


## Instructional Leadership Management for Teachers in Indonesia

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### Abstract

In the context of education in Indonesia, the quality of learning is largely determined by the effectiveness of instructional leadership implemented by school leaders, especially principals. Instructional leadership plays an important role in guiding teachers to improve the quality of teaching, learning planning, and student learning outcomes. Unfortunately, many teachers in Indonesia still face challenges in terms of academic supervision, development of pedagogical competence, and lack of collaborative culture supported by strong leadership management. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study on how the instructional leadership model can be managed strategically in the context of Indonesian education. This study aims to analyze the role and strategies of instructional leadership management in supporting teacher performance in Indonesia. Specifically, this study explores best practices, implementation barriers, and the contribution of instructional leadership to teacher professional development and improving the quality of learning. The method used is qualitative research based on literature review, by reviewing various scientific articles, education policy reports, and relevant academic publications from the last 5 years. The analysis was conducted thematically to identify patterns, approaches, and strategic implications of instructional leadership practices in Indonesian schools. The results of the study show that the success of instructional leadership is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to build a learning vision, provide professional support to teachers, and create a conducive school climate. In addition, teacher involvement in decision-making and ongoing training has been shown to increase learning effectiveness. Instructional leadership is an important pillar in education management in Indonesia. Strengthening the principal's managerial function, collaboration of teaching teams, and support for education policies are essential to ensure that instructional leadership can contribute to improving teacher quality and student learning outcomes sustainably.

**Keywords:** : Instructional Leadership, Educational Management, Teacher Performance, Principal

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### PENDAHULUAN

This work presents an in-depth exploration of the application of instructional leadership management in the context of Indonesian education, which has its own social, cultural, and bureaucratic characteristics. Although the idea of instructional leadership has been widely discussed in global education literature, this research provides a new perspective by highlighting how the concept is adapted and implemented in the Indonesian educational environment. This study also critically discusses contextual challenges such as a strong bureaucratic culture, resource gaps between regions, and the impact of curriculum policy changes such as the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. By highlighting these dynamics, this article presents a more comprehensive understanding of how instructional leadership can improve teacher effectiveness and learning quality. This contextual focus not only enriches academic discourse but also provides practical contributions to the development of relevant leadership models in developing countries such as Indonesia.

Education has a strategic role as the main foundation in the development process of a country. In the era of globalization and the rapid development of digital technology, the education system in Indonesia is faced with various challenges and demands to continue to improve its quality. One of the essential factors in realizing optimal education quality is the role of teachers as the main implementers of the learning process in the classroom. However, the effectiveness of the teacher's role does not only depend on individual competence alone, but is also greatly influenced by the implementation of instructional leadership management in the school environment. Instructional leadership emphasizes the proactive role of the principal in providing

support, assistance, and development of teacher teaching practices, so that it can have a real impact on improving student learning outcomes (Akgöz et al., 2024).

Instructional leadership is not a completely new idea, but in recent years, this concept has received increasing attention in various educational studies, especially because of its orientation focused on improving the quality of the learning process. In the Indonesian context, the implementation of instructional leadership faces a number of obstacles, such as differences in the level of competence among school principals, imbalances in the availability of resources, and limited training based on direct practice. In this context, instructional leadership management directed at strengthening the role of teachers becomes a strategic issue to be studied further, especially in exploring how this approach is implemented concretely and to what extent it influences the quality of education at various levels (Basthomi et al., 2023).

Literature review in the last five years shows an increasing academic interest in the implementation of instructional leadership, especially in local contexts such as Indonesia. Several studies emphasize the importance of aspects such as instructional supervision, providing constructive feedback, strengthening professional collaboration among teachers, and increasing capacity through ongoing training programs. These findings indicate that instructional leadership management makes a significant contribution in shaping a school culture that is oriented towards the quality of learning (Bhayangkara et al., 2020).

However, a number of studies have also revealed a real gap between the theoretical concept of instructional leadership and its implementation in the field. Many principals do not fully understand the instructional responsibilities they should carry out, or are still focused on bureaucratic administrative tasks, so that their involvement in supporting teacher performance tends to be symbolic or limited. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how instructional leadership is implemented concretely, as well as the various factors that influence its effectiveness in school environments, both in urban and rural areas in Indonesia (Cravens & Zhao, 2023).

