



The Effectiveness of Headmaster Communication in Improving Teacher Performance Motivation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Murtafaqo | Universitas PTIQ, Jakarta | Indonesia
Otong Surasman | Universitas PTIQ, Jakarta | Indonesia
EE Junaedi Sastradiharja | Universitas PTIQ, Jakarta | Indonesia
*Correspondence: murtafaqo72@gmail.com

Abstract

Communication is a fundamental element in educational leadership that plays a strategic role in shaping organizational culture and improving institutional performance. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of communication of school principals in increasing teacher performance motivation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Effective communication is seen as a strategic instrument in educational leadership because it plays a role in building mutual understanding, trust, and commitment to teachers' work. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research informants included school principals, senior teachers, and junior teachers of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah who were selected purposively. Data analysis was carried out with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing following the Miles and Huberman model. The results of the study show that open, persuasive, and participatory communication by school principals is able to increase teacher performance motivation, which is reflected in increasing discipline, responsibility, and quality of learning implementation. The communication patterns used include vertical and horizontal communication with a dialogical approach. In addition, effective interpersonal communication between principals and teachers contributes to creating a conducive and harmonious work climate. The findings of the study indicate that the frequency of communication, information openness, and responsiveness of school principals are positively correlated with the level of teachers' work motivation. This study concludes that the effectiveness of communication principals has a significant role in increasing teacher performance motivation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, which in turn has an impact on improving the quality of learning.

Keywords: Communication of school principals, motivation of teacher performance, educational leadership, madrasah ibtidaiyah, effectiveness of communication.

Received: November 11, 2025 | Revised: November 24, 2025 | Accepted: December 25, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the main foundation in the dynamics of educational organizations that determine the effectiveness of leadership and the quality of institutional performance (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In the context of educational institutions, communication functions as a means of information transmission, the formation of meaning, and the construction of an organizational culture that supports the achievement of educational goals.



The principal as the highest leader in the education unit has a strategic responsibility in managing organizational communication to ensure that all components of the school move synergistically towards the vision that has been set (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Teacher performance is a determining factor in determining the quality of education in schools. Various studies show that teacher quality contributes the most significant to student learning achievement compared to other factors such as infrastructure or curriculum (Hattie, 2009; Stronge et al., 2011). However, teacher performance is not solely determined by their professional competence, but is also influenced by motivational factors that encourage teachers to optimally actualize their potential. Teachers' work motivation is formed through complex interactions between internal factors such as self-actualization needs and external factors such as principal's leadership, organizational climate, and applied reward system (Toropova et al., 2021).

The leadership of the principal has a substantial influence on the motivation of teachers. Research by Leithwood et al. (2019) shows that the transformational leadership of principals characterized by the ability to communicate vision, provide inspiration, and create an environment that supports professional development is able to increase teachers' intrinsic motivation. Hallinger and Heck (2010) in their longitudinal study found that the leadership of the principal has an indirect effect on student achievement through the mediation of motivation and teacher performance. These findings underscore the importance of understanding the mechanisms by which principal leadership, particularly through communication, can drive teacher motivation.

In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, the complexity of the principal's leadership becomes higher because it has to integrate the goals of general education and Islamic religious education. Madrasah heads are not only required to have managerial competence and educational leadership in general, but must also be able to be role models in the practice of Islamic values and communicate the vision of Islamic education to all stakeholders (Fauzi & Muslim, 2015). This requires a more inclusive and spiritually nuanced communication pattern to touch the dimension of teachers' intrinsic motivation rooted in religious values.

Organizational communication in an educational setting has unique characteristics that distinguish it from communication in business organizations. DeVito (2019) identifies that effective communication in educational organizations requires a deep understanding of academic culture, educational values, and teacher professionalism. Principal's communication not only serves as an instrument of administrative coordination, but also as a means of forming a common vision, professional empowerment, and developing learning communities. Research by Tschannen-Moran (2014) shows that trust built through open and consistent communication between principals and teachers is a strong predictor for collaboration and performance of school organizations.

Various organizational communication models have been developed to explain the effectiveness of communication in improving the performance of organizational members. Shannon and Weaver (1949) proposed a mathematical model of communication that emphasized the importance of message clarity and noise minimization in the communication process. This model was later developed by Schramm (1954) who added an element of field of

experience to emphasize the importance of similarity of context between communicators and communicators. In the context of educational leadership, Sergiovanni (1992) proposed the concept of moral leadership that emphasizes the importance of communicating educational values and goals to build collective commitment.

