The Influence of Principal Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and School Culture on Teacher Performance Through Achievement Motivation

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ABSTRACT:

This quantitative study aims to analyze the direct and indirect effects of principal leadership, organizational commitment, and school culture on the performance of elementary school teachers who are civil servants in Grobogan Regency, with achievement motivation as the mediating variable. Using an explanatory survey approach, data were collected from 375 ASN elementary school classroom teachers selected through purposive random sampling from a population of 5,785 teachers across 19 subdistricts. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software. The results of the analysis indicate that all direct and indirect hypotheses were significantly accepted ($p < 0.05$). Principal leadership ($\beta = 0.284$), organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.124$), and school culture ($\beta = 0.219$) had positive and significant effects on teacher performance. Organizational commitment was found to have the most dominant influence on achievement motivation ($\beta = 0.465$). Furthermore, achievement motivation was found to significantly mediate the effects of leadership ($\beta = 0.052$), organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.123$), and school culture ($\beta = 0.077$) on teacher performance. These findings confirm that the continuous improvement of teacher performance does not depend solely on strengthening external leadership and the school climate but also requires an internal psychological drive in the form of achievement motivation.

Keywords: teacher performance, principal leadership, organizational commitment, school culture, achievement motivation

1. Introduction

The quality of the national education system is largely determined by the effectiveness and performance of educators on the front lines of learning (Mensah et al., 2024). Teachers play a central role in planning, implementing, and evaluating the instructional process to ensure the achievement of basic educational goals (Permana & Eliza, 2022). However, field data indicate that the quality of learning outcomes in Indonesia still faces serious challenges. Based on the 2022 *Program for International Student Assessment* (PISA) assessment, Indonesia's scores in reading literacy and mathematics have declined, impacting the

quality of educational outcomes (Pitdianti et al., 2024). At the local level, the 2023 Education Report notes that Grobogan Regency is one of the regions with the lowest literacy (58.51%) and numeracy (47.53%) achievement rates in Central Java Province, where the average pedagogical competency score on the Teacher Competency Test (UKG) has not yet reached the optimal threshold (Murdianto et al., 2020).

The issue of low teacher performance is believed to be influenced by both internal and external dynamics within the school organization (Suriansyah et al., 2020). Various studies indicate that factors such as the principal's managerial leadership, commitment to the profession and the organization, school climate and culture, and motivation to excel are key determinants of teacher performance (Nuryadi et al., 2023). The principal's leadership plays a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment (Masni et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there is a *research gap*; on the one hand, transformational and managerial leadership are reported to have a significant impact on teaching performance (Suastini & Manuaba, 2021), yet on the other hand, some studies have found that transformational leadership style does not have a significant direct impact if it is not supported by adequate teacher commitment or an appropriate internal school climate (Boli, 2024).

Similarly, organizational commitment and school culture are theoretically viewed as social cohesive forces and sources of moral motivation for teachers in carrying out their duties (Ariyanti, 2021). A supportive and transparent school culture fosters mutual trust and a positive work ethic among educators (Nursita et al., 2023). However, the influence of these external variables on performance outcomes is often complex and mediated by individual psychological variables (Suhada, 2021). Achievement motivation the intrinsic desire to excel in tasks and overcome challenges is strongly suspected to act as a bridge linking leadership direction, commitment, and workplace culture to improved professional performance (Hakim et al., 2021).

This study aims to test and analyze the causal relationship model between principal leadership, organizational commitment, and school culture on the performance of civil servant elementary school teachers in Grobogan Regency, both directly and indirectly through achievement motivation as an *intervening* variable (Aritonang & Hutauruk, 2024). The novelty of this study lies in the testing of a comprehensive PLS-SEM-based model that positions achievement motivation as the primary mediating variable for elementary school teachers in an area with Education Report Card characteristics that require quality interventions (Zulkarnaen et al., 2020).

2. Methodology

Design: This study employed a quantitative ex-post facto causal-survey design. This design was selected to examine the structural relationships and effects among variables without manipulating or applying direct treatment to the research environment (Permana & Eliza, 2022).

Participants/Sample: The target population of this study consisted of all civil servant (ASN) elementary school teachers in Grobogan Regency, distributed across 19 subdistricts, with a total population of 5,785 individuals. Using Slovin's formula with a margin of error of $e = 0.05$ (5%), A minimum sample size of 375 respondents was determined. The sampling technique employed purposive random sampling, taking into account geographic representation across all subdistricts as well as the structural homogeneity of elementary school teachers' duties in the region (Murdianto et al., 2020).

