



The Role of Principal Leadership, Incentives, and Emotional Intelligence in Improving Teacher Performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. This study uses a quantitative method with a descriptive-correlational approach. The sample of this study is 44 teachers, who were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected through questionnaires that had been tested for validity and reliability, then analyzed using multiple regression. The results of the study show that principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. The principal's leadership had the most dominant influence with a regression coefficient of 0.351, followed by emotional intelligence with a coefficient of 0.310, and incentives with a coefficient of 0.282. Simultaneously, these three variables explain 62.7% of the variation in teacher performance. In conclusion, good principal leadership, the provision of appropriate incentives, and high emotional intelligence play an important role in improving teacher performance. The recommendations given are increased leadership training, evaluation of incentive systems, and development of teachers' emotional intelligence to improve the quality of teaching in schools.

Keywords: Principal Leadership; Incentives; Emotional Intelligence; Teacher Performance & SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role in producing a superior and quality generation, who are able to compete at the global level. In realizing this goal, schools as formal educational institutions play a central role (Anggraini & Nugraheni, 2024). The success of a school is inseparable from the performance of teachers as the spearhead in the learning process. Good teacher performance will have a direct impact on improving the quality of education (Lailatussaadah, 2015). In this context, various factors play a role in improving teacher performance, including the leadership of the principal, the incentives given, and the emotional intelligence of the teachers.

The principal has an important role in creating a conducive school climate and supporting teacher performance. Effective leadership can motivate teachers to work better and more professionally (Rokhani, 2020). The principal who plays the role of a leader must be able to provide the direction, inspiration, and support needed by teachers (Rustamaji et al., 2017). Good principal leadership also includes the ability to manage resources, including teachers, so that they can work optimally and achieve the educational goals that have been set (Khosiah & Maryani, 2020).

In addition, incentives also play an important role in encouraging teacher performance improvement. Incentives, both in financial and non-financial forms, can be an incentive for teachers to increase their dedication and productivity (Akilah & Rahman, 2020). At SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang, the provision of the right incentives can have a positive impact on the morale of teachers. Incentives given on time and under teachers' achievements can be an effective form of reward to increase motivation.

Emotional intelligence is also one of the factors that cannot be ignored in improving teacher performance. A teacher's ability to manage his emotions, and interact with peers, students, and student's parents, greatly affects the success of the learning process (Fadhilah & Mukhlis, 2021). Teachers who have high emotional intelligence tend to be better able to face various challenges in the classroom and at school (Bariyyah & Latifah, 2019). Emotional intelligence helps teachers to stay calm in difficult situations, think clearly, and make wise decisions.

Teacher performance is not the result of a single factor, but the accumulation of various interrelated factors (Iskandar, 2013). In this case, good principal leadership, the provision of appropriate incentives, and the emotional intelligence possessed by teachers are three important elements that can complement each other in creating a productive and supportive work environment. These three factors play a role in building a positive work atmosphere, where teachers can work more focused and motivated (Fadilah et al., 2020; Suharyanto et al., 2019, 2020).

School principals who have good leadership can be role models for teachers. Through a participatory and inspiring leadership style, school principals can encourage teachers to be actively involved in decision-making related to the teaching and learning process (Salsabila et al., 2023). Democratic leadership will make teachers feel valued and involved in important processes in schools, thereby increasing their sense of belonging to the institution in which they work (Susanto, 2016).

At SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang, effective principal leadership has shown a significant impact in improving teacher performance. Principals who can listen to teachers' aspirations, provide constructive feedback, and create a harmonious work atmosphere will motivate teachers to work better. In addition, the principal is also tasked with ensuring that teachers receive adequate support and facilities to carry out their duties.

Providing incentives is also one of the strategies that is widely applied in various schools to improve teacher performance. At SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, incentives are not only in the form of financial awards, but also appreciation in other forms, such as awards for achievements, additional training, and opportunities for career development. Incentives provided fairly and transparently will encourage teachers to perform better, as well as create healthy competition among teachers.

However, it is not enough just with good leadership and adequate incentives, teachers' emotional intelligence is also an important factor in improving the quality of their work. Teachers who have high emotional intelligence can build good relationships with students, colleagues, and students' parents. Good emotional intelligence will make it easier for teachers to manage stress

and deal with various situations that may arise in the school environment with a calmer and more constructive attitude.

Teachers with high emotional intelligence are also better able to create a fun learning atmosphere and support the learning process (Thaib, 2013). They can identify students' emotional needs and respond accordingly so that students feel valued and supported in the learning process. This will ultimately increase students' motivation to learn and have an impact on their academic achievement.

On the other hand, low emotional intelligence can be an obstacle for teachers in carrying out their duties. Teachers who have difficulty managing their emotions tend to feel frustrated and overwhelmed more easily in the face of challenges in the classroom. This can negatively impact their relationships with students and peers, as well as degrade the quality of teaching (Kumara, 2018).