Work motivation in the perspective of organizational psychology is understood as the psychological force that drives, directs, and maintains individual behavior in carrying out tasks to achieve certain goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The most influential motivation theory in the context of organizations is Self-Determination Theory which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation comes from the internal satisfaction that individuals feel when doing activities, while extrinsic motivation comes from external factors such as reward or punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In the context of education, teachers who are highly intrinsically motivated tend to show greater commitment to professional development and quality of learning.

Previous studies have identified various factors that affect teachers' work motivation. Jesus and Lens (2005) found that teachers' perceptions of organizational support, autonomy in teaching, and recognition of professional contributions are significant predictors of work motivation. Meanwhile, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) in their longitudinal study showed that the transformational leadership of school principals was positively correlated with teachers' collective self-efficacy and work motivation. However, there is still limited research that specifically explores the role of communication of school principals as mediators between leadership and teacher motivation, especially in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Indonesia.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of communication between school principals in increasing teacher performance motivation at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What is the communication pattern used by school principals in interacting with teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah? (2) How does the effectiveness of the principal's communication affect the motivation of teacher performance? (3) What factors support and hinder the effectiveness of communication of school principals? This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution in enriching the literature on educational leadership and organizational communication, as well as providing practical implications for improving the effectiveness of madrasah head leadership.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of communication between principals and teacher performance motivation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the subjective meanings, social contexts, and dynamics of interactions that occur in natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study is seen as appropriate because it focuses on an in-depth analysis of contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts with the boundaries between phenomena and contexts that are not entirely clear (Yin, 2018).

The research was carried out in three Madrasah Ibtidaiyah that were purposively selected with considerations: (1) having a minimum of B accreditation, (2) the principal has served for at least three years, and (3) showing the dynamics of organizational communication that can be observed. The selection of three cases is intended to allow cross-case analysis that can enrich the research findings (Stake, 2006). The research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with criteria: the incumbent principal, senior teachers with a minimum working period of five years, and junior teachers with a working period of less than five years. The total research informants were 15 people consisting of 3 principals, 6 senior teachers, and 6 junior teachers.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participatory observation was carried out for three months to observe the communication patterns of school principals in various situations such as teacher meetings, learning supervision, and informal interactions. The researcher used structured observation guidelines that included aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication, frequency of interaction, and teachers' responses to principals' communication. In-depth interviews are conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines that allow flexibility in information mining (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Each informant was interviewed at least twice with a duration of 60-90 minutes to ensure the depth and saturation of the data. Documentation is carried out on relevant documents such as school work programs, meeting minutes, and teacher performance data.

The data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014) which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction was carried out by encoding interview transcripts and field notes using thematic codes developed inductively from the data and deductive from the theoretical framework. Data presentation is carried out in the form of matrices, diagrams, and descriptive narratives to facilitate the understanding of patterns and relationships between themes. Conclusions are drawn in stages by comparing findings from different data sources and cases to identify consistent patterns and contextual variations.

The validity of the data is guaranteed through the application of four criteria of credibility of qualitative research according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is fulfilled through triangulation of data sources, triangulation of methods, and member checking. Transferability is guaranteed through thick descriptions that allow readers to assess the suitability of the findings with other contexts. Dependability is maintained through trail audits that document the entire research process. Confirmability is ensured through the researcher's reflexivity documenting positions, assumptions, and biases that may affect the interpretation of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication Pattern of School Principals at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

The results of the study identified three main communication patterns used by school principals in interacting with teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, namely formal-vertical communication, horizontal communication, and informal communication. Formal-vertical

communication occurs in structural contexts such as teacher council meetings, morning briefings, and academic supervision. In this type of communication, the principal conveys strategic information about policies, school programs, and performance targets. An effective principal not only delivers instruction in a directive manner, but also opens up a space for dialogue to get input and teachers' perspectives. This is in line with the findings of Hallinger and Heck (2010) which show that leadership that involves teachers in decision-making increases the sense of ownership and commitment to organizational goals.

Horizontal communication occurs in a collaborative context between principals and teachers as equal professionals. In this pattern, the principal positions himself as a colleague who together with the teacher seeks to improve the quality of learning. Horizontal communication occurs in professional forums such as lesson studies, internal workshops, and curriculum discussions. Effective principals actively listen to teachers' experiences and concerns, provide constructive feedback, and share good practices. This communication pattern creates a collaborative culture that encourages organizational learning as stated by Louis and Marks (1998) that schools that have a strong collaborative culture show better academic performance.