Instruments: Data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (4). The instrument operationalized five main variables:

1. Teacher Performance (Y): Assessed through indicators of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning processes (Pitdianti et al., 2024).

2. Principal Leadership (X_1): Evaluated via indicators of personality traits, understanding of the school community, alignment with school

vision/mission, decision-making capabilities, and communication effectiveness (Suriansyah et al., 2020).

3. Organizational Commitment (X_2): Measured across three dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Suastini & Manuaba, 2021).

4. School Culture (X_3): Measured through seven dimensions: innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, result orientation, individual orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability (Agung & Danim, 2021).

5. Achievement Motivation (Z): Measured using indicators of goal-attainment drive, personal responsibility, evaluative motivation, willingness to take calculated risks, creativity/innovation, and interest in challenging tasks (Hakim et al., 2021).

Pre-testing on a limited sample ($n = 50$) using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation confirmed that all items were valid ($r_{\text{calculated}} > r_{\text{table}} = 0.279$). Internal consistency reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding. 0.70 across all constructs.

Procedure: The research was executed through a structured sequential process to ensure data validity and methodological rigor. The detailed steps of the study implementation were as follows:

1. Instrument Development: Conceptualization and operationalization of indicators into a structured 4-point Likert questionnaire based on established literature.
2. Pilot Testing: Instrument distribution to a preliminary sample ($n = 50$) for validity and reliability screening.
3. Field Data Collection: Primary survey administration to 375 targeted ASN elementary school teachers across the 19 subdistricts of Grobogan Regency.
4. Data Screening & Tabulation: Verification of completed responses for completeness, consistency, and proper coding prior to statistical software import.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) executed via SmartPLS 4 (Suhardi, 2023). The evaluation followed a two-stage approach:

1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model):

a. Convergent Validity: Assessed via outer loadings (≥ 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50)(Putu Gede Subhaktiyasa, 2024).

b. Construct Reliability: Assessed via Composite Reliability (≥ 0.70) and Cronbach's Alpha.

c. Discriminant Validity: Verified using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (< 0.90), Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and cross-loadings.

2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model):

a. Collinearity Diagnostics: Checked using Inner Variance Inflation Factors (VIF < 5).

b. Hypothesis Testing & Direct/Indirect Effects: Evaluated via path coefficients (β) and non-parametric bootstrapping ($5{,}000$ subsamples, $\alpha = 0.05$, $t_{\text{table}} = 1.96$).

c. Model Fit & Predictive Power: Assessed through Effect Size (f^2), Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Predictive Relevance (Q^2), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR < 0.08), and Goodness of Fit (GoF).

3. Results

3.1 Respondent Profile

This study involved 375 respondents who were civil servant elementary school teachers spread across 19 subdistricts in Grobogan Regency. The profiles of the respondents based on gender and years of teaching experience are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Respondent Profile by Gender

Gender	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	278	74.13
Male	97	25.87
Total	**375**	**100**

Based on Table 1, of the total 375 respondents, 278 (74.13%) were female, and 97 (25.87%) were male, indicating that the respondents were predominantly female civil servant elementary school teachers in Grobogan Regency, in this study.

Table 2. Respondent Profile Based on Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
< 5 years	50	13.3
5–10 years	84	22.4
10–15 years	93	24.8
15–20 years	139	37.1
> 20 years	9	2.4
Total	**375**	**100**

Table 2 shows that the largest group of respondents had 15–20 years of teaching experience (139 people; 37.1%), followed by those with 10–15 years (93 people; 24.8%) and 5–10 years (84 people; 22.4%). There were 50 teachers with less than 5 years of service (13.3%), while the group with more than 20 years of service consisted of only 9 people (2.4%). This pattern indicates that the majority of respondents are in the mid-career stage with fairly extensive teaching experience.

3.2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The results of the convergent validity and construct reliability tests are presented in Table 3. All final indicators showed *outer loadings* above 0.70. The *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) values for all variables were above the 0.50 threshold (ranging from 0.615 to 0.722), while *the Composite Reliability* ranged from 0.868 to 0.930 (> 0.70).