This study aims to analyze the role of principals' leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence in improving teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. This study is expected to provide a clear picture of how these three factors interact with each other and contribute to improving teacher performance.

This research is also expected to be a consideration for schools in designing policies related to teacher management and improving their performance. In addition, the results of this research are also expected to provide new insights for educators and stakeholders in the world of education regarding the importance of leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence in creating an effective learning environment.

Optimal teacher performance is needed to achieve better educational goals (Myrdal, 2019). With strong principal leadership, the right incentives, and high emotional intelligence, it is hoped that teachers can work more professionally and provide the best for their students. SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang, with all its potential, has a great opportunity to become one of the schools that is able to produce high-quality graduates.

Thus, it is important for all parties involved in education, both teachers, principals, and the government, to work together in creating a school climate that supports improving teacher performance. The combination of good leadership, the right incentives, and strong emotional intelligence will have a positive impact not only on teachers, but also on the entire school community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to examine the role of principals' leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence in improving teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. To achieve this goal, the research method used is a quantitative method with a descriptive-correlational approach. This approach is used because the researcher wants to know the relationship between the existing variables and how these variables affect teacher performance.

This study uses a descriptive-correlational quantitative method. The descriptive method is used to describe the phenomenon that occurs in the field, namely about how the principal's leadership, the provision of incentives, and emotional intelligence affect teacher performance. Meanwhile, the correlational method is used to find out how much the relationship between the variables studied is (Santoso & Madiistriyatno, 2021).

This research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. This location was chosen because it is one of the schools with a good reputation and has the potential to be an object of research to explore the factors that affect teacher performance. This research was carried out for three months, starting from July to September 2024.

The population in this study is all teachers who teach at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Based on data from the school, the number of teachers who are actively teaching is 44 people. Because the population is relatively small, this study uses a saturated sample. A saturated sample means that the entire population was taken as a research sample, namely 44 teachers. This method was chosen to get more accurate and representative results from all teachers in the school.

In this study, there are three independent variables and one dependent variable, namely:

- Independent Variables:
 - Principal Leadership (X1): The role of the principal in leading, motivating, and directing teachers in carrying out their duties.
 - Incentive (X2): A form of reward or compensation given to teachers, both in financial and non-financial forms.
 - Emotional Intelligence (X3): The teacher's ability to manage their own emotions, understand the emotions of others, and interact effectively in the school environment.
- Dependent Variables:
 - Teacher Performance (Y): The level of achievement of teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, which is measured by various performance indicators, such as attendance, dedication, and achievement of teaching targets.

The research instrument used in this study is a questionnaire consisting of four main parts, namely:

- Principal Leadership: Using a Likert scale with 5 answer options, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The indicators measured include the ability of school principals to lead, give direction, and support the development of the teaching profession.
- Incentives: The questions in this questionnaire cover various aspects of incentives, both financial and non-financial, such as salaries, bonuses, achievement awards, and personal development opportunities.
- Emotional Intelligence: The questions in this section are designed to measure the teacher's ability to recognize and manage their own emotions as well as their ability to empathize with others.
- Teacher Performance: This section measures teacher performance through several indicators, such as teaching ability, attendance, participation in school activities, and student learning outcomes.
- Each variable was measured using the Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The data in this study were collected through several techniques as follows (Data, 2015):

- Questionnaire: The main instrument used in this study is a questionnaire distributed to 44 teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru. This questionnaire is divided into four parts according to the variables studied.
- Interviews: In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with several teachers and principals to deepen the data obtained from the questionnaires, especially related to leadership and incentive variables.
- Documentation: The researcher also collects secondary data in the form of school documents related to teacher performance, such as attendance reports, student academic achievement, and teacher training activities.

The data obtained was analyzed using quantitative analysis techniques with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program (Ghozali, 2016). The analysis steps carried out are as follows:

- Validity and Reliability Tests: Validity tests are used to measure whether the instrument used actually measures what it is supposed to measure. Meanwhile, the reliability test was carried out to measure the consistency of the research instrument.
- Descriptive Analysis: This analysis is carried out to describe the profile of the respondents and to find out the distribution of answers from each of the variables studied.
- Normality Test: This test is used to find out whether the data obtained is normally distributed or not. It is important to test normality before proceeding to correlation and regression analysis.
- Correlation Test: A correlation test was conducted to see the relationship between independent variables (principal leadership, incentives, emotional intelligence) and dependent variables (teacher performance). The technique used is the Pearson correlation test.

