
HERSEY AND BLANCHARD'S SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The aims of the study are to analyse and describe the role of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model, namely directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating, in improving school achievement. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. The location of the study is at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict, Pemalang Regency. Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources involving the principal and three teachers. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through technique triangulation, source triangulation, and time triangulation. The findings indicate that the directing style did not play a role in improving school achievement, while the coaching, supporting, and delegating styles played a significant and strategic role in improving school achievement, and the principal was more dominant in applying the delegating style in improving school achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict.

Keywords

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model, School Achievement.



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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Education Report for SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict for the literacy ability indicator obtained results in the moderate category, with 70% of students achieving minimum competency and a ranking in the lower-middle range (61-80%) at the Pematang Rejang Regency level, while for the numeracy indicator, the results were in the moderate category, with 56.67% of students achieving minimum competency and the school ranking in the lower-middle range (61-80%) at the Pematang Rejang Regency level. These results show that some students already have literacy and numeracy skills, but they are still below expectations. The literacy and numeracy skills of students at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict are in the moderate category, and strategies are needed to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills so that they have an impact on improving school achievement.

In the current era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0, which is characterized by rapid advances in technology, information, and communication, openness and competitiveness have brought about significant changes in various areas of life (Tjandrawinata in Sasikirana & Herlambang, 2020). Education is one of the areas that has been affected by the rapid development of the times and is required to constantly adapt to these developments. In facing these dynamic and competitive developments, school principals are required to innovate and implement various strategies in preparing an excellent future generation, one of which is by implementing appropriate leadership. As the highest leader in the school, the principal not only acts as an administrator but also as a learning leader, manager, and supervisor. Principals are required to be able to manage their resources, one of which is teachers, effectively. In managing human resources in schools, namely teachers with various characteristics, principals must be able to optimize these resources in supporting quality learning activities. Based on interviews with two teachers on August 23rd, 2025, the principal of SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict has strong personal values, such as integrity, discipline, decisiveness, responsibility, and commitment to the school's progress. These values form the basis for decision-making, school management, building a positive school culture, and empowering the school community and the wider community. The principal also has strong leadership skills, able to inspire and motivate teachers to optimize their performance in an effort to achieve good school achievement.

Based on interviews with the principal and documentation studies on September 1st, 2025, SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal has 37 teachers, consisting of senior and junior teachers, with 100% bachelor's degree qualifications in education and non-education fields. These teachers have varying abilities and commitment to their work or levels of readiness. Of the 37 teachers, there are no teachers in the low readiness category (R1), 2 teachers in the low to moderate readiness category (R2), 5 teachers in the moderate to high readiness category (R3), and 30 teachers in the high readiness category (R4). Given the varying levels of teacher readiness, it is important for school principals to apply situational leadership based on the situation and conditions of these teachers.

Opinion (Goleman in Chen & Silverthorne, 2005) states that effective leaders do not rely on a single leadership style. One strategy that can be implemented by school principals is adaptive leadership that responds to the situation and level of teacher readiness. Rigid and uniform leadership is often ineffective in dealing with the diversity of teachers' abilities. Therefore, a flexible leadership model is needed, namely the situational leadership model of Hersey and Blanchard. (Robbins & Judge, 2019) believes that the effectiveness of situational leadership depends on the readiness of team members in a particular organization and situation. This model emphasises adjusting leadership styles ranging from directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating based on the readiness level of followers, in this case, teachers, in carrying out their duties, starting from low level (R1), low to moderate (R2), moderate to high (R3), and high (R4) (Lelyana, 2023). Providing appropriate guidance and support and applying the right basis of authority can increase motivation, boost confidence, improve comfort at work, increase commitment to work tasks, reduce potential conflicts among teachers, reduce resistance to leaders, and enhance teachers' creativity in carrying out learning activities so that work tasks can be completed properly in accordance with predetermined targets and have a direct impact on school achievement.

