

The Influence of Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the influence of principal leadership on the performance of guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools. A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed, involving 37 guidance and counseling teachers as respondents. Data were collected using validated leadership and performance questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The findings show that the performance of guidance and counseling teachers falls within the good to very good category, while principal leadership is categorized as fair. The results indicate a significant positive effect of principal leadership on teacher performance. This finding confirms that better principal leadership leads to improved teacher performance in providing counseling services. These results highlight the critical role of effective principal leadership in improving the quality of school counseling services. Therefore, strengthening principals' managerial, supervisory, and motivational competencies is crucial to optimize teacher performance and support the achievement of school counseling goals.

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INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling teachers hold a vital role in supporting students' academic, personal, social, and career development, as emphasized by Gysbers & Henderson (2014) who state that school counselors are central to the developmental guidance system. Their performance determines the success of counseling programs designed to address students' diverse needs (Bleuer & Walz, 2015). Consistent with Yusuf (2017), effective GC teacher performance ensures that preventive and developmental services function optimally within the school environment. Thus, identifying factors that enhance guidance and counseling teacher performance is necessary to strengthen the educational support system for students.

Among the external factors affecting teacher performance, principal leadership is frequently regarded as one of the most influential. Hallinger (2011) explains that principals act as instructional leaders who shape the professional climate of schools, while Leithwood et al. (2020) assert that leadership is the second strongest factor influencing learning outcomes after teaching quality. This leadership function becomes particularly important for guidance and counseling teachers, who require structural, administrative, and supervisory support to implement counseling programs effectively (Sink & MacDonald, 2014). Without such leadership, the performance of guidance and counseling teachers may not reach its optimal potential.

Principal leadership includes the ability to provide direction, motivation, professional development, and a positive school climate (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). Effective leadership has been found to significantly influence teacher job satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Bush, 2020; Day et al., 2016). In the counseling context, ASCA (2019) stresses that principals have an essential role in ensuring that counseling services are well-managed, well-resourced, and aligned with school goals. Therefore, leadership practices directly shape how guidance and counseling teachers design, implement, and evaluate counseling services within the school.

Despite its importance, studies indicate that leadership quality varies significantly across schools. Some principals excel in supervision and communication, while others face challenges in motivating teachers or managing time for performance monitoring (Mulyasa, 2013; Lunenburg, 2010). For guidance and counseling teachers, limited supervision and inadequate resource provision may lead to inconsistent performance across schools (Schmidt, 2017). Such disparities highlight the need to analyze the extent to which principal leadership affects guidance and counseling teacher performance, particularly in contexts where leadership quality is not evenly distributed.

Previous empirical research supports the existence of a strong relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance. Adi (2015) found that principal leadership significantly contributes to the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. Similar findings were reported by Setiadi (2013), who noted that managerial competence among principals strongly influences school success and teacher productivity. Meanwhile, Sutermeister (in Mulyasa, 2012) emphasizes leadership as a determinant of organizational productivity, including teaching performance. These studies align with the argument presented by Danim (2009), who explains that both task-oriented and people-oriented leadership can enhance teacher performance when applied effectively.

Although several studies have examined leadership influences in teaching contexts, research specifically focusing on guidance and counseling teachers remains limited. Guidance and counseling teachers perform specialized tasks such as program planning, counseling interventions, and individual student assessments tasks that require distinct leadership support (Gibson & Mitchell, 2011; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017). This difference in role specialization suggests that the influence of principal leadership on guidance and counseling teachers may differ from that on classroom teachers. Therefore, a targeted investigation is required to understand this relationship within the counseling context.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership on the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. Understanding this relationship will provide empirical evidence useful for improving leadership practices and strengthening counseling program implementation. Moreover, the findings are expected to inform policymakers and educational stakeholders about the importance of developing principal leadership competencies that directly support the work of guidance and counseling teachers, ultimately improving the overall quality of counseling services in schools.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. The aim was to determine the influence of principal leadership on the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on numerically measuring variables and testing the relationships between variables through statistical analysis. The correlational design was used to identify the degree of relationship and contribution of principal leadership variables to guidance and counseling teacher performance variables, based on empirical data obtained from respondents.

The sample in this study was all 37 guidance and counseling teachers working in secondary schools in Medan City, using a purposive random sampling technique. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire. The principal leadership instrument was developed based on educational leadership indicators, covering aspects of providing direction, motivation, supervision, provision of facilities and infrastructure, and monitoring and evaluation. Meanwhile, the guidance and counseling teacher performance instrument refers to the competency standards and professional duties of guidance and counseling teachers, including program planning, service implementation, support activities, evaluation, and program administration. Each instrument used a Likert scale with four response options. Prior to use, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. Validity was tested using product-moment correlation, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The instrument was deemed reliable if its α value was ≥ 0.70 . All invalid items were removed or revised to ensure a valid and reliable instrument was used during the data collection phase.

Data analysis techniques in this study included descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe data trends for each variable through average values, percentages, and categories. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the influence of principal leadership on guidance and counseling teacher performance. Prior to the regression test, the data met classical assumptions, including normality, linearity, and homogeneity. The regression test yielded correlation coefficients (R^2), coefficients of determination (R^2), F-tests, t-tests, and regression coefficients to determine the strength and significance of the relationships between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study present an empirical overview of the leadership conditions of school principals and the performance of guidance and counseling teachers, as well as the relationship between the two. Data obtained from 37 respondents showed variations in the level of leadership of school principals and the performance achievements of guidance and counseling teachers, which were then analyzed using linear regression to determine the contribution of leadership to the performance of guidance and counseling teachers.