Table 3. Measurement Model Evaluation Results (Outer Model)

Variable / Construct	Range of Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Principal Leadership (X1)	0.746 – 0.897	0.928	0.722
Organizational Commitment (X2)	0.801 – 0.844	0.868	0.686
School Culture (X3)	0.722 – 0.814	0.918	0.615
Achievement Motivation (Z)	0.781 – 0.853	0.930	0.688
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.813 – 0.866	0.872	0.694

An evaluation of discriminant validity using *the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) showed that all variable pair values were below 0.90, with the highest value recorded for the relationship between Achievement Motivation and Organizational Commitment (0.848). These results were further confirmed by the *Fornell-Larcker* criteria and *cross-loadings*, where the AVE of each construct was greater than its correlation with other constructs, and each indicator had the highest loading on the variable it measured. The *Inner VIF* values between variables ranged from 1.434 to 2.673 (< 5.00), confirming the absence of multicollinearity issues.

3.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a *bootstrapping* procedure with 5,000 subsamples. A summary of the path coefficients and statistical tests is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Hypothesis Testing for Direct and Indirect Effects

Hypothesis / Path of Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistics	p-Values	95% CI (Lower, Upper)	Notes
H1: Leadership → Achievement Motivation	0.198	4.513	0.000	[0.113; 0.283]	Accepted
H2: Organizational Commitment → Achievement Motivation	0.465	10.533	0.000	[0.374; 0.547]	Accepted
H3: School Culture → Achievement Motivation	0.291	7.617	0.000	[0.215; 0.367]	Accepted
H4: Leadership → Teacher Performance	0.284	5.067	0.000	[0.176; 0.394]	Accepted
H5: Organizational Commitment → Teacher Performance	0.124	2.225	0.026	[0.018; 0.235]	Accepted
H6: School Culture → Teacher Performance	0.219	4.322	0.000	[0.120; 0.317]	Accepted
H7: Achievement Motivation → Teacher Performance	0.264	3.898	0.000	[0.134; 0.400]	Accepted
H8: Leadership → Motivation → Performance	0.052	2.911	0.004	[0.023; 0.094]	Accepted (Mediation)
H9: Organizational Commitment → Motivation → Performance	0.123	3.568	0.000	[0.061; 0.195]	Accepted (Mediation)
H10: School Culture → Motivation → Performance	0.077	3.568	0.000	[0.041; 0.126]	Accepted (Mediation)

Based on Table 4, all direct hypotheses (H1–H7) and mediation hypotheses (H8–H10) were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$; $t > 1.96$). Organizational commitment had the strongest influence on Achievement Motivation ($\beta = 0.465$). Meanwhile, Principal Leadership had the greatest direct influence on Teacher Performance ($\beta = 0.284$). Cumulatively, the most dominant *total effect* on Teacher Performance stems from Principal Leadership (0.336), followed by School Culture (0.296), Achievement Motivation (0.264), and Organizational Commitment (0.247).

3.4 Model Goodness-of-Fit and Specification Evaluation

The structural validity evaluation revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.626 for Achievement Motivation (moderate-high category) and 0.536 for Teacher Performance (moderate category). The predictive relevance value (Q^2) was recorded at 0.619 for Achievement Motivation and 0.499 for Teacher Performance ($Q^2 > 0$), indicating the model's strong predictive accuracy. The *Standardized Root Mean Square Residual* (SRMR) test yielded a score of 0.058 (< 0.08), and the *Goodness of Fit* (GoF) index was 0.626 (> 0.36), confirming that the structural model meets the criteria for *a good fit* empirically.

Further evaluation using the *PLS Predict* procedure (Table 5) was conducted to assess the model's predictive ability compared to the linear regression model (*Linear Model*, LM). The results show that of the 30 indicators tested, 20 indicators had lower prediction error values (*Root Mean Square Error* and *Mean Absolute Error*) in the PLS model compared to the LM model, as illustrated by the following indicators for the variables "Motivation to Achieve" and "Teacher Performance."

