cross-site difference lies in the evaluation schedule

The three schools faced common challenges: pedagogical monotony (dominance of lecture-based methods), limited learning media, infrastructure deficits, and uneven access to professional development. Principals responded through empathetic mentoring, MGMP-based method diversification, structured appreciation of teacher achievements, and multi-channel resource mobilization coordinating with School Committees (*Komite Sekolah*), submitting BOS reallocation proposals to the District Education Office (*Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Bogor*), and, at SDN Jasinga 06, securing cooperative community support for media procurement. Notable cross-case differences included SDN Jasinga 07's biweekly supervision intensity, SDN Jasinga 06's most acute infrastructure deficit requiring the broadest community mobilization, and SDN Jasinga 03's highest reliance on adaptive situational coaching due to limited staffing. To systematically compare how each school experienced and addressed these challenges, Table 4 maps the main obstacle domains alongside their school-specific manifestations and the shared cross-case solutions.

**Table 4. Challenges and Solutions in Teacher Performance Management across Case Schools**

Challenge Domain	SDN Jasinga 03	SDN Jasinga 06	SDN Jasinga 07	Cross-Case Solution
Pedagogical monotony	Limited variety of methods; dominance of lecture-based teaching	Underuse of project-based and collaborative learning	Insufficient active learning strategies in daily practice	Merdeka Curriculum workshops, MGMP-based method diversification, internal teaching clinics
Limited learning media	Minimal digital tools; reliance on teacher-made media	Shortage of projectors and printed materials; partial support from cooperatives/community	Inadequate classroom equipment; BOS funds gradually reallocated to media	BOS reprioritization, proposals to District Education Office, teacher-made learning aids
Infrastructure deficit	Classroom limitations handled with school committee and parent support	Most severe facility gaps; requires multi-source mobilization	Damaged classrooms and limited space; formal rehabilitation proposals submitted	Multi-channel advocacy: committee, BOS, and district-level proposals
Teacher motivation and resistance	Resistance to change handled through empathetic mentoring and personal guidance	Teacher fatigue addressed via one-on-one conversations and informal recognition	Motivation strengthened through appreciation, public acknowledgement, and reflective forums	Appreciative and empathetic leadership, intrinsic motivation stimulation, recognition of incremental improvement
Professional development access	Limited external training; strengthened through internal MGMP and certification support	MGMP at sub-district level combined with internal learning communities	Internal Merdeka Curriculum workshops and sharing of good practices institutionalized	School-based professional learning communities, peer coaching, and lesson-study-oriented reflection

Table 4 reveals that while structural barriers were shared across all three schools, the specific responses were calibrated to each school's organizational context.

## DISCUSSION

### Leadership Characteristics of Female Principals

The leadership characteristics identified in this study empathy, openness, assertiveness, responsibility, inspirational modelling, and participatory communication are consistent with (Rohmatika, 2023; Siswadi et al., 2025), who found

that female principals in Indonesian schools consistently employ relational and empathetic leadership that fosters teacher trust and intrinsic motivation. The combination of empathy and assertiveness observed here, where accountability was enforced through mutual awareness rather than coercion, reflects what Widyawati et al., (2022) described as gender-sensitive leadership that distinguishes female principals from masculine, hierarchical paradigms integrating soft-skill-based conflict management, gender-oriented empowerment, and emotional intelligence to create a more adaptive and innovative school environment. The inspirational and collaborative dimensions further align with (Aditya et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2022), who demonstrate that principals who model a strong work ethic and learning spirit substantially enhance teacher professional motivation and commitment.

