

## THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ACADEMIC SUPERVISION ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency. Employing a quantitative approach with an ex post facto survey design, data were collected from 149 teachers selected through proportional random sampling from a total population of 237 teachers across public elementary schools in Patean District. The primary data source consisted of teachers' responses to validated Likert-scale questionnaires measuring three variables: principal leadership style, academic supervision, and teachers' professional competence. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, including Pearson product-moment correlation to assess the strength of relationships between variables, simple linear regression to determine the individual effect of each independent variable, and multiple linear regression to examine the simultaneous influence of both variables on teachers' professional competence. Hypothesis testing was performed at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The results revealed that principal leadership style had a significant positive influence on teachers' professional competence, contributing 75.0% of the variance. Academic supervision also demonstrated a significant positive effect, accounting for 70.9% of the variance in teachers' professional competence. Simultaneously, principal leadership style and academic supervision explained 81.2% of the variance in teachers' professional competence, indicating a very strong and statistically significant combined effect. These findings emphasize the importance of effective school leadership and continuous academic supervision in strengthening teachers' professional competence, improving instructional quality, and supporting sustainable educational development in elementary schools.

### Keywords

Academic Supervision, Principal Leadership Style, Teachers' Professional Competence.



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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional competence is one of the fundamental determinants of educational quality and instructional effectiveness in schools. Professional competence reflects teachers' mastery of subject matter, pedagogical expertise, instructional strategies, and the ability to continuously develop their professionalism in response to educational changes and societal demands. In the context of elementary education, teachers are expected not only to deliver curriculum content effectively but also to facilitate meaningful learning experiences that foster students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. Teachers with strong professional competence tend to demonstrate higher instructional quality, greater adaptability to curriculum reform, and more effective classroom management practices, all of which contribute significantly to improving student learning outcomes and overall school performance (Bahmannia et al., 2020; Jihaduddin et al., 2020). Consequently, strengthening teachers' professional competence has become a strategic priority in educational development worldwide (Nataliia, 2021).

Recognizing the importance of teacher professionalism, the Indonesian government has emphasized the necessity of professional competence through various educational policies and regulations (Helda & Syahrani, 2025; Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). One of the most significant policies is Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022 concerning National Education Standards, which states that teachers, as professional educators and learning agents, are required to possess four core competencies: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competence (Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022). Professional competence specifically refers to teachers' ability to master learning materials comprehensively, understand scientific structures and methodologies, develop creative instructional materials, and utilize technology to support teaching and professional growth (Mulyono et al., 2023; Darmawan & Hakim, 2023). This policy reflects the government's commitment to ensuring that teachers maintain high professional standards in order to achieve national education goals and improve educational quality across regions.

However, despite these policy expectations, the reality in many public elementary schools, particularly in Patean District, Kendal Regency, reveals a persistent discrepancy between the ideal standards of teacher professionalism and actual conditions in schools. Preliminary observations conducted in public elementary schools in Patean District indicate that many teachers still encounter difficulties in adapting to educational transformation, particularly in implementing innovative and technology-based learning approaches required by the Merdeka Curriculum. Many teachers

continue to rely on conventional teaching methods and demonstrate limited readiness to integrate digital technologies into classroom instruction. Furthermore, continuous professional development programs are often perceived merely as administrative obligations rather than strategic opportunities for improving professional competence and instructional quality. As a result, the impact of such programs on teachers' instructional performance and collaborative professionalism remains relatively limited.

Additional findings from preliminary observations also revealed that some teachers still experience difficulties in mastering subject content deeply and comprehensively, leading to less meaningful and less engaging learning experiences for students. The situation is further complicated by disparities in employment status among teachers, including civil servant teachers, PPPK teachers, driving teachers, and honorary teachers, which indirectly influence morale, professionalism, and workplace dynamics within schools. These conditions suggest that professional competence among teachers in public elementary schools in Patean District has not yet reached the expected standards, thereby creating concerns regarding instructional quality and educational effectiveness.

The discrepancy between expected and actual professional competence is also reflected in educational report card data from public elementary schools in Patean District. Several schools experienced declines in educational performance indicators between 2023 and 2024, suggesting ongoing challenges in maintaining instructional quality and professional teaching standards. These findings indicate that improving teachers' professional competence remains an urgent issue requiring strategic and evidence-based interventions. Consequently, identifying factors that significantly influence teachers' professional competence becomes essential for improving educational quality and supporting sustainable school development.