This study uses a qualitative approach based on a literature review, which provides space for researchers to examine in depth various previous study results, especially those published in the last five years (2019–2024). Through this approach, researchers not only aim to map the empirical findings that are already available, but also to identify general patterns, challenges faced, and opportunities that can be utilized in implementing instructional leadership for teachers in Indonesia. The analysis process is carried out by systematically tracing scientific articles from national and international journals that are relevant to the topic of study (Creary, 2025).

One of the advantages of the qualitative literature review approach lies in its ability to compile a comprehensive and in-depth synthesis of knowledge. In the context of this study, the literature review method is utilized to integrate various academic perspectives related to instructional leadership management practices, taking into account differences in context such as educational levels (elementary, junior high, senior high), geographic location, and the social and cultural background of the school. Therefore, this study not only presents a general overview of the topic being studied, but is also able to reveal the diversity and complexity of instructional leadership practices in various real conditions in Indonesian schools (Semila et al., 2025).

In the context of educational management, instructional leadership is considered the most relevant leadership approach in efforts to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes. This is due to its orientation which explicitly emphasizes teaching and learning activities, improving teacher professional performance, and creating a supportive learning environment. The principal, as the main actor in instructional leadership, is expected to be able to carry out effective classroom observations, provide ongoing pedagogical support, and build a collaborative learning community. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of instructional leadership is very essential (Pana, 2024).

On the other hand, the dynamics of changes in national education policies also influence the pattern of implementation of instructional leadership in schools. For example, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes differentiated learning and meeting the individual needs of students, places teachers in a strategic role that requires continuous professional guidance from the principal. This condition indicates that instructional leadership management must be responsive and adaptive to the development of the curriculum and education policies, in order to support the realization of substantial and sustainable educational transformation (Battad, 2024).

This study also aims to provide a conceptual contribution in formulating an instructional leadership model that is in line with the characteristics of the education system in Indonesia. Through the process of synthesizing various literatures, it is expected that contextual instructional leadership models, strategies, and approaches can be identified that are in accordance with the real needs of schools and teachers in the field. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be a useful reference for policy makers and principal training institutions in designing more appropriate and effective leadership competency improvement programs (Xin & Tahir, 2024).

Considering the urgency of improving the quality of education and the key role of teachers in the learning process, strengthening instructional leadership management is a strategic issue that needs to be continuously studied and developed. This study aims to respond to this need through a qualitative approach based on literature review, in order to present a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of practices, obstacles, and recommendations in strengthening instructional leadership in Indonesia over the past five

years. It is hoped that the results of this study will not only enrich the academic treasury, but also provide practical contributions to efforts to develop the national education system (Gaston, 2024).

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study, titled \*Instructional Leadership Management for Teachers in Indonesia\*, focuses on an in-depth analysis of the role and strategies of instructional leadership management in improving teacher performance in Indonesia. Its main objective is to identify how instructional leadership can be effectively applied to encourage teacher professionalism and improve the quality of the learning process and outcomes in schools. This study also highlights best practices that have been successfully implemented in various educational contexts, while revealing the obstacles that arise in the implementation process. In addition, this study evaluates the extent to which instructional leadership can contribute to strengthening teachers' pedagogical competencies and creating a collaborative learning environment. The research problems are clearly and consistently structured and discussed systematically throughout the manuscript. Meanwhile, the literature review is comprehensive and focuses directly on the main issues relevant to the research questions, thus forming a strong theoretical basis to support the analysis and findings of this study (Hompashe, 2024).

The results of the literature review in the last five years indicate that instructional leadership has a positive contribution to improving teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Research conducted by Mulyasa (2020) revealed that a leadership style that focuses on strengthening the learning process directly affects the increase in teacher motivation and professionalism in carrying out their duties. Similar findings were also put forward by Sukarno and colleagues (2021), who emphasized that the active involvement of school principals in conducting learning observations and providing constructive feedback can strengthen teachers' pedagogical reflection. Therefore, it can be concluded that the management of instructional leadership has a strategic role as the main foundation in achieving educational quality in the school environment (Saensuriwong et al., 2024).