Research (Juniawati et al., 2025) explains that the application of situational leadership has a positive impact on teachers' professional competence and learning quality, thereby implying good school performance. Then, research (Mukhtar et al., 2025) shows that the situational leadership of the principal of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Bandung Barat contributes significantly to improving the performance of the curriculum development team. This is achieved because leaders can adjust their approach, ranging from telling, selling, participating, to delegating, according to the level of readiness and competence of each member. This study reveals that the application of flexible leadership not only affects quantitative aspects such as the achievement of time targets and the

quantity of curriculum production, but also significantly improves the quality of the curriculum produced. Furthermore, research (Widiastuti & Permana, 2023) explains that Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model implemented by the principal of SD IT As-Shofa can improve teacher performance through several strategies, namely: giving task directions, providing space for creativity, and empowering teachers. Furthermore, research (Zukhruf & Azani, 2023) reveals that Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model, applied by the principal of SMP Daarul Quran Surakarta, has succeeded in improving the quality of education, and there are several obstacles, namely, the followers' compliance with the principal's directions is still low, and their understanding of leadership is still not optimal. And research conducted (Wahid et al., 2020) proves that the Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model, which consists of telling, selling, supporting, and delegating styles, can improve the quality of education at Sekolah Alam Lukulo Kebumen by optimally utilising input, process, and output.

Previous studies have confirmed the positive impact of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model on teachers' professional competence, curriculum development team performance, and education quality at various school levels, including Madrasah Aliyah, SMP, SD IT, and Sekolah Alam. However, these studies have not specifically explored the contribution of the Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model to holistic school achievement, particularly in private religious-based primary schools located in sub-districts with distinctive social and cultural characteristics. Previous studies have focused more on aspects of learning quality, education quality, or the performance of curriculum development teams, while the causal relationship between the implementation of situational leadership styles and improvements in school achievement, which includes academic, non-academic, and school management aspects, still needs to be explored in greater depth.

This study focuses on two main aspects, namely: (1) the specific context of the research object, namely SD Muhammadiyah in Comal Subdistrict, Pematang Regency, which is a leading school with Muhammadiyah Islamic characteristics and social dynamics that have not been touched upon by similar studies, and (2) an in-depth look at the adaptation strategy of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model, which consists of directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating by the principal in response to the varying levels of readiness of teachers to directly boost school achievement. Thus, this study is expected not only to reinforce previous findings but also to provide new empirical contributions regarding the implementation of situational leadership in a more

specific and complex context, as well as to enrich the knowledge base on the effectiveness of this leadership model in improving primary school achievement as a whole.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. The qualitative approach is used to understand, explain, explore, and describe Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model in improving school achievement that cannot be explained, measured, and described using a quantitative research approach. The phenomenological method was used to understand and interpret the phenomenon of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model in improving school achievement based on the subjective experiences of school principals. In this study, the researcher acted as a key instrument by being directly involved in the natural context of the research subject through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies, where interpersonal skills, intuition, and empathy determine the quality of the data produced.

The research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict, Pematang Rejang Regency, with the research subjects being school principals selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources involving the principal and three teachers. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation from November 17th - 28th, 2025, and documentation studies. The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation studies were then sorted to select only those relevant to the research focus. Next, the data were presented in tables and descriptive texts, followed by the interpretation and validation of the research findings on the implementation of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model as an effort to improve school achievement (Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The presentation of research data, including interviews, observations, and documentation studies, is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Results on Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model as an Effort to Improve School Achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict, Pemalang Regency