One important factor that potentially influences teachers' professional competence is the principal's leadership style (Lijun & Te, 2024; Retnowati et al., 2024). School principals are expected not only to function as administrative managers but also as instructional leaders who inspire, motivate, and facilitate teacher development. Leadership style reflects the patterns of behavior, communication, decision-making, and interpersonal interaction employed by school leaders in influencing teachers and organizational members (Robbins & Judge, 2016). Effective principals create supportive learning environments, encourage innovation, facilitate professional collaboration, and provide strategic direction for school improvement. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that effective leadership contributes positively to teacher

professionalism, instructional effectiveness, and organizational performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Hallinger, 2011). Principals who exhibit transformational and participative leadership styles tend to foster higher teacher motivation, commitment, and professional growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Astuti et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, preliminary findings in Patean District indicate that school leadership practices have not been fully optimized in promoting teachers' professional competence. Some principals are still perceived as focusing more on administrative responsibilities than on instructional leadership and teacher development. Communication, motivational support, and participative decision-making processes are not always implemented effectively, potentially limiting teachers' opportunities for professional growth and instructional improvement. These conditions indicate that leadership style remains a crucial variable requiring further empirical investigation.

Another significant factor influencing teachers' professional competence is academic supervision. Academic supervision refers to a continuous process of professional assistance provided by school principals to teachers in order to improve instructional practices, classroom management, and professional performance (Sugiar & Sanusi, 2024; Sunaryo, 2020). Effective academic supervision includes systematic planning, classroom observation, reflective discussion, feedback provision, and follow-up professional development activities. Through academic supervision, teachers receive guidance and constructive support to improve instructional quality and overcome challenges encountered during the teaching-learning process (Kholil & Harahap, 2023)

Despite its strategic role, academic supervision practices in many schools often remain administrative rather than developmental (Andriyati et al., 2026; Rohendi & Helmawati, 2021). Preliminary observations in public elementary schools in Patean District reveal that supervision activities are frequently inconsistent with established schedules and are rarely followed by meaningful feedback or professional assistance. In many cases, supervision is conducted merely to fulfill administrative requirements without systematic follow-up actions aimed at improving teachers' professional competence. As a result, the potential contribution of academic supervision toward strengthening teacher professionalism has not been fully realized.

Previous empirical studies have demonstrated that both principal leadership style and academic supervision significantly influence teachers' professional competence. Studies conducted by Rahman and Dianawati Wasliman (2026), Usman et al. (2023), and Adham et al. (2024) found that

leadership practices and effective supervision positively contribute to teachers' professional development and instructional quality. However, other studies, such as those conducted by Shintawati et al. (2025) and Singerin (2021), reported inconsistent findings, indicating that leadership and supervision did not significantly affect professional competence in certain educational contexts. These inconsistent findings reveal the existence of a research gap that requires further investigation, particularly in rural and semi-rural elementary school settings.

Furthermore, a review of previous studies indicates several limitations that distinguish the present research. First, most prior studies examined the effects of principal leadership style and academic supervision separately, focusing on their individual contributions to teacher competence. Second, many studies were conducted in urban schools, secondary education institutions, or broader educational settings, providing limited evidence from rural elementary school contexts. Third, previous research has primarily emphasized pedagogical performance, teacher motivation, or job satisfaction, while relatively few studies have specifically investigated professional competence as a comprehensive construct encompassing subject mastery, instructional expertise, professional development, and technology integration. Therefore, this study differs from previous research by simultaneously examining the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools located in Patean District, Kendal Regency, a rural educational context undergoing curriculum transformation and digital adaptation. This integrated approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher professionalism and offers contextual evidence that has been underrepresented in the existing literature.

