

The influence of work motivation, school culture, and school literacy on the professional competence of elementary school principals in bodeh district, pemalang regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation (X1), school culture (X2), and school literacy (X3) on the professional competence of elementary school principals (Y) in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency. A quantitative causal approach was adopted using a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The results show that work motivation, school culture, and school literacy each significantly influence principals' professional competence, with respective contributions of 48.5%, 5.91%, and 42.0%. Simultaneously, the three variables explain 75.5% of the variance in principals' professional competence. These findings indicate that strengthening work motivation, school culture, and school literacy is essential for enhancing the professional competence of school principals. The study provides practical implications for educational stakeholders, suggesting that principal development programs should focus on motivating school leaders, fostering collaborative school culture, and promoting literacy-based initiatives to support effective and innovative school leadership. Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency was chosen as the research location because it has a representative number of elementary schools and a diverse range of teacher and principal characteristics, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of work motivation, school culture, school literacy, and principals' professional competence. In addition, the educational conditions in Bodeh District indicate a need for improving school leadership quality, making this study relevant for providing empirical insights useful for local education policy development.

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Introduction

Education serves as the foundation for shaping high-quality human resources that are competitive at the global level. Efforts to improve the quality of education require optimal school management. Educational management standards include planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision at the institutional to national levels to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of education. These provisions are regulated in PP No. 19 Tahun 2005 Bab 1 Pasal 9 concerning National Education Standards, which aim to support effective school administration.

School principals are not only responsible for teaching, but also for leading and directing schools to ensure that all educational resources are optimally utilized to achieve objectives and improve learning outcomes. As managers, administrators, academic supervisors, and instructional

leaders, principals act as the key drivers of educational quality improvement (Anjani & Dafit, 2024; Rahmiati et al., 2023; Mobonggi et al., 2022; Pujiastuti, 2022; Natalia et al., 2023).

According to the Perdirjen GTK tahun 2023, principals must demonstrate competencies in three main areas: personal, social, and professional. Personal competence includes self-reflection, prioritizing student interests, and maintaining emotional, spiritual, and moral integrity. Social competence is reflected in the ability to collaborate with communities and professional organizations to enhance educational quality. Meanwhile, professional competence includes the ability to develop learning visions and culture, lead student-centered instruction, and manage educational resources effectively, transparently, and accountably (Permendikdasmen No. 7 of 2025; Perdirjen GTK, 2023; Anwar, 2024; KSPSTK, 2024).

This competency model consists of five mastery levels, ranging from level 1 (understanding) to level 5 (expert), and is used as the basis for performance assessment, mapping, and continuous professional development of school principals. Additionally, it can be used for self-reflection and replaces previous regulations deemed no longer aligned with current leadership needs in the Merdeka Belajar (“Freedom to Learn”) era (Permendikbud, 2018; Perdirjen GTK, 2023; Mulyasa, 2022; Anwar, 2024).

The professional competence of school principals is reflected in three key indicators. First, the ability to apply student-centered instructional leadership by supporting innovative, collaborative, and participatory learning practices. Second, the ability to manage all school resources effectively, efficiently, transparently, and accountably to optimally achieve educational goals. Third, the capacity to formulate and implement an educational vision and foster a positive and sustainable learning culture within the school environment. These competencies serve as the fundamental basis for improving learning quality and achieving school success (Dimara, 2023; Ernawati et al., 2024; Fauziyah et al., 2023; Hatimah, 2024; Insani et al., 2022; Prastiko, 2024; Rusiadi et al., 2024; Ananda et al., 2023).

According to the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel Regulation No. 7327/B.B1/HK.03.01/2023, school principals are required to demonstrate competence in managing educational resources effectively, implementing student-centered leadership, and developing a sustainable vision and learning culture. These three indicators serve as benchmarks for principals' ability to lead and improve educational quality holistically and in the long term. These competencies are crucial to ensure that elementary schools can provide high-quality education. In addition to overseeing school operations, principals also act as instructional leaders who inspire, motivate, and optimize the potential of both students and educational personnel. However, in practice, many principals still face challenges in enhancing their professionalism, as indicated by weak managerial skills, low staff involvement, suboptimal school culture, and insufficient levels of literacy.

Table 1 Performance Assessment of School Principals

School Name	SD N 1 Pendowo	SD N 3 Pendowo	SD N 3 Kelangdepok	SD N 1 Muncang	SD 2