Directing Leadership Style	Coaching Leadership Style	Supporting Leadership Style	Delegating Leadership Style
There are no teachers with low readiness levels (R1) at SD Muhammadiyah 01 in Comal Subdistrict.	<p>In terms of task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour), the principal provides very detailed task instructions, from planning and implementation to evaluation, and applies strict and multidimensional supervision through administrative and academic supervision, as well as direct monitoring.</p> <p>In terms of socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour, the principal also provides high levels of support through intensive two-way communication, direct guidance, sharing experiences, motivation, and providing opportunities for development through forums such as Teacher Working Groups.</p>	<p>-In terms of task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour), the principal provides broad and simple task instructions, as well as looser and less strict supervision compared to R2 teachers.</p> <p>-Supervision is carried out through direct monitoring, administrative supervision, and academic supervision, and teachers are given the freedom to take initiative.</p> <p>-In terms of socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour, high levels of support are provided through intensive two-way communication to exchange ideas, provide motivation, and actively involve teachers in challenging tasks and decision-making, such as becoming Deputy Principal for Student Affairs and involvement in school event committees such as the Muharam Festival, Milad Muhammadiyah, and the formation of Teacher Working Groups.</p> <p>-To improve teacher competence, the principal provides encouragement and motivation to participate in training</p>	<p>-In terms of task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour), the principal only provides general task instructions, exercises loose supervision, and teachers often proactively submit reports without being asked to do so by the principal.</p> <p>-The principal manifests broad delegation of authority.</p> <p>-Although supervision is loose, it still exists through administrative and academic supervision.</p> <p>-In terms of socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour, the principal provides minimal detailed guidance because teachers are already capable of working independently.</p> <p>-The principal delegates more strategic responsibilities and authority, such as assigning teachers as Deputy Principal for Public Relations and core committee leaders, accompanied by complete trust.</p> <p>-Communication is two-way and is more often initiated by teachers.</p>

Directing Leadership Style	Coaching Leadership Style	Supporting Leadership Style	Delegating Leadership Style
	The use of reward power, both non-material and material.	activities, workshops, and seminars. The application of referent power, where the principal influences teachers through exemplary behavior and sharing best practices.	The use of expert power, where the principal influences teachers through competence and experience.

Source: Results of interviews, observations, and documentation studies, 2026

Based on the presentation of the research results, the research findings are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Research Findings on Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model as an Effort to Improve School Achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict, Pemalang Regency

Directing Leadership Style	Coaching Leadership Style	Supporting Leadership Style	Delegating Leadership Style
There are no teachers who are not fully capable and committed to performing their duties or who have a low level of readiness (R1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principal acts as both a mentor and a coach. -Academic supervision is carried out based on the principle of equality and to explore potential in finding solutions to problems, not merely as dictatorial supervision and assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principal provides general guidance and focuses more on giving advice and feedback. - Supervision is loose but still present through monitoring and supervision, both administrative and academic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The description of duties is openly provided through school meetings, and the teacher understands the steps involved in their duties. - Teachers are given trust and full independence in planning and carrying out their main duties and additional duties as teachers. - The principal delegates some of their authority to teachers, namely as Deputy Principal for Public Relations. - Supervision is loose but still exists and is carried out periodically through monitoring and evaluation, as well as administrative and academic supervision.
	Two-way and open communication patterns between the principal and teachers. This communication is established to direct,	- The principal acts as a coach who focuses more on building the team's confidence, motivation, and independence by providing emotional support, giving	- The principal acts as a coach who empowers individuals to find their own solutions, rather than simply giving instructions.

<p>guide, and monitor performance progress.</p>	<p>constructive feedback, and empowering individuals to find their own solutions, rather than simply giving instructions.</p> <p>- Communication is intensive, familial, and more discussion-based than instructional.</p>	<p>-Communication is initiated by teachers and is more discussion-based than instruction-based.</p>
<p>Non-material reward power is a key strategy in improving teacher readiness.</p>	<p>The principal uses personal power, namely referent power, which is much stronger and more sustainable.</p>	<p>The principal uses a personal power base, namely expert power, which is much stronger and more sustainable.</p>

Source: Analysis of interview results, observations, and documentation studies, 2026

The discussion of the research findings and their impact on directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating styles is explained as follows.