In addition, most previous studies have examined leadership style and academic supervision separately, while limited research has explored their simultaneous influence on teachers' professional competence, especially in public elementary schools located in rural districts such as Patean, Kendal Regency. Therefore, this study offers novelty by simultaneously examining the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence within the specific context of public elementary schools in Patean District. This study contributes theoretically by enriching the literature concerning educational leadership, supervision, and teacher professionalism in Indonesian elementary education contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, school principals, and educational supervisors in designing more effective leadership strategies and supervision programs to

strengthen teachers' professional competence and improve educational quality.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) examine the influence of principal leadership style on teachers' professional competence; (2) analyze the influence of academic supervision on teachers' professional competence; and (3) determine the simultaneous influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach using a causal survey design to examine the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency. Quantitative research is appropriate for this study because the collected data were numerical and analyzed statistically to test the proposed hypotheses. According to Sugiyono, quantitative research is based on positivist philosophy and is used to investigate populations or samples through statistical analysis. The causal survey design was selected because this study aimed to identify causal relationships among variables and determine the extent to which independent variables influence the dependent variable.

The research was conducted in public elementary schools located in Patean District, Kendal Regency, from September 2024 to May 2025. The population of this study consisted of all civil servant and non-civil servant teachers working in public elementary schools in the district, totaling 237 teachers. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 149 teachers as research respondents. The study applied proportional random sampling to ensure that all teachers had equal opportunities to be selected as participants while maintaining proportional representation from each school.

This study involved three variables, namely principal leadership style as the first independent variable ( $X_1$ ), academic supervision as the second independent variable ( $X_2$ ), and teachers' professional competence as the dependent variable ( $Y$ ). Teachers' professional competence refers to teachers' ability to master subject matter, develop instructional materials creatively, conduct reflective professional development, and utilize information and communication technology in the learning process. Principal leadership style refers to the ways principals communicate, motivate, make decisions, and control organizational activities in schools (Dou et al.,

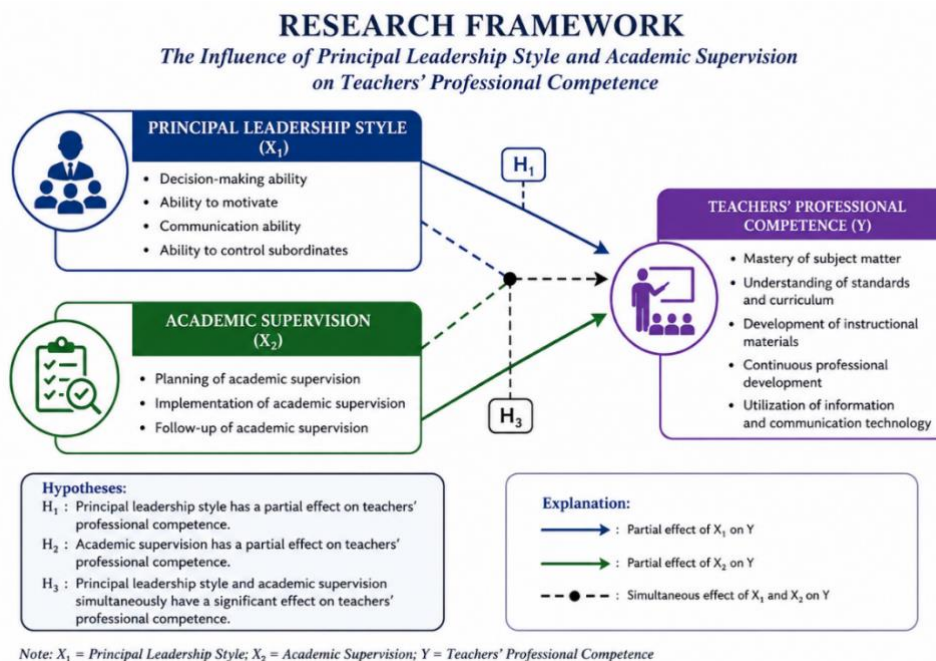
2017; Sulbidin & Awang, 2024). Meanwhile, academic supervision refers to continuous guidance and assistance provided by principals to improve teachers' instructional performance through supervision planning, implementation, and follow-up activities.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires developed based on the operational indicators of each variable. All questionnaire items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument for teachers' professional competence initially consisted of 45 items, the principal leadership style instrument consisted of 36 items, and the academic supervision instrument consisted of 30 items. Prior to the main data collection process, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability involving 30 teachers outside the research sample. Instrument validity was analyzed using the Product-Moment correlation technique, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed that all research variables had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating that the instruments were reliable and suitable for data collection.