- Multiple Regression Analysis: Regression analysis is used to determine the influence of independent variables simultaneously on dependent variables. The multiple regression model used in this study can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Information:

Y	= Teacher Performance
α	= Constant
b_1, b_2, b_3	= Regression coefficient of each independent variable
X1	= Principal Leadership
X2	= Incentives
X3	= Emotional Intelligence
e	= Error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the role of principals' leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence in improving teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. The research was conducted using a descriptive-correlational quantitative approach. Based on the methods that have been described earlier, the following are the results of the research obtained.

Respondent Description

The respondents in this study were 44 teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Based on the questionnaire data collected, the demographic characteristics of the respondents can be summarized as follows:

- Gender: Of the 44 respondents, 28 teachers were female (63.64%) and 16 teachers were male (36.36%).
- Age: Most respondents were in the age range of 30–40 years (45.45%), followed by the age range of 41–50 years (31.82%) and over 50 years old (22.73%).
- Service Period: Most teachers have a working period of 11–20 years (40.91%), followed by teachers with a working period of more than 20 years (36.36%) and less than 10 years (22.73%).

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

a. Principal Leadership (X1)

The descriptive results of the questionnaire related to the principal's leadership showed that the majority of respondents felt that the principal had shown good leadership. The average score for the principal's leadership variable was in the "agree" category, with an average score of 4.12 on a Likert scale of 1–5. This shows that teachers feel that their principals are able to provide direction, support professional development, and be an inspiration for teachers.

b. Incentives (X2)

The average score for the incentive variable was 3.85, which falls into the category of "moderately agreeing". Teachers stated that the incentives provided, both in financial and non-financial forms, are enough to motivate them to improve their performance. However, some respondents noted that financial incentives, such as bonuses and benefits, can still be increased to further motivate teachers' overall performance.

c. Emotional Intelligence (X3)

The average emotional intelligence score was 4.05, which was in the "agree" category. This shows that most teachers feel they have good emotional intelligence. They are able to manage their emotions well when interacting with students, colleagues, and students' parents. Teachers also feel able to empathize with the situations faced by students in the teaching-learning process.

d. Teacher Performance (Y)

The average teacher performance score is at 4.10, which is included in the "good" category. This means that the majority of teachers show good performance, as evidenced by their dedication to their work, consistent attendance, and participation in school development activities. Teachers also reported that they felt they were able to meet the teaching targets that had been set.

Validity and Reliability Test

Before conducting further analysis, a validity and reliability test was carried out on the questionnaire instrument used. Based on the test results:

- All questionnaire items were declared valid with a correlation value of > 0.3 .
- The Cronbach's Alpha score for the variables of principal leadership, incentives, emotional intelligence, and teacher performance was above 0.7, which indicates that this research instrument has a good level of reliability.

Normality Test

The normality test was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, and the results showed that the data was normally distributed with a significance value for each variable greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data is eligible for correlation and regression analysis.

1. Correlation Test

To determine the relationship between independent variables (principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence) and dependent variables (teacher performance), a Pearson correlation test was conducted. The results of the correlation test are as follows:

- Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance: Correlation value $r = 0.632$ with significance value $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$. This shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between the principal's leadership and teacher performance. The better the principal's leadership, the better the teacher's performance.
- Teacher Incentives and Performance: Correlation value $r = 0.525$ with significance value $p = 0.001 (< 0.05)$. There is a positive and significant relationship between the incentives provided and teacher performance. The increase in the provision of incentives is directly proportional to the improvement of teacher performance.
- Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Performance: Correlation value $r = 0.614$ with significance value $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$. This suggests that emotional intelligence is also significantly related to teacher performance. Teachers who have high emotional intelligence tend to perform better.

2. Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the influence of independent variables simultaneously on dependent variables, multiple regression analysis was performed. The results of the analysis are as follows:

$$Y=1,203+0,351X_1+0,282X_2+0,310X_3+e$$

- Principal Leadership (X_1) has a regression coefficient of 0.351 and is significant with $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$, which means that the principal's leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance.
- Incentive (X_2) has a regression coefficient of 0.282 and is significant with $p = 0.002 (< 0.05)$, indicating that incentives have a significant effect on teacher performance.
- Emotional Intelligence (X_3) has a regression coefficient of 0.310 and is significant with $p = 0.001 (< 0.05)$, indicating that emotional intelligence also has a positive effect on teacher performance.
- The adjusted R^2 of the regression model is 0.627, which shows that 62.7% of the variation in teacher performance can be explained by the principal's leadership variables, incentives, and emotional intelligence. The remaining 37.3% was explained by other factors that were not studied in this study.

3. Hypothesis Test

Based on the results of the regression analysis, it can be concluded that:

- H1 accepted: There is a significant influence between the principal's leadership and teacher performance.
- H2 accepted: There is a significant influence between teacher incentives and performance.
- H3 accepted: There was a significant influence between emotional intelligence and teacher performance.