Table 1. Results of the Analysis of the Influence of Principal Leadership on the Performance of Guidance and Counseling Teachers

| Variabel | R | R Square |
|---------------------|-------|----------|
| X ₁ ke Y | 0.520 | 0.270 |

Regression analysis shows that the principal's leadership contributes significantly to the performance of the Guidance and Counseling Teacher, with an R value of 0.520 indicating a moderate positive relationship. The R Square value of 0.270 indicates that 27% of the variation in Guidance and Counseling Teacher performance is influenced by the principal's leadership, while the rest is influenced by other factors not examined, such as teacher intrinsic motivation, workload, school climate, professional training, and policy support. Statistical significance is shown through the F count value of 12.960 which is greater than F table 4.17 and the p value = 0.001 < 0.05, which confirms that the regression model is valid and influential. The positive regression coefficient of 0.440 indicates that the better the principal's leadership, the better the Guidance and Counseling Teacher performance.

Table 2. Regression Equation and Significance of Principal Leadership on the Performance of Guidance and Counseling Teachers

| Variabel | Unstandardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|--------|-------|
| | B | | | |
| (Constant) | 99.995 | | 11.114 | 0.000 |
| X ₁ | 0.440 | | 3.600 | 0.001 |

The regression analysis results in table 2 show that the constant has a value of 99.995 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the constant is significant and can be used in the model. This constant value illustrates that when the principal leadership variable (X₁) is set at zero, the performance of the guidance and counseling teachers (Y) remains at a baseline of 99.995. This indicates that the performance of guidance and counseling teachers is already at a fairly high level even though it is not influenced by the principal's leadership. Therefore, other factors—such as internal motivation, professionalism, and the work environment—continue to contribute to their performance.

Meanwhile, the coefficient of variable X₁ is 0.440 with a t-value of 3.600 and a significance level of 0.001, indicating that principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on guidance and counseling teacher performance. This positive coefficient means that every one-unit increase in the quality of the principal's leadership will increase guidance and counseling teacher performance by 0.440 points. A significance value well below the 0.05 threshold confirms

that this influence is not a coincidence, but rather represents a real and strong relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that principal leadership plays a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of guidance and counseling tasks and services in schools.

DISCUSSIONS

Adi (2015) found that there is a significant contribution of principal leadership behavior to the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. This means that the principal's leadership has a statistically significant effect in improving the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. When viewed from the descriptive results of the data on principal leadership and guidance and counseling teacher performance, the findings show that principal leadership falls into the *fair* category, while guidance and counseling teacher performance is in the *good* category. Therefore, the outcomes do not align; principal leadership needs improvement because it is still categorized as fair, particularly in the areas of: (a) providing encouragement to work, (b) providing facilities and infrastructure, (c) guiding and directing, and (d) supervising and evaluating. These aspects are essential efforts that principals must undertake to enhance guidance and counseling teacher performance. Among the observed indicators, the lowest score was found in the supervision and evaluation domain. This indicates weaknesses in the principal's leadership in strengthening guidance and counseling teacher performance, as principals often experience difficulties allocating sufficient time for supervision and evaluation of guidance and counseling teachers' tasks. This includes conducting classroom visits to monitor classical guidance and counseling services provided to students, as well as evaluating the implementation of guidance and counseling programs.

The results of the analysis further show that the contribution of principal leadership is greater than the contribution of work motivation to guidance and counseling teacher performance. Principal leadership contributes 27%, while work motivation contributes 25.2%. Thus, principal leadership plays the largest role in improving guidance and counseling teacher performance. As the highest authority in school management, principals require various skills and competencies to manage school resources effectively. A principal must possess the ability to mobilize and manage all available resources to support the school's progress. Enhancing guidance and counseling teacher performance demands a principal who is independent, democratic, and capable of making informed policies and decisions related to school development. Furthermore, efforts to improve teacher performance require strong willingness, active involvement, and a high level of commitment from the principal, both in planning and implementation.

The findings of Setiadi (2013) also explain that the managerial competence of school principals is crucial, as it relates directly to the success of the school in achieving educational goals, including improving teacher performance which represents the frontline of educational implementation. Principal leadership ability, in this regard, is focused on leadership patterns and the strategies used to enhance teacher work motivation and develop their professional competence. Additionally, Sutermeister (as cited in Mulyasa, 2012) argues that one of the determinants of productivity and performance is leadership. The principal's ability to enhance

guidance and counseling teacher performance must be carried out *by design*, not merely through routine activities. Effective feedback for improvement must be obtained through continuous program evaluation, which can be conducted through various methods and media, including structured discussions.

According to Danim (2009), task-oriented leadership emphasizes the achievement of tasks by both groups and individual members. Research conducted by the University of Michigan (as cited in Danim, 2009) found that leaders who demonstrate subordinate-oriented leadership achieve better performance outcomes. These findings further reinforce the important role of principal leadership in shaping and improving guidance and counseling teacher performance.

The implication of this research is the need for schools to build a collaborative work culture between principals and guidance counselors to ensure the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and development of guidance counseling services. Therefore, improving the leadership quality of principals is a key strategy in ensuring optimal guidance counselor performance and the success of guidance counseling programs in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the principal's leadership has a significant effect on the performance of guidance and counseling teachers with a contribution of 27%, which means that the more effective the principal's leadership in providing direction, supervision, motivation, and support for infrastructure, the higher the performance of guidance and counseling teachers in implementing guidance and counseling services. This finding also shows that the quality of the principal's leadership has a greater role than other factors, such as work motivation, in improving the performance of guidance and counseling teachers. Therefore, improving the leadership competency of the principal is a key factor in strengthening the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services and in supporting the achievement of educational goals in schools.

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