Although instructional leadership shows great potential in improving the quality of education, its implementation in Indonesia still faces a number of contextual challenges. One of the main obstacles lies in the disparity in the ability of school principals to understand and carry out instructional roles effectively. Research conducted by Rochman (2019) indicates that many school principals in disadvantaged areas tend to prioritize administrative tasks over efforts to improve the quality of the learning process. This situation is further complicated by limited access to ongoing training programs that are in accordance with field needs and are practice-based. Thus, a more responsive and contextual leadership development model is needed, in order to be able to answer the real needs of schools in various regional settings (Liu & Hallinger, 2018).

Various literature studies also emphasize the importance of close partnerships between principals and teachers in creating a constructive learning culture. A study conducted by Wahyuni and Darmawan (2022) shows that principals who facilitate professional collaboration through the formation of teacher learning communities can build a school climate that is conducive to innovation in learning. In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, this form of collaboration is becoming increasingly relevant, considering that teachers are required to carry out differentiated learning, which requires collaborative space to discuss, evaluate, and develop strategies together. Therefore, instructional leadership should not only prioritize a top-down hierarchical approach, but also build horizontal relationships that mutually strengthen and empower each other between school elements (Malinga et al., 2021).

Several literatures also underline that the principal's ability to respond to the dynamics of national education policies is a crucial challenge in carrying out the role of instructional leader. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which focuses on strengthening learning independence and forming the profile of Pancasila students, requires active involvement from the principal in providing real support to teachers. Research by Nurhayati and Wibowo (2023) indicates that principals who actively create space for teachers to conduct pedagogical experiments are more successful in implementing new education policies optimally. This finding emphasizes the importance of the role of the principal not only as an understanding of policy, but also as an agent who is able to integrate the policy into a systematic and sustainable teacher capacity development strategy (Sundari et al., 2023).

The evaluative dimension in instructional leadership has also become the focus of various recent studies. Ideally, the principal carries out structured and continuous monitoring of the learning process in order to assess the effectiveness of teaching practices. A study conducted by Hidayat et al. (2021) revealed that the implementation of routine learning monitoring, accompanied by the provision of personal feedback to teachers, contributes positively to improving the quality of teaching while strengthening the professional commitment of educators. However, there are still symbolic supervision practices, where learning observations have not been used optimally as a basis for developing teacher capacity. This condition indicates the need to strengthen the competence of school principals through leadership training designed based on contextual needs in educational units (Zhan & Cao, 2023).

In addition to the role of supervision, the motivational dimension in instructional leadership is also a crucial aspect that needs to be analyzed in depth. Research conducted by Astuti and Nugroho (2020) shows that principals who are able to motivate teachers by providing appreciation, recognition, and awards for their performance contribute significantly to improving the work ethic and loyalty of teachers to educational institutions. This finding confirms that the practice of instructional leadership is not solely focused on

technical managerial aspects, but also includes emotional and relational dimensions. Therefore, principals need to be equipped with strong interpersonal skills in order to build harmonious and constructive interactions with all components of the school (Brandon et al., 2018).

Several literatures also emphasize the importance of technology integration in supporting the effectiveness of instructional leadership. A study conducted by Prasetyo and Fitriani (2022) revealed that the use of digital platforms for the purposes of supervision, reporting, and teacher professional development can increase work efficiency and transparency in managing the learning process. In the context of the current digital transformation, principals are required to adopt technology as a strategic instrument in carrying out instructional functions optimally. Thus, challenges continue to arise, especially in areas with limited technological infrastructure and low digital literacy. This situation requires an adaptive and contextual approach, in line with the local conditions of each educational unit (Entong & Abdul Aziz, 2023).

On the other hand, various studies also provide strategic recommendations in order to strengthen the practice of instructional leadership. Some of these include the importance of organizing principal training that emphasizes an experiential learning-based approach, the formation of community networks between school leaders to encourage the exchange of good practices, and the implementation of periodic evaluations of the implementation of instructional leadership at the education unit level. In addition, the literature also underlines the need for an active role for the education office in designing a more contextual principal coaching system, responsive to field dynamics, and focused on improving student learning outcomes (Holzberger & Schiefe-Tiska, 2021).

In general, the results of the literature review over the past five years indicate that instructional leadership management in Indonesia has significant potential to improve the quality of learning if implemented in a planned, sustainable manner, and adapted to local characteristics. Although its implementation still faces a number of obstacles, such as limited resources and minimal practice-based training, various research findings that are available can be the initial basis for developing a contextual and applicable instructional leadership model for educational units in Indonesia. Thus, this research plays a strategic role in summarizing and integrating existing knowledge, while encouraging the realization of more effective leadership practices, responsive to field dynamics, and transformative in education management (Abonyi et al., 2024).