Informal communication is a communication pattern that occurs outside the formal structure of the organization in a social and personal context. Effective principals take advantage of informal moments such as breaks, school social events, or spontaneous conversations in the corridors to build a personal closeness with teachers. In this informal communication, the topic of conversation is not always directly related to work but also touches on aspects of the teacher's personal life such as family and hobbies. Informal communication plays an important role in building trust and rapport between principals and teachers. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) show that trust is the foundation for open communication and effective collaboration in school organizations.

The Effectiveness of Principal's Communication in Increasing Teacher Motivation

The findings of the study show that the effectiveness of communication by school principals has a significant effect on teachers' work motivation through several mechanisms. First, clear and consistent communication about the school's vision and goals helps teachers understand the meaning and importance of their work. When teachers understand how their contributions support a larger cause, they experience an increase in intrinsic motivation. This is consistent with the theory of Self-Determination which emphasizes that sense of purpose is a basic psychological need that affects intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The teachers interviewed stated that the principal who regularly communicated the school's vision and connected it to the teacher's daily tasks made them feel their work was meaningful and impactful.

Second, communication that is supportive and respects teachers' contributions increases motivation through meeting the need for recognition and appreciation. Effective principals consistently provide positive feedback, recognize teachers' achievements both privately and publicly, and celebrate shared success. Teachers reported that recognition from the principal, even as simple as a thank you or praise in front of their peers, provided an emotional energy

that encouraged them to continue improving performance. These findings are in line with research by Kelm and McIntosh (2012) which found that leadership recognition is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and teacher motivation.

Third, communication that opens up space for teacher participation in decision-making meets the need for autonomy and competence. Effective principals not only listen to teachers' input but also involve them in formulating solutions to school problems. Participation in decision-making makes teachers feel respected as professionals and increases their sense of control over their work. Research by Leithwood et al. (2019) shows that teachers who engage in shared leadership show higher organizational commitment and work motivation. Teachers in the study stated that when principals asked for their opinions and implemented their suggestions, they felt more invested in the school's success.

Fourth, communication that is responsive to teachers' needs and concerns creates psychological safety that supports risk-taking and innovation. Teachers reported that they were more motivated to try new learning methods when principals were open to experimentation, provided support when faced with difficulties, and saw failure as a learning opportunity rather than a punishment for mistakes. This is in line with the concept of psychological safety from Edmondson (1999) which shows that a psychologically safe work environment encourages learning and innovation. Effective principals create psychological safety through empathetic, non-judgmental communication, and focus on problem-solving rather than blame.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Communication Effectiveness

Research identified several factors that support the effectiveness of principals' communication. The first factor is the principal's communication competencies which include the ability to listen actively, empathize, and articulate clear messages. School principals who have high communication competence are able to adapt communication styles to the characteristics of the audience, choose the right time and place for important communication, and use various communication media effectively. The second factor is the organizational culture that supports open communication. Schools that have a culture of trust and high collaboration facilitate more effective communication because teachers feel safe to express their opinions and concerns. The third factor is the availability of time and opportunities for communication. Principals who allocate dedicated time to communication with teachers and create structures that facilitate regular interactions such as one-on-one meetings show higher communication effectiveness (Blase & Blase, 2000).

Meanwhile, several factors that hinder the effectiveness of communication were also identified. The first factor is the high administrative workload of the principal which reduces the time for substantive communication with teachers. Many principals admit that they are stuck in administrative routines so communication with teachers becomes limited and tends to be transactional. The second factor is the difference in perception and expectations between the principal and the teacher which can cause miscommunication. When principals and teachers have different understandings of priorities, performance standards, or effective ways of working, communication becomes less productive. The third factor is the limitation of

communication infrastructure such as adequate meeting rooms and communication technology. Some madrasas still face facility constraints that limit the frequency and quality of formal communication between principals and teachers.

The Impact of Effective Communication on Teacher Performance

The results of the study show that effective communication of school principals has a real impact on various dimensions of teacher performance. In terms of discipline, teachers in schools with effective communication with principals show a higher level of punctuality and attendance. They state that clear communication about expectations and communication that appreciates their contributions makes them feel bad if they are negligent. In terms of learning quality, supportive communication and providing constructive feedback encourage teachers to continue to improve their teaching practices. Teachers reported that discussions with principals about learning gave them new ideas and encouraged reflection on their practices. These findings are consistent with research by Day et al. (2016) which showed that effective instructional leadership, one of whose components is communication about learning, is positively correlated with the quality of teacher teaching.