The data analysis technique consisted of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondents' perceptions of each research variable. Inferential analysis included prerequisite tests and hypothesis testing. The prerequisite tests consisted of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure that the regression assumptions were fulfilled. The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, while linearity was tested through ANOVA analysis. Multicollinearity was examined using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, and heteroscedasticity was analyzed using the Glejser test.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression and multiple linear regression analyses. Simple regression analysis was used to determine the partial influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence separately. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the simultaneous influence of both independent variables on teachers' professional competence. The hypotheses were tested using t-tests and F-tests with a significance level of 0.05. The results of this analysis were used to determine the significance and magnitude of the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency.

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Principal leadership style (X1) and academic supervision (X2) are assumed to influence teachers' professional competence (Y), either partially or simultaneously. The conceptual framework is presented in the following diagram:



**Figure 1.** Research Framework

The framework indicates that effective principal leadership style and well-implemented academic supervision are expected to contribute positively to improving teachers' professional competence in elementary schools.

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Principal leadership style (X1) and academic supervision (X2) are assumed to influence teachers' professional competence (Y), either partially or simultaneously. Based on this framework, three research hypotheses were formulated: (H1) principal leadership style positively and significantly influences teachers' professional competence; (H2) academic supervision positively and significantly influences teachers' professional competence; and (H3) principal leadership style and academic supervision simultaneously exert a positive and significant influence on teachers' professional competence. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

This study aimed to investigate the influence of principal leadership style and academic supervision on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency. Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed to 149 teachers from public elementary schools in the district. The data were analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression analyses with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics. The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

#### The Influence of Principal Leadership Style on Teachers' Professional Competence

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between principal leadership style and teachers' professional competence. The correlation coefficient was 0.866, which was categorized as very strong. Hypothesis testing using the t-test showed a t-value of 20.991, which exceeded the critical t-table value (1.97623) at a significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that principal leadership style has a significant positive effect on teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.750 indicates that principal leadership style contributed 75.0% to teachers' professional competence, while the remaining 25.0% was influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

**Table 1.** Influence of Principal Leadership Style on Teachers' Professional Competence

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Principal Leadership Style → Teachers' Professional Competence	0.866	0.750	20.991	0.000	Significant influence (75.0%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

#### The Influence of Academic Supervision on Teachers' Professional Competence

Academic supervision was also found to have a significant effect on teachers' professional competence. The correlation coefficient was 0.842, with a t-value of 19.463 and a significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a very strong and significant positive effect.

**Table 2.** Influence of Organizational Commitment on Work Motivation

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Academic Supervision → Teachers' Professional Competence	0.842	0.709	19.463	0.000	Significant influence (70.9%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Academic supervision was found to have a strong and statistically significant influence on teachers' professional competence. The analysis showed a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.842, indicating a very strong positive relationship between academic supervision and teachers' professional competence. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.709 suggests that 70.9% of the variation in teachers' professional competence can be explained by academic supervision, while the remaining 29.1% is influenced by other factors not included in this study. The t-value of 19.463 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirms that academic supervision has a positive and significant effect on teachers' professional competence. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) stating that academic supervision significantly influences teachers' professional competence is accepted.

These findings indicate that effective academic supervision plays a crucial role in improving teachers' professional competence. Through systematic supervision activities, such as instructional planning assistance, classroom observation, constructive feedback, and follow-up coaching, teachers receive professional guidance that helps them enhance subject mastery, instructional strategies, classroom management skills, and the integration of technology into learning. Consistent and developmental supervision also encourages reflective practice and continuous professional growth among teachers. Consequently, schools that implement well-structured academic supervision programs are more likely to foster higher levels of teacher professionalism, which ultimately contributes to improved instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

**Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership Style and Academic Supervision on Teachers' Professional Competence**

Table 3 shows that the regression model produced an R-square value of 0.812, indicating that principal leadership style and academic supervision simultaneously contributed 81.2% to teachers' professional competence. The F-value of 315.762 with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05 indicates that the regression model was statistically significant.

**Table 3.** Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership Style and Academic Supervision on Teachers' Professional Competence

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Principal Leadership Style & Academic Supervision → Teachers' Professional Competence	0.901	0.812	315.762	0.000	Simultaneous significant influence (81.2%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that principal leadership style and academic supervision simultaneously have a strong and significant influence on teachers' professional competence. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.901 indicates a very strong positive relationship between the two independent variables and teachers' professional competence. Moreover, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.812 shows that 81.2% of the variance in teachers' professional competence can be explained jointly by principal leadership style and academic supervision, while the remaining 18.8% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. The F-value of 315.762 with a significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3), which states that principal leadership style and academic supervision simultaneously influence teachers' professional competence, is accepted.