Table 5. PLS Predict Results (Example of Achievement Motivation and Teacher Performance Indicators)

Indicator	Q^2predict	PLS-SEM RMSE	PLS-SEM MAE	LM RMSE	LM MAE	IA RMSE	IA MAE
MB1	0.445	0.581	0.456	0.591	0.452	0.780	0.605
MB2	0.427	0.625	0.492	0.612	0.471	0.825	0.696
MB3	0.272	0.744	0.567	0.731	0.563	0.872	0.725
MB4	0.506	0.579	0.443	0.584	0.415	0.823	0.676
MB5	0.491	0.570	0.460	0.559	0.444	0.799	0.612
MB6	0.384	0.583	0.453	0.573	0.443	0.743	0.592
KG1	0.292	0.573	0.428	0.577	0.428	0.681	0.564
KG2	0.397	0.531	0.390	0.555	0.401	0.684	0.538
KG3	0.346	0.582	0.448	0.583	0.428	0.719	0.543

These findings indicate that the PLS model has better predictive power than the linear regression model, although it is not entirely superior across all indicators; thus, the model's predictive power in this study can be categorized as moderate (*medium predictive power*).

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of a principal's leadership contributes substantially to strengthening teachers' motivation to excel and their professional performance in the classroom (Suriansyah et al., 2020). Principals who

demonstrate personal integrity, articulate a clear vision and mission, and provide persuasive instructional communication instill a sense of security and clarity of direction in teachers (Nursita et al., 2023). Theoretically, this reinforces the perspectives of transformational and instructional leadership, in which support from superiors fosters an affective climate that motivates teachers to adopt higher teaching standards (Suratman, 2022).

Emically, organizational commitment has been shown to be the most dominant determinant in shaping achievement motivation (β = 0.465). Emotional (affective) attachment, rational (continuous) considerations, and ethical (normative) motivation lead teachers to view the school's success as an integral part of their full self-identity (Aritonang & Hutauruk, 2024). Teachers with high organizational commitment do not merely show up to fulfill formal obligations (Septiani et al., 2025); rather, they are internally motivated to explore innovative learning strategies, overcome limitations in teaching resources, and demonstrate the courage to take professional risks (Nelson & Ariawan, 2020).

The positive influence of school culture has also been consistently confirmed (Rianahsari et al., 2023). A school culture that emphasizes results-orientation (Yusup et al., 2021), teamwork, and mutual care among school community members creates a work ecosystem that minimizes destructive work-related stress (Agung & Danim, 2021). This supportive climate fosters the growth of healthy competitive drive (*achievement motivation*) (kumari & Kumar, 2023), which in turn is reflected in the meticulous preparation of instructional modules, mastery of differentiated classroom management, and objectivity in student learning assessments (Zulher et al., 2023).

Most importantly, structural analysis demonstrates the crucial role of achievement motivation as an *intervening* (mediating) variable. The principal's leadership, organizational commitment, and school culture do not merely influence output variables in a mechanistic manner (Yasin, 2020). The presence of internal psychological drive acts as a conduit of energy that transforms these external factors into actual performance-oriented behavior (Hakim et al., 2021). The mediating effect of organizational commitment on performance through achievement motivation recorded the highest coefficient score (β = 0.123), indicating that investment in organizational commitment will have an optimal impact on improving teaching performance (Mensah et al., 2024) when supported by the maintenance of individual achievement motivation (Murdianto et al., 2020).

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that principal leadership, organizational commitment, and school culture have a positive and significant influence on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Grobogan Regency, both directly and indirectly through achievement motivation as an intervening variable. Organizational commitment proved to be the strongest driver in triggering teachers' achievement motivation, while the principal's leadership made the most dominant total contribution to the accumulation of teaching performance at the school. Achievement motivation was empirically shown to mediate all external antecedent variables on teacher performance outcomes.

The theoretical implications of this study reinforce the integration between organizational behavior theory and psychological motivation, in which external variables in the work environment require intrinsic mediators to trigger maximum performance. Practically, education agencies and policymakers are advised to design principal leadership development programs oriented toward social and instructional entrepreneurship. Principals need to be encouraged to foster a transparent organizational climate and provide performance-based recognition to sustain teachers' commitment and motivation to excel over the long term.

This study is limited in its geographical scope, covering only civil servant elementary school teachers in Grobogan Regency; therefore, generalizing the findings to other educational levels or regions should be done with caution.

Future research is recommended to expand the sample scope to other educational levels and consider additional contextual variables to enrich the proposed causal model.

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7. Author Declaration

The author declares that this article is an original work and has not been published or is currently under consideration for publication elsewhere, either in part or in its entirety. The author also declares that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct or writing of this research.