Directing Leadership Style

The research findings indicate that at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal District, there are no teachers who are not fully capable and committed to carrying out their duties or have a low level of readiness (R1). The absence of teachers with a low level of readiness (R1) was due to several main factors, namely: (1) the existence of a selective recruitment mechanism for new teachers that prioritises educational qualifications in accordance with regulations and minimum competencies as prospective teachers, and (2) the placement and distribution of teaching tasks for teachers that takes into account their abilities and educational backgrounds.

The absence of teachers with low readiness (R1) has a positive impact, namely that the principal can devote more time and energy to other managerial functions, such as coordination and networking with various parties in organising various school programmes or activities to realise the school's vision, rather than directing basic tasks to these teachers. In addition, the leadership style shifts from autocratic directing to a participatory, empowering, and delegating style, which will foster independence, increase creativity, promote a sense of comfort in carrying out work tasks, and reduce teacher resistance to the principal.

Coaching Leadership Style

The findings show that (1) the principal comprehensively combines directing and coaching styles because teachers in the R2 category need specific technical guidance as well as psychological support to build their abilities and self-confidence, and (2) there is a gap between the policy of

assigning teaching tasks to teachers with a background in qualifications. The placement is not entirely linear with the educational background and experience of teachers, namely, teachers with Strata 1 qualifications in Sufism and Psychotherapy are assigned to teach Kemuhammadiyah subjects and have also taught PJOK subjects. This has the potential to create or prolong low to moderate readiness (R2).

Based on the findings of this study, there are positive and negative impacts on teacher readiness and school management, namely: (1) the positive impact is that teachers experience a concrete increase in their professional and pedagogical abilities, and (2) the negative impact is that the principal spends a lot of time and energy directing and guiding teachers with low to moderate readiness levels (R2) compared to other managerial functions such as coordination and networking with various parties in implementing various school programmes and activities.

Supporting Leadership Style

Based on these research findings, there are positive and negative impacts on teacher readiness and school management. The positive impacts are: (1) teachers experience an increase in their self-confidence and motivation because they feel involved in various strategic activities and are also involved in joint decision-making, (2) the principal can save time and energy and focus more on coordination and networking with various parties in achieving the school's vision, and (3) the selection of deputy principals and extracurricular activity coordinators, as well as the opportunity to participate in self-development activities, creates a positive culture that encourages all teachers to improve their performance. The negative impact is that teachers become highly dependent on motivation from the principal. If the principal provides less motivation, teachers' commitment to their work will also decline.

Delegating Leadership Style

Based on these research findings, there is a positive impact on teacher readiness and school management, namely: (1) the principal's duties and responsibilities are lighter because some of these duties and responsibilities are delegated to teachers with a high level of readiness (R4), and (2) the principal can save time and energy and focus more on being a learning leader and coordinating and building networks with various parties in achieving the school's vision.

Discussion

The research findings show that at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict, there are no teachers who are not fully capable and committed to carrying out the tasks assigned to them or who

have a low level of readiness (R1). Thus, the research findings reveal that the principal does not apply a directing leadership style, so the directing leadership style does not play a direct role in improving school achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Comal Subdistrict.

Coaching Leadership Style

These research findings are in line with Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory as stated in (Robbins & Judge, 2024); (Sunarso, 2022); (Wayne & Miskel, 2014); (Yukl, 2020) that the effectiveness of the coaching leadership style lies in providing intensive guidance behaviour because teachers are not fully capable, as well as supportive behaviour that strengthens the teachers' abilities and enthusiasm. Teachers with low to moderate readiness levels (R2) require both directing and supporting behaviors (Hersey & Blanchard, 1985). The application of the bases of power used by the principal towards teachers with low to moderate readiness (R2) is reward power, in line with the opinion of (Hutahaean, 2021); (Mu'ah et al., 2019), which states that this coaching style is often reinforced with reward power because teachers at this level of maturity are willing to try new behaviours if they receive positive benefits to encourage compliance and reinforce the desired development.