From an Islamic educational perspective, these characteristics are intrinsically aligned with core Islamic leadership values. The empathy demonstrated through personal attention to teachers embodies the principle of *rahmah* (Q.S. Al-Anbiya: 107), while the balance of firmness and compassion reflects *'adl* (Q.S. An-Nisa': 58). The culture of openness and participatory decision-making mirrors the Qur'anic principle of *shura* (Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159), and the consistent enactment of *amanah* in managing teacher performance resonates with the prophetic hadith "*Kullukum rā'in wa kullukum mas'ūlun 'an ra'iyatih.*" The concept of *uswah hasanah* (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21) further captures the inspirational-exemplary dimension of their leadership. These convergences confirm that the leadership characteristics of female principals in Jasinga are not only consistent with contemporary educational leadership theory but also grounded in Islamic educational ethics, contributing to Islamic education management scholarship (Irawan et al., 2024; Siswadi et al., 2025).

### **Female Principal Leadership Style**

The finding that female principals applied transformational, situational, and participatory styles synergistically with contextually differentiated emphases across the three schools is consistent with and extends recent scholarship on female principal leadership in Indonesia. (Afriani et al., 2025; Etika Wulandari et al., 2025) identify transformational leadership as the dominant characteristic of female principals in Indonesian primary schools, where vision-linking, inspirational coaching, and structured reflection systematically improve teacher motivation and performance. The present study confirms this finding while revealing that transformational leadership takes contextually differentiated forms: SDN Jasinga 06 employed explicit vision-linking and assessment clinics; SDN Jasinga 07 used an appreciative-facilitative model; SDN Jasinga 03 operated through an exemplary-coaching blend. All three expressions embody the Islamic concept of *uswah hasanah* leading by exemplary moral conduct and purposeful vision which (Siswadi et al., 2025) argue is an empirically effective strategy for building teacher commitment in Muslim-majority school communities.

The situational leadership dimension is supported by (Sari et al., 2022; Silfiati et al., 2022; Solihati, 2020), who demonstrate that calibrating supervision to each teacher's professional maturity precisely what was observed at SDN Jasinga 03 and 06 produces superior performance outcomes compared to uniform supervision approaches. (Kimani, 2021) further confirms that situational responsiveness is a critical competency for principals navigating diverse teacher developmental stages. The participatory dimension aligns with (Lenawati et al., 2026; Prasetyo & Kifla, 2023),

who find that teacher involvement in institutional decision-making substantially increases dedication, belonging, and performance motivation, while (Huda, 2025; Ilyas et al., 2026) show that participatory principal leadership improves school climate and collective teacher agency in Indonesian contexts. This participatory model further reflects the Islamic principle of *shura* (Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159) and shared stewardship (*amanah*), making these findings directly relevant to Islamic education management scholarship (Mustajib et al., 2023; Siswadi et al., 2025).

### **Teacher Performance Improvement Strategy**

The integrated performance improvement strategies identified in this study combining Merdeka Curriculum workshops, MGMP-based professional learning communities, differentiated academic supervision cycles, individual coaching, and multi-stage evaluation are well-grounded in teacher performance management theory, which highlights the interaction between individual, organizational, and task factors as determinants of teacher effectiveness (Aropah, 2025; Muspawi, 2021). Muspawi, (2021) specifically argues that contextually adaptive strategies combining capacity-building with systematic monitoring produce sustainable improvements across the full lesson planning implementation evaluation cycle, which directly mirrors the documented outcomes at all three SDN. The emphasis on educator empowerment and professional agency as the central element of each principal's strategy rather than top-down compliance monitoring is further consistent with (Aropah, 2025) finding that performance management in Indonesian public schools is most effective when teachers experience development as self-directed.

The structured supervision cycle pre-observation, observation, post-observation with constructive feedback documented across all three schools reflects best practices identified by (Ali & Susilawati, 2025; Indrayani et al., 2025), who demonstrate that dialogical supervision simultaneously improves administrative discipline and pedagogical capability. The differentiation in evaluation scheduling quarterly at SDN Jasinga 07, weekly monitoring for specific classes at SDN Jasinga 06, and semester-end reviews at SDN Jasinga 03 is consistent with situational leadership theory's prescription that supervision intensity should match each teacher's developmental needs (Sari et al., 2022; Solihati, 2020). The MGMP-based professional learning communities, lesson-study reflection, and internal teaching clinics operationalize the school-based professional development model as a structural mechanism for continuous teacher growth (Mubarok et al., 2024; Suryati et al., 2023), confirming that these female principals moved beyond ad hoc training toward sustainable professional learning ecosystems.