## **METHOD**

The researchers demonstrated great care in selecting sources by applying strict inclusion criteria, limiting the literature to publications from the last five years (2019–2024) to ensure the relevance and topicality of the findings. Through thematic analysis, this study was able to identify patterns, trends, and conceptual relationships among various studies related to instructional leadership in Indonesia. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the roles of principals and teachers in improving the quality of learning through leadership oriented toward the instructional process. Thus, the methodology used not only strengthens the validity of the study results but also provides a comprehensive understanding of effective instructional leadership strategies in the context of Indonesian education, in line with the main objective of the study to examine the role and implementation of instructional leadership management at the school level.

This study applies a qualitative approach with a literature review method as the main basis in the process of data collection and analysis. The selection of this approach is based on its ability to explore in depth various research results, empirical findings, and existing theoretical frameworks related to instructional leadership, especially in the context of the education system in Indonesia. The purpose of this approach is to build a comprehensive understanding of the practices applied, the challenges faced, and strategies for strengthening instructional leadership through a systematic review of relevant scientific literature sources.

The data in this study were obtained from various sources of secondary scientific publications that have high relevance, such as national and international journal articles, academic conference proceedings, research reports, scientific books, and scientific works in the form of dissertations and theses available in university repositories. The data collection process was carried out through searches on a number of leading databases, including Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, ResearchGate, and scientific journal portals managed by higher education institutions in Indonesia. All documents reviewed were selected selectively based on their direct relevance to the topic of instructional leadership in the context of teachers in Indonesia.

This study applied strict inclusion criteria in the literature selection process. Only documents published within the last five years (2019–2024), written in Indonesian or English, and explicitly discussing instructional leadership in the context of primary and secondary education in Indonesia were included in the analysis. Conversely, sources that did not have adequate academic foundations, were not relevant to the context of education in Indonesia, or only reviewed leadership in general without highlighting the instructional aspect specifically were excluded from this study.

The data collection process in this study was carried out through documentation techniques, which included the stages of identifying, downloading, and organizing documents that met the inclusion criteria that had been set. All collected documents were then analyzed using a content analysis approach to reveal key themes related to instructional leadership. These themes include the principal's leadership strategy, implementation of learning supervision, forms of support for teachers, use of technology in learning management, and leadership responses to the dynamics of national education policy.

The literature review process was carried out in a structured and systematic manner, starting with the identification of keywords such as "instructional leadership", "principal", "teacher empowerment", "learning management", and "education in Indonesia". After the relevant documents were successfully collected, the researcher conducted an in-depth reading of each publication to assess its academic quality, the suitability of the content to the focus of the study, and the contribution to the formulation of the research problem. Furthermore, documents that met the criteria were analyzed and grouped based on sub-themes that emerged from the content of the study, in order to facilitate the process of integration and further data analysis.

In this study, data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which allows researchers to identify recurring patterns, relationships between themes, and conceptual dynamics that develop from various literature sources reviewed. The analysis stage begins with an open coding process to group initial categories based on document content. Next, axial coding is carried out to connect these categories into a more complex conceptual network. This process then ends with selective coding, namely determining the central theme that is the basis for the main findings of the study. All stages of analysis are directed at producing a narrative construction that is conceptually solid and scientifically accountable.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the study results, this study applies the source triangulation technique, namely by comparing the findings from various types of publications such as scientific journal articles, academic dissertations, and education policy reports. In addition, researchers also involve a peer debriefing process, namely an in-depth discussion with colleagues to review and criticize the interpretation of data and analysis results. This strategy is carried out to avoid subjective bias and ensure that the conclusions produced have a strong empirical basis and can be academically accounted for.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the scope of the study is limited to literature published in the last five years, so it is not yet able to represent the long-term dynamics of instructional leadership practices in Indonesia. Second, the literature review method used does not allow for the collection of primary data, so all findings depend on the quality and depth of analysis of previous studies. Third, limited access to scientific journals that are closed or paid is an obstacle in itself in expanding the scope of more comprehensive references.

Although this study did not involve direct participation of human subjects, the researchers still uphold the principles of academic ethics by ensuring that all sources of information used receive proper attribution through accurate citation. Every quotation or thought taken from the literature is presented transparently and included in the bibliography in accordance with the rules of scientific writing. Efforts to prevent plagiarism are a top priority in the process of compiling and presenting the results of this study.