The findings of this study are reinforced by research conducted (Hairiah et al., 2024); (Munthe, 2015); (Siagian et al, 2022) which reveals that the coaching style shows positive results when team members begin to understand their tasks, but need additional motivation. Furthermore (Ermawati et al., 2024); (Istikarani et al., 2025) revealing that the directing style provides direction and guidance to team members so that they work with clear targets. In such situations, a leader should focus on boosting team members' morale by providing a more in-depth explanation of the importance of achieving targets and providing socio-emotional support. This step has an impact on increasing followers' commitment to completing the responsibilities assigned to them.

This study shows that in improving school achievement, the application of adaptive leadership and good diagnostic skills by the head teacher can overcome structural problems such as mismatches in teacher assignment and transform them into momentum for improving teacher capacity, which ultimately aims to transition teachers to a higher level of readiness and improve school achievement holistically. This condition is in line with the study conducted by (Asyari, 2023); (Novitasari & Asbari, 2021), which proves that coaching leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance, thereby improving school achievement.

In addition, these findings indicate that school achievement is not only determined by the suitability of teachers' backgrounds, but also by the effectiveness of leadership in managing and empowering human resources. Despite the problem of mismatches in teacher assignments, the coaching leadership style has succeeded in transforming the coaching and learning process into one that is more collaborative, focused, and sustainable. This has become the foundation for improving school achievement in other aspects, such as student learning outcomes and school climate.

Thus, the research findings prove that the coaching leadership style of the principal plays a strategic role in improving school achievement, especially when dealing with teachers who have a low to moderate level of readiness (R2), namely, teachers who are partially capable but fully committed to carrying out their work tasks. This role is realised through a combination of three complementary dimensions of leadership behaviour, namely: (1) structured and systematic task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour). The principal provides specific task instructions, conducts strict supervision through monitoring and evaluation, and provides administrative and academic supervision. This builds clarity and a framework of tasks needed by teachers whose abilities are still developing, (2) Intensive socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour. In this case, the principal not only acts as a mentor who shares knowledge and experience, but also as a coach who is egalitarian, gives positive feedback, motivates, appreciates, and opens up two-way communication. To increase the level of teacher readiness, concrete support is also provided through the facilitation of professional development, such as opportunities to participate in Teacher Working Groups, and (3) the appropriate use of bases of power. The principal strategically utilises reward power to encourage and reinforce positive teacher behaviour, which is in line with the characteristics of teachers at a low to moderate level of readiness (R2) who need more external reinforcement.

The findings of this study are in line with Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, as stated in (A. Wulandari & Mulyanto, 2024); (Azmy, 2021); (Fauzi, 2022); (Robbins & Judge, 2024) that the effectiveness of the supporting leadership style is achieved by providing support and non-directive behaviour to followers. The application of bases of power by school principals to teachers with low to moderate readiness levels (R2) is referent power or exemplary behaviour, in accordance with the opinion of (Robbins & Judge, 2019), which states that the effectiveness of this supporting style is often reinforced by referent power, where followers obey and follow the leader because they respect, admire, like, or want to be like the leader.

The findings of this study are reinforced by studies conducted (Irawati et al., 2024); (Maulana et al., 2024) which reveal that the supporting leadership style shows high effectiveness when applied to followers with adequate competence but who are not fully committed to carrying out their work tasks. In such situations, the leader's role shifts towards strengthening work relationships, two-way communication, and providing support. Through this strengthening, leaders ensure that followers clearly understand job expectations and mandates. Furthermore, a study by (Maulana et al., 2024); (Nur et al., 2025); (Rahayu & Kusmanto, 2024) proves that a supportive style can increase teacher job satisfaction, thereby implying an increase in overall school achievement.

The findings indicate that improved school achievement is the result of implementing an adaptive and targeted supporting style, demonstrating that the headteacher successfully diagnosed teachers with moderate to high readiness levels (R3) who have adequate abilities but low motivation and self-confidence, and respond to them with a combination of low and non-rigid task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour) in the form of strategic advice, rather than dictatorial instructions, and high socio-emotional support behaviour or work relationship behaviour (supportive behaviour) through familial guidance, collaborative discussions, and empowerment in committees. Thus, the improvement in school achievement in this context is not only reflected in the achievement of administrative or school programme targets, but more in the transformation of teachers' capacity from merely being able to carry out tasks to being more motivated, confident, and proactive in contributing.