These findings suggest that improving teachers' professional competence requires not only effective academic supervision but also supportive and effective leadership from school principals. Principals who demonstrate appropriate leadership styles can create a positive school climate, motivate teachers, encourage professional collaboration, and facilitate continuous professional development. At the same time, systematic academic supervision provides teachers with guidance, feedback, and opportunities for instructional improvement. The combination of strong leadership and effective supervision creates a synergistic effect that significantly enhances teachers' professional competence. Consequently, efforts to improve teacher professionalism in public elementary schools should focus on strengthening both leadership practices and academic supervision programs as complementary strategies for achieving higher educational quality.

## **Discussion**

### **Principal Leadership Style and Teachers' Professional Competence**

The findings of this study support Hypothesis 1, which states that principal leadership style significantly affects teachers' professional competence. The analysis revealed that principal leadership style contributed 75.0% to teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools in Patean District, Kendal Regency. The positive regression coefficient (0.821) indicates that the more effective the principal's leadership style, the higher the level of teachers' professional competence. This finding confirms that leadership practices play a strategic role in improving teachers' mastery of subject matter, instructional innovation, reflective practices, and technology integration in teaching and learning activities.

These findings are consistent with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring, motivating, and empowering organizational members to achieve higher performance and professional growth. According to Bernard M. Bass, transformational leaders influence followers through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence. In the educational context, principals who adopt transformational leadership behaviors are more capable of encouraging teachers to improve their instructional competence and professional commitment.

Previous empirical studies also support the findings of this research. (Mansuryah, 2026) found that effective principal leadership positively influences teacher professionalism and instructional quality in elementary schools. Similarly, Maghfiroh & Mahmudah (2025) concluded that principals who actively provide guidance, motivation, and participatory decision-making opportunities significantly improve teachers' professional competence. These findings indicate that leadership effectiveness is closely related to teachers' willingness to continuously develop their professional capacities.

The findings are further supported by Jackson & Marriott (2012), who emphasized that transformational school leadership positively affects teacher commitment, instructional improvement, and school effectiveness. Their studies demonstrated that principals who create collaborative school cultures and encourage teacher participation tend to produce more innovative and professionally competent teachers. This condition is highly relevant to the implementation of the independent curriculum in Indonesia, where teachers are expected to demonstrate creativity, adaptability, and technological literacy in classroom instruction.

Moreover, Hallinger (2011) explained that instructional leadership behaviors, such as monitoring instruction, supporting professional development, and providing constructive feedback, significantly contribute to teachers' professional growth. Principals who prioritize instructional leadership can create learning-oriented school climates that encourage teachers to continuously improve their pedagogical and professional skills.

The findings of this study also indicate that principal leadership becomes increasingly important in rural educational contexts such as Patean District, where disparities among civil servant teachers, PPPK teachers, honorary teachers, and driving teachers may influence teachers' motivation and professionalism. In such conditions, principals are required not only to function as administrators but also as motivators, mediators, and instructional leaders capable of fostering

collaboration and reducing professional gaps among teachers.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that strengthening principal leadership capacity is essential for improving teacher professionalism. Leadership development programs should therefore emphasize transformational and instructional leadership competencies, including communication skills, teacher empowerment, collaborative decision-making, emotional intelligence, and technology-based educational leadership. Through effective leadership practices, principals can establish positive school cultures that support sustainable professional development among teachers.

### **Academic Supervision and Teachers' Professional Competence**

The results of this study also support Hypothesis 2, which states that academic supervision significantly affects teachers' professional competence. The findings revealed that academic supervision contributed 70.9% to teachers' professional competence. The positive regression coefficient (0.798) indicates that better implementation of academic supervision leads to higher levels of teachers' professional competence. This finding demonstrates that supervision activities, including supervision planning, classroom observation, reflective discussion, and follow-up programs, are important mechanisms for improving teachers' instructional quality and professional development.

Theoretically, academic supervision is closely related to clinical supervision theory, which emphasizes professional assistance and continuous improvement in teaching practices. Cogan explained that supervision should not merely function as an administrative evaluation but rather as a collegial process that helps teachers identify instructional problems and improve classroom performance. Through constructive supervision, teachers receive feedback, guidance, and opportunities for reflective learning that contribute to professional growth.