- H4 accepted: Principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence simultaneously had a significant effect on teacher performance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed that principal's leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence have a significant influence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Based on the results of the multiple regression test, these three independent variables simultaneously explained 62.7% of the variation in teacher performance. This shows that factors of leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence play an important role in influencing how teachers carry out their duties and responsibilities in school.

Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance

The results showed that the leadership of the principal had a positive and significant influence on teacher performance, with a regression coefficient of 0.351 and a significance value of $p = 0.000$. This means that the better the principal's leadership, the better the teacher's performance. This finding is in line with the transformational leadership theory put forward by (Syahril, 2019), where a leader who is able to provide direction, inspiration, and support will be able to motivate subordinates to work better. The principal at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru seems to have managed to play this role well, as indicated by the average principal's leadership score of 4.12 (the "agree" category). Teachers feel that their principals have the ability to provide clear direction, support teachers' professional development, and create a conducive work environment. According to research conducted by (Handayani & Rasyid, 2015), effective principal leadership contributes significantly to the improvement of teacher and student achievement, especially in terms of teacher motivation and dedication.

Teacher Incentives and Performance

Incentives were also proven to have a significant effect on teacher performance, with a regression coefficient value of 0.282 and a significance value of $p = 0.002$. These findings are consistent with the motivation theory of (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020), where incentives, both in financial and non-financial forms, are a "hygiene" factor that can encourage a person to work better if given appropriately. In the context of schools, the right incentives will motivate teachers to improve their performance in teaching and participate in various school development activities. Although the average incentive score obtained is 3.85 (the "moderately agree" category), this shows that the incentives provided by the school are quite good, but there is still room for improvement. Some respondents revealed that financial incentives such as allowances and bonuses can still be increased. This is in line with the research conducted by (Devi et al., 2023) which shows that adequate incentives can increase teachers' motivation and productivity in carrying out their duties.

Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Performance

Emotional intelligence also had a significant influence on teacher performance, with a regression coefficient of 0.310 and a significance value of $p = 0.001$. These findings corroborate the research conducted by (Saputra et al., 2017) which states that emotional intelligence, which is a person's ability to manage their emotions and interact effectively with others, greatly affects individual performance in various work contexts, including in the school environment. In this study, the average emotional intelligence score of 4.05 shows that teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru have good emotional intelligence, which helps them in carrying out teaching tasks and interacting with students. Teachers who are able to manage their emotions well tend to have a more harmonious relationship with students, which ultimately improves the quality of learning in the classroom. This is supported by research (Cheema et al., 2016), which found that teachers with high emotional intelligence tended to perform better in terms of classroom management, interaction with students, and achievement of instructional goals.

The Relationship between Leadership, Incentives, Emotional Intelligence, and Teacher Performance

The study also examined the simultaneous influence of principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence on teacher performance. The results of the regression test show that these three variables together have a significant influence on teacher performance with an Adjusted R^2 of 0.627. This means that these three variables are able to explain 62.7% of the variation in teacher performance. These findings suggest that strong leadership, adequate incentives, and good emotional intelligence are important combinations in creating a work environment that supports optimal performance for teachers. This study is consistent with the results of research from (Farmawaty et al., 2018), which found that the combination of principal leadership and incentivization directly affected teacher motivation and performance. In addition, this study also supports the findings of (Djollong et al., 2024) which states that emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving teacher performance, especially in managing emotional challenges faced during the teaching process.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the role of principals' leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence in improving teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that these three variables significantly affected teacher performance, both individually and simultaneously. First, the leadership of the principal is proven to have a positive and significant influence on teacher performance. Effective principals, who are able to provide direction, motivation, and support to teachers, contribute directly to improving teacher performance. This shows the importance of the role of a leader in creating a conducive work environment for teachers to carry out their duties optimally. Second, the incentives given to teachers, both in financial and non-financial forms, also have a significant influence on performance. Providing the right incentives can motivate teachers to be more dedicated to their work. However, the results of this study also indicate that the current incentives can still be increased to further spur teachers' enthusiasm in work. Third, teachers' emotional intelligence has an important role in supporting their performance. Teachers who have the ability to manage emotions, empathize, and communicate effectively with students and colleagues, tend to perform better. Emotional intelligence helps teachers overcome various challenges in the school environment and carry out teaching tasks more effectively. Simultaneously, principal leadership, incentives, and emotional intelligence were able to explain 62.7% of the variation in teacher performance, which shows that the combination of these three variables is very important in creating a work environment that supports teacher productivity. These results underscore the importance of school policies to continue to develop these three aspects in order to improve teacher performance and the overall quality of education. Thus, this study provides empirical evidence that effective leadership, adequate incentives, and high emotional intelligence are key factors that must be managed properly to improve teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Practical recommendations proposed are increased leadership training for school principals, evaluation of more relevant incentive systems, and training programs to improve teachers' emotional intelligence.

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