These findings indicate that when a supportive style is applied with accurate and adaptive diagnostics, improvements in school achievement can ultimately be achieved, resulting in higher quality academic and non-academic achievements. This is reinforced by the research of (Mahdalina et al., 2025), which reveals that supporting leadership plays an important role in improving school quality, teachers' pedagogical and professional competence, and school achievement comprehensively.

Thus, the research findings prove that the collaborative and democratic supporting leadership style of school principals is effective in improving school achievement, especially when directed at teachers with moderate to high readiness levels (R3) or teachers who are already capable but need to strengthen their commitment and intrinsic motivation. This role is realised through a combination of three complementary dimensions of leadership behaviour, namely: (1) task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour) that is not rigid and is based on mutual trust. The principal reduces

directive control and plays more of a role as a strategic advisor. Meanwhile, supervision is carried out loosely through monitoring and evaluation, and supervision that functions as guidance, not strict control, because the teachers' technical abilities are already well-established. (2) Intensive socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour. Interactions are built collaboratively and participatively, with two-way communication through a democratic attitude in planning school programmes or activities. In this case, the principal acts as a coach and facilitator who motivates, explores potential, and empowers teachers to improve their work ethic. Teachers' involvement in the Teacher Working Group formation committee, the Gebyar Muharam committee, and the Milad Muhammadiyah committee, as well as their duties as Deputy Principals in the field of student affairs, are concrete evidence of empowerment and space for contribution in decision-making. (3) referential authority or effective role modelling to encourage teachers to emulate and internalise the positive values practised by the principal.

The findings of this study are in line with Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, as stated in (Adnan & Hamim, 2015); (Krisnandi et al., 2019); (Mirčetić & Vukotić, 2020); (Sherly et al., 2020); (Sunarso, 2022); (Syarifudin et al., 2023) that the delegating leadership style is effectively applied to followers with a high level of readiness who are able to carry out tasks independently without requiring much direction and strict supervision from leaders, and who have full confidence to work effectively even without more support or encouragement from leaders. In the delegating style, leaders delegate authority by assigning different tasks or responsibilities to their followers (Masruhin & Raudhoh, 2022). The application of bases of power by the principal to teachers with a high level of readiness (R4) is expert power, in accordance with the opinion of (Robbins & Judge, 2024, p. 443); (Yukl, 2020) which states that the special knowledge and skills possessed by leaders regarding the best way to carry out a task or solve an important problem provide significant potential influence over followers. Expert power is effectively applied to followers with a high level of readiness who often desire direction and support from leaders who are low in authority. Leaders gain respect and are able to influence competent followers who are confident that they possess the knowledge, expertise, and skills that are important to followers.

The findings of this study are reinforced by studies conducted (Herwinesastra, 2024); (R. Wulandari et al., 2021), which reveals that an effective delegating leadership style improves personal and organisational performance, thereby impacting the achievement of optimal organisational goals. Its leadership function is evident in the ability to influence, motivate, and direct team

members to achieve organisational goals. This shows that follower performance is greatly influenced by the attention and manner in which leaders treat them, which ultimately determines the smooth running of the entire work process.