The findings of this study are in line with research conducted by Said (2025), who found that effective academic supervision significantly improves teachers' competence and instructional effectiveness. Similarly, Longginus & Belan (2021) emphasized that supervision activities focused on professional dialogue, collaboration, and instructional reflection positively influence teachers' professional competence and instructional innovation.

Furthermore, Diana et al. (2025) and Karnati (2019) argued that developmental supervision encourages teachers to become reflective practitioners who continuously evaluate and improve their instructional practices. Teachers who receive consistent supervision support tend to demonstrate

greater confidence, stronger instructional skills, and higher commitment to professional learning (Concepcion & Labitad, 2024). This aligns with the current educational transformation in Indonesia, which requires teachers to adopt student-centered and technology-integrated learning approaches.

The findings also reveal several contextual issues related to academic supervision in public elementary schools in Patean District. Preliminary observations showed that although supervision programs had been formally planned, their implementation was often inconsistent and lacked systematic follow-up. In many cases, supervision was still perceived as an administrative obligation rather than a professional mentoring process. This condition may limit the effectiveness of supervision in improving teachers' competence and instructional practices.

From a practical standpoint, the findings imply that academic supervision should be redesigned as a collaborative and developmental process. Principals need to provide constructive feedback, encourage reflective discussion, and facilitate follow-up activities such as workshops, mentoring, and professional learning communities. In addition, supervision should focus not only on evaluating teachers' compliance with instructional procedures but also on supporting innovation, creativity, and technology integration in classroom learning.

### **Simultaneous Influence of Principal Leadership Style and Academic Supervision on Teachers' Professional Competence**

In line with Hypothesis 3, this study found that principal leadership style and academic supervision simultaneously had a significant positive effect on teachers' professional competence. The simultaneous regression analysis showed that both variables contributed 81.2% to teachers' professional competence, indicating a very strong influence. This finding suggests that effective leadership and well-implemented supervision complement one another in strengthening teachers' professionalism and instructional performance.

This result supports the Integrated Leadership and Instructional Improvement framework proposed by Hallinger (2011), which explains that leadership and supervision are interconnected components in improving school effectiveness and instructional quality. As stated by principals who combine strong leadership practices with continuous supervision are more capable of creating supportive school climates that encourage teacher development and instructional innovation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007)

The findings are also consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model proposed by Arnold Bakker and Demerouti (Tummers & Bakker, 2021), which states that organizational

resources such as leadership support and professional guidance help employees cope with work demands and improve performance outcomes. In the educational context, principal leadership and academic supervision function as institutional resources that strengthen teachers' motivation, confidence, and professional competence.

Several previous studies reinforce these findings. (Siagian et al., 2025; Yalçın et al., 2025; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) highlighted that school leadership and supervision collectively influence teacher professionalism when implemented consistently and collaboratively. Additionally, Kaso et al. (2021) explained that leadership effectiveness becomes more impactful when combined with instructional support systems such as supervision, mentoring, and professional learning communities.

The simultaneous influence identified in this study highlights the importance of integrated school improvement strategies. Improving teacher professionalism cannot rely solely on leadership or supervision independently; rather, both components must operate synergistically. Principals should therefore develop leadership practices that encourage participation, trust, and professional collaboration while simultaneously implementing supervision programs that are reflective, continuous, and focused on instructional improvement.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that principal leadership style and academic supervision are critical determinants of teachers' professional competence in elementary schools. These findings contribute theoretically to the literature on educational leadership and supervision while also providing practical implications for policymakers, school principals, and educational stakeholders in strengthening teacher professionalism and improving educational quality in Indonesia.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that principal leadership style and academic supervision play significant roles in enhancing teachers' professional competence in public elementary schools. Effective leadership and continuous academic supervision create a supportive environment that encourages teachers to improve their instructional skills, professional development, and adaptability to educational changes. The findings suggest that teacher professionalism is influenced not only by individual efforts but also by institutional support through strong leadership and well-implemented supervision. Therefore, schools should prioritize strengthening principals' leadership

capacity, improving the quality of academic supervision, and fostering a collaborative school culture as strategic efforts to enhance teacher professionalism and educational quality, particularly in rural educational contexts such as Patean District, Kendal Regency.

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