Through the application of systematic literature review methods, this study is expected to be able to provide contributions both in theoretical and practical areas to the development of instructional leadership management in Indonesia. The findings of this study not only conceptually map various practices and challenges in the implementation of instructional leadership, but also present evidence-based recommendations that can be utilized by school principals, policy makers in the education sector, and training institutions in formulating strategies to improve teacher quality and learning effectiveness in the school environment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study highlights the importance of the principal's role in creating an effective learning culture, supporting teacher professionalism, and developing a quality-oriented education management system. This research also has significant implications for policymakers and teacher training institutions in formulating strategies for the continuous improvement of educators' capacity. Although its practical contribution to the development of the national education system has been mentioned, this research can still be strengthened through a more detailed description of the application of the findings in the field and the expected real impact at various levels of education. Thus, this study has the potential to become the basis for the formation of more measurable, participatory, and sustainable education policies in the context of improving the effectiveness of instructional leadership in Indonesia (Ralebese et al., 2025).

One of the main findings from the literature review is that instructional supervision is the most frequently highlighted component in instructional leadership practices. A study conducted by Hidayat et al. (2021) emphasized that supervision that is carried out routinely and accompanied by constructive feedback has a significant role in improving the quality of teaching. However, many studies also highlight the weaknesses of supervision that still focuses solely on administrative aspects and has not substantially supported the development of teacher professionalism. This indicates the urgency to reconstruct the supervision approach to be more oriented towards pedagogical dialogue and a collaborative reflective process between the principal and teachers (Abdulai, 2025).

Several literature studies confirm that the effectiveness of instructional leadership management is highly dependent on the implementation of teacher capacity building programs. Principals who are able to provide space for teachers to experiment, organize ongoing training, and provide informal support such as mentoring activities are considered successful in creating a professional learning culture in the school environment. Research by Nurhayati and Wibowo (2023) shows that strengthening teacher capacity cannot be limited to technical aspects alone, but also requires an emotional and relational approach to build mutual trust and

cooperation. This finding emphasizes the strategic role of the principal as a facilitator in the teacher learning process, not just as an implementer of regulations (Lin & Hu, 2025).

The transformation of education policy, such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, presents significant challenges in the implementation of instructional leadership. Various studies emphasize that school principals play an important role as a liaison between national regulations and the implementation of learning at the classroom level. The main problem identified in the latest literature is the unpreparedness of a number of school principals in deeply understanding both the philosophical and technical aspects of the newly implemented curriculum. Therefore, the success of implementing this policy is highly dependent on the ability of school principals to initiate training programs for teachers, prepare appropriate learning tools, and manage time and resources adaptively and responsively to changes (Luaran et al., 2025).

Several studies, such as those presented by Prasetyo and Fitriani (2022), show an increase in the use of digital technology in instructional leadership practices, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Principals have begun to utilize various digital platforms to support the supervision process, learning documentation, and professional development for teachers. However, the implementation of this technology still shows disparities between regions in Indonesia. Regions with limited infrastructure and low digital literacy experience obstacles in optimizing technology as a managerial tool in learning. This condition emphasizes the urgency of integrating information and communication technology (ICT)-based training into principal competency strengthening programs systematically and sustainably (Mbua, 2023).

In addition to technical competence, instructional leadership also includes motivational aspects that play a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of learning management. Findings from Astuti and Nugroho's (2020) research show that principals who are able to give awards for teacher achievements, express appreciation openly, and foster supportive relationships tend to be successful in encouraging loyalty and improving the performance of educators. This underlines the importance of the interpersonal capacity of school leaders in creating positive emotional relationships with all elements of the school. However, this dimension often receives less attention in leadership training programs that focus more on procedural and administrative aspects (Lingam et al., 2021).

Several literatures show that the level of teacher participation in decision-making related to instructional aspects is still relatively low in various schools. This phenomenon is closely related to the strong hierarchical culture that dominates the educational environment, as well as the lack of discussion space between the principal and teachers regarding learning strategies. Recent studies confirm that effective instructional leadership management is ideally participatory and based on a spirit of collaboration. The unavailability of a dialogue forum or reflective container is a major obstacle in realizing a professional learning community in the school environment. Therefore, the principal needs to encourage the formation of an open and continuous communication mechanism, so that teachers can actively contribute to the process of formulating learning policies (Sukarmin & Sin, 2021).