The improvement in school achievement found in the research actually shows the application of a dynamic delegating style that goes beyond rigid theoretical boundaries, where the effectiveness of delegating leadership for teachers in the high readiness category (R4) does not fully correspond to the ideal description in theory. Theoretically, it is established that teachers with a high level of readiness (R4) who have very high abilities and commitment should only require a delegating style with low directive and supportive behaviour, as well as a basis of expert power. However, the research findings reveal that even though the headteacher gave full trust and loose supervision, the interactions that occurred were more collaborative and supportive than predicted by theory. The headteacher continues to build intensive, two-way communication, provide appreciation, and open up opportunities for development through training. In other words, improving school achievement in this context is not only achieved through the delegation of authority alone, but through a unique combination of full trust (delegating) with empowering coaching and expertise-based exemplary leadership (expert power). This shows that in practice, effective leadership for high-performing teachers also requires support and recognition to maintain their motivation and confidence, while optimising their contribution to the school's strategic programmes. Thus, improvements in school achievement do not only come from the efficiency of delegated tasks, but also from a collaborative work climate and continuous development fostered by the headteacher, even for teachers who are already competent. These findings enrich the theory by showing that the delegating style in the field is more fluid and responsive to the psychological and professional needs of teachers, where improved school achievement is the result of synergy between autonomy and support, even at the highest level of readiness.

Thus, the findings of this study prove that the delegating leadership style of school principals contributes significantly to improving school achievement, especially when directed at teachers who have a high level of readiness (R4) or teachers who are skilled and established in carrying out their work tasks. This role is realised through a combination of three complementary dimensions of leadership behaviour, namely: (1) task-oriented behaviour (directive behaviour), where the principal provides simple task descriptions and delivers them in an open forum, namely in work meetings, which enables teachers to understand and adapt independently. Furthermore, the

principal gives full trust to teachers to plan and implement learning with minimal direction, even delegating authority as Deputy Principal for Public Relations. Supervision is carried out loosely through periodic monitoring and evaluation, such as administrative and academic supervision. Teachers show proactivity by reporting developments without being asked, indicating a high degree of independence and responsibility, (2) Socio-emotional support or supportive behaviour. The principal applies a family-like coaching approach to motivate and appreciate teachers. Teachers proactively establish intensive communication with the principal. Communication is built not only to motivate but also to provide solutions to problems that arise and to appreciate the achievement of targets. In addition, the principal actively encourages and opens opportunities for teachers to participate in competency development through training, workshops, or seminars. Communication is reciprocal and collaborative, where teachers take the initiative to discuss the progress of delegated tasks, and (3) the application of an effective power base, namely expert power. Their knowledge and skills in various fields foster teacher compliance and trust, which in turn encourages teachers to continue to develop and improve their performance.

Thus, overall, the research findings reveal the role of the principal's situational leadership as a manager in improving school achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict, through the application of flexible and differentiated coaching, supporting, and delegating styles according to the teachers' level of readiness. The principal does not apply a rigid leadership style, but rather combines and adjusts directive behaviour, supportive behaviour, and bases of power strategically to build teachers' capacity and commitment in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The principal does not apply a directing leadership style, but tends to apply a coaching, supporting, and more dominant delegating leadership style.

With different strategies for each level of teacher readiness, the principal successfully created an environment that supported teachers' transition to higher levels of readiness, from low to moderate or high. This process is reinforced by the use of the appropriate bases of power, namely reward power for category R2, referent power for category R3, and expert power for category R4, which are not coercive but inspirational and motivational.

The research findings confirm Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (A. Wulandari & Mulyanto, 2024); (Glasø, 2015), (Thompson & Glasø, 2018), which states that leadership effectiveness depends on the match between the leader's style and the follower's readiness level, and is in line with the study conducted by (Juniawati et al., 2025), which revealed that the application of

situational leadership has a positive impact on teachers' professional competence and learning quality, thereby implying good school achievement. This is further reinforced by a study conducted by (Wahid et al., 2020), which revealed that the Hersey and Blanchard's model of situational leadership by the principal of Sekolah Alam Lukulo Kebumen can improve school achievement or quality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, results, and discussion of the study, it can be concluded that the principal does not apply a rigid leadership style, but rather combines and adapts coaching, supporting, and delegating styles adaptively based on the situation and the level of teacher readiness, supported by the application of the appropriate bases of power. This strategically builds the capacity and commitment of teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, thereby increasing school achievement at SD Muhammadiyah 01, Comal Subdistrict. The principal does not apply a directing leadership style, but tends to apply coaching, supporting, and, more dominantly, delegating leadership styles.

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