### **Challenges and Solutions for Handling Teacher Performance**

The challenges encountered pedagogical monotony, limited learning media, infrastructure deficits, and uneven professional development access are structurally typical of rural-suburban public elementary schools in Indonesia's peripheral districts, as documented by (Haritani et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2023). The fact that the principals at SDN Jasinga 03, 06, and 07 actively transformed these constraints into developmental momentum reflects the empowerment-oriented and adaptive leadership practices that (Huda, 2025; Oktaviani et al., 2025) identify as critical for improving educational quality under resource-limited conditions. The multi-channel resource mobilization strategy combining school committee coordination, BOS reallocation proposals, district-level advocacy, and community cooperative support

illustrates the adaptive competency (Oktaviani et al., 2025) describe as essential for leaders who must address challenges exceeding the school's formal resource envelope.

The strategy of converting infrastructure constraints into professional development opportunities for example, using the absence of commercial media as a catalyst for teacher-made aid workshops is consistent with (Oktaviani et al., 2025) framework of reframing problems as innovation opportunities. (Lenawati et al., 2026; Prasetyo & Kifla, 2023) further demonstrate that participatory leadership boosts teachers' intrinsic motivation precisely because shared ownership of challenges and solutions creates stronger professional agency, as clearly illustrated by SDN Jasinga 07's cross-grade development team and SDN Jasinga 06's participatory RKAS planning. The recognition strategies employed verbal rewards, public acknowledgement of incremental improvements, and reflective forums align with (Baro'ah & Pujirahayu, 2025) finding that female principals strategically leverage appreciation as a low-cost, high-impact motivational tool in under-resourced contexts. Taken together, these findings confirm that female principals in rural-suburban Jasinga have developed contextually appropriate adaptive leadership capacities that are crucial for sustaining teacher performance and school improvement in peripheral settings (Huda, 2025; Siswadi et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the overall findings, the leadership of female principals at SDN Jasinga 07, 06, and 03 plays a major role in improving teacher performance through openness, empathy, assertiveness, responsibility, the ability to inspire, and the building of warm yet disciplined cooperation and communication, which together enhance the quality of lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation and positively affect student learning outcomes in rural-suburban public elementary schools such as those in Jasinga. Empirically, the principals applied complementary transformational, situational, and participatory leadership styles, reflected in integrated professional development programs (Merdeka Curriculum workshops, MGMP activities, and internal training), academic supervision and periodic class visits, as well as performance evaluations with constructive feedback that strengthened teacher motivation, creativity, and responsibility despite limited infrastructure and varied teaching methods. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on educational leadership in Indonesia by providing empirical evidence from a rural-suburban public school context that has been underrepresented in previous research, and supports gender leadership theories that highlight women's soft skills such as empathy, relational communication, and collaborative problem-solving as strategic assets in managing teacher performance and building a quality-oriented school culture that is also aligned with Islamic values of amanah, rahmah, and shura.

Practically, the findings indicate that female principals can serve as key agents in institutionalizing a culture of lifelong teacher learning through the strengthening of competency development programs, dialogical academic supervision, and school community partnerships for resource mobilization, so policymakers are encouraged to provide sustained policy support, leadership training, and adequate facilities to ensure that the strategic leadership role of female principals in improving teacher and school quality can be maintained and optimized. This study nevertheless has several limitations: it is based on a qualitative multi-site case study of only three public elementary schools in one rural-suburban district, which constrains the transferability

of the findings, and it relies on participants' self-reports and the researcher's interpretive analysis, which may introduce subjectivity despite the use of triangulation and credibility strategies; therefore, future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across multiple districts or provinces, to combine qualitative case studies with quantitative survey or experimental designs for more objective measurement of the impact of female principal leadership on teacher performance indicators, and to undertake longitudinal research to examine how leadership practices and teacher performance evolve over time.

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