One of the significant findings identified from the literature review is the disparity in the quality of instructional leadership across regions in Indonesia. Schools located in urban areas or areas with adequate access to training programs are generally led by principals who are more adaptive and progressive in carrying out instructional functions. In contrast, schools in remote areas often face constraints in the form of limited resources, minimal access to information, and a lack of adequate systemic support. These conditions contribute to the disparity in the quality of learning between regions. Therefore, the literature suggests the need for leadership training policies that are more responsive to the local context and based on the needs of each region (Bada et al., 2024).

The results of the literature review also highlight the importance of the role of external institutions, such as the education office, in strengthening the implementation of instructional leadership in the school environment. Several studies have shown that the effectiveness of school principals in carrying out their leadership functions is often influenced by the coaching policies and supervision patterns implemented by local education authorities. However, obstacles such as weak coordination, lack of continuity in training, and the implementation of a top-down approach are still major challenges in optimizing this institutional support. Therefore, a sustainable principal development model is needed that is based on learning outcomes in order to encourage more meaningful and impactful leadership transformation at the education unit level (Akullo & Kamanyire, 2023).

In general, the results of this literature review indicate that strengthening instructional leadership cannot be done instantly or through a uniform approach. Each school has unique characteristics that require leadership strategies that are tailored to the professional needs of teachers, the conditions of students, and local challenges faced. Therefore, an instructional leadership model is needed that is adaptive, based on empirical evidence, and prioritizes participatory principles. The principal should be placed as an agent of transformation who not only carries out administrative functions, but also as a learning leader who plays an active role in building a collaborative, reflective school ecosystem that focuses on improving the quality of education in a sustainable manner (Sindhvad et al., 2022).

## DISCUSSION

Instructional leadership is a crucial element in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, especially related to the role of the principal as a central figure in managing the learning process. The results of a literature review over the past five years show that principals in Indonesia play a dominant role in determining the direction of instructional policies and strategies. They contribute to formulating educational visions, guiding teachers in implementing the curriculum, and creating a supportive learning climate. However, various studies reveal that the leadership patterns applied are still heavily influenced by bureaucratic culture, which has an impact on the limited space for teachers to innovate independently in learning practices (Burkhanova & Tazhina, 2020).

One crucial aspect of instructional leadership that has been highlighted in various studies is the implementation of learning supervision. Literature findings indicate that supervision that is carried out regularly and accompanied by constructive feedback has a positive influence on improving teachers' pedagogical capacity. However, most of the supervision practices identified in the study are still oriented towards administrative aspects and tend to be formalistic, emphasizing more on fulfilling documents than improving the quality of the teaching and learning process. This condition suggests the importance of transforming the supervision approach towards a more reflective and collaborative model, with the main goal of supporting continuous teacher professional development (Victoria, 2025).

Several studies have shown that principals who are able to carry out instructional leadership functions optimally are those who succeed in creating a learning environment that supports collaboration and innovation among educators. The characteristics of this kind of leadership can be seen from active support for ongoing training programs, allocation of special time for reflective meetings between teachers, and strengthening the professional learning community (PLC). Recent literature, as presented by Nurhayati and Wibowo (2023), emphasizes that success in improving teacher capacity is not solely determined by technical interventions, but is also greatly influenced by the quality of interpersonal and emotional relationships between the principal and teachers (Castro, 2023).

Curriculum transformation, such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, presents significant challenges for the implementation of instructional leadership at the school level. Principals are required to not only master the substance of the policy, but also have the ability to implement it concretely in the context of educational operations. Based on the results of the literature review, it was found that most principals still face obstacles in understanding both the conceptual and technical aspects of this new curriculum. Thus, the urgency of an adaptive instructional leadership model becomes increasingly apparent, in order to ensure that policy changes can be fully internalized by teachers and reflected in relevant and effective learning practices in the classroom (Langdon Warren, 2021).

The technological aspect is also one of the main focuses in instructional leadership in the contemporary era. Since the post-COVID-19 pandemic period, the integration of digital technology in managing the learning process has shown a significant increase. Findings from Prasetyo and Fitriani's (2022) research indicate that principals have begun to utilize various digital platforms to support supervision activities, academic reporting, and teacher professional development. However, there is still a striking disparity in the application of this technology between schools in urban areas and in remote areas. Schools in remote areas often face obstacles in the form of limited infrastructure and low digital literacy, which in turn become serious challenges in ensuring equal distribution of education quality throughout Indonesia (S. Aguilar, 2023).