In terms of professional collaboration, effective communication between principals also encourages collaboration between teachers. When principals consistently communicate the value of collaboration, facilitate practice sharing forums, and recognize collaborative contributions, the culture of knowledge sharing among teachers increases. Teachers are more open to observing peers' classes, sharing learning materials, and discussing teaching challenges. Research by Vangrieken et al. (2015) shows that teacher collaboration facilitated by school leadership has a positive impact on collective efficacy and student achievement. In terms of learning innovation, communication that creates psychological safety encourages teachers to experiment with new methods. Some teachers report that they try innovative learning approaches such as project-based learning or flipped classrooms because they feel supported by the principal through encouraging communication and provision of resources.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that communication of school principals has a very strategic role in increasing teacher performance motivation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The effectiveness of communication is not only determined by the frequency or intensity of communication, but rather on the quality of communication which includes message clarity, openness, responsiveness, and empathy. Principals who are able to synergistically integrate various formal, informal, vertical, and horizontal communication patterns create a communication ecology that supports teacher motivation and performance. Effective communication serves as a mechanism through which the principal's leadership is translated into motivation and concrete actions of teachers in improving the quality of learning.

The findings of the study show that the communication of school principals increases teacher motivation through four main mechanisms, namely giving meaning to work, recognition and reward, empowerment through participation, and the creation of psychological safety. These mechanisms work simultaneously to meet teachers' basic

psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness which are the foundations of intrinsic motivation according to Self-Determination Theory. Effective principals understand these needs and intentionally design their communications to meet those needs.

This research provides several practical implications for increasing the effectiveness of madrasah head leadership. First, the development of communication competencies of school principals needs to be a priority in the training and coaching program of school principals. The training program needs to cover not only the technical aspects of communication but also the development of soft skills such as empathy, active listening, and emotion management. Second, it is necessary to create an organizational structure and culture that facilitates effective communication such as scheduling regular one-on-one meetings, practice sharing forums, and two-way feedback mechanisms. Third, the administrative workload of school principals needs to be redesigned so that they have enough time for substantive communication with teachers. This can be done through delegating administrative tasks, utilizing technology, or adding administrative staff.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the findings. First, as qualitative research with a case study design, generalization of findings to different contexts needs to be done carefully. Second, this study only involved three madrasahs so that a wider variety of contexts has not been explored. Further research with a larger and diverse sample is needed to validate the findings. Third, this study focuses on the communication of principals as an independent variable, while in reality, leadership effectiveness is the product of the complex interaction of various factors. Further research that explores the interaction of communication with other factors such as organizational culture, school resources, and teacher characteristics will provide a more comprehensive understanding. Despite these limitations, this research makes an important contribution in enriching the literature on educational leadership and paving the way for more in-depth follow-up research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 130-141. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230010320082>
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: What do we know? *School Leadership & Management*, 34(5), 553-571. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2014.928680>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 221-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

- DeVito, J. A. (2019). *The interpersonal communication book* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
- Fauzi, A., & Muslim, A. (2015). Transformational leadership in Islamic schools: A study of madrasah principals in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 3(2), 145-160.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership & Management*, 30(2), 95-110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632431003663214>
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.
- Jesus, S. N., & Lens, W. (2005). An integrated model for the study of teacher motivation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 54(1), 119-134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2005.00199.x>
- Kelm, J. L., & McIntosh, K. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavior support on teacher self-efficacy. *Psychology in the Schools*, 49(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20624>
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Leithwood, K., Sun, J., & Schumacker, R. (2019). How school leadership influences student learning: A test of "The Four Paths Model". *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(4), 570-599. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19878772>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Louis, K. S., & Marks, H. M. (1998). Does professional community affect the classroom? Teachers' work and student experiences in restructuring schools. *American Journal of Education*, 106(4), 532-575. <https://doi.org/10.1086/444197>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2017). *Organizational behavior* (17th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. Jossey-Bass.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Motivated for teaching? Associations with school goal structure, teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 152-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.006>
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford Press.
- Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(4), 339-355. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111404241>

- Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2021). Teacher job satisfaction: The importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, 73(1), 71-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1705247>
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(4), 547-593. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070004547>
- Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., & Kyndt, E. (2015). Teacher collaboration: A systematic review. *Educational Research Review*, 15, 17-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.04.002>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.