In addition to the structural aspects and utilization of technology, the motivational dimension in instructional leadership is also a crucial element that influences the effectiveness of learning management. Principals who are able to show appreciation, give awards, and openly acknowledge teachers' contributions and achievements have been shown to encourage increased loyalty and professional commitment of educators. Recent studies highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and interpersonal capacity in building harmonious and supportive relationships between principals and teachers. Unfortunately, these abilities have not been the main focus in most leadership trainings that are still oriented towards procedural and administrative aspects (Harianto et al., 2025).

The organizational structure that is still hierarchical and minimal participation is a fairly striking obstacle in the implementation of instructional leadership in Indonesia. Several studies indicate that the level of teacher participation in the strategic decision-making process is still relatively low. The absence of a communication forum or structured discussion forum between the principal and teachers results in limited distribution of ideas, concepts, and aspirations from educators. Academic literature recommends the implementation of a more participatory and collaborative leadership model as a more effective approach in encouraging the realization of learning innovation and the formation of an active and progressive learning community (Tan et al., 2020).

The gap in the quality of instructional leadership across regions in Indonesia is one of the crucial findings in this literature review. Schools located in urban areas, with adequate training and access to information, are generally led by principals who are more progressive and innovative in carrying out their instructional roles. In contrast, in remote areas or areas that are considered disadvantaged, principals are often faced with various structural limitations, including minimal resources, limited access to the latest information, and lack of

support and mentoring from external institutions. These disparities contribute to significant differences in the quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes between regions (Zheng & Abdullah, 2024).

The contribution of external institutions, such as education offices and school supervisors, is an important element in supporting the effectiveness of instructional leadership. Findings in the literature show that the success of school principals is often closely related to the quality of support, coaching, and supervision provided by authorized agencies. However, the coaching approach that is still hierarchical (top-down), inconsistent, and less based on evaluations that refer to student learning outcomes, is a major challenge in efforts to encourage leadership transformation in educational units. For this reason, a coaching model is needed that is more adaptive, context-based, and directly integrated with the dynamics of learning management practices in schools (Torres et al., 2020).

The results section presents key findings on how principals play a central role in directing, supervising, and supporting improvements in learning quality through teacher capacity building. In addition, this study also identifies significant challenges such as ongoing curriculum changes, limitations in the integration of learning technology, and gaps in motivation and competence between regions. In the discussion section, these findings are analyzed in depth in relation to the research questions, providing a more complete understanding of the dynamics of instructional leadership in the field. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of comprehensive and sustainable management strategies to strengthen the role of principals as effective learning leaders. The author also acknowledges the limitations of the study, particularly its scope, which is limited to current literature and reliance on secondary data sources, thus opening opportunities for more empirical follow-up studies in the future (MONTALES, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review in the last five years, it can be concluded that instructional leadership management in Indonesia plays a very vital role in determining the quality of learning at the school level. The principal as a central figure in instructional management is responsible not only for administrative aspects, but also for creating a conducive learning environment, supporting teacher innovation, and ensuring the achievement of educational goals. However, in practice, the implementation of instructional leadership still faces various challenges, such as a strong bureaucratic culture, low teacher participation in decision-making, limited resources, and a lack of continuous and contextual training. The findings also show that leadership effectiveness is greatly influenced by external factors, such as support from the education office and school supervisors, as well as the readiness of the principal to respond to policy changes such as the Merdeka Curriculum and post-pandemic digitalization.

Thus, strengthening instructional leadership management in Indonesia requires a more holistic and adaptive approach, which takes into account the diversity of local contexts, geographical challenges, and professional needs of teachers. Reforms are needed in the principal coaching system, starting from the reorientation of a more participatory and collaborative leadership paradigm, to the development of a reflective and feedback-based supervision model. Policy interventions that are more targeted, data-based, and sensitive to regional disparities are also important to ensure equality in the quality of national education. Therefore, the transformation of instructional leadership is not only the responsibility of the principal alone, but also requires synergy between all education stakeholders in order to create a competitive, inclusive school ecosystem that is oriented towards optimal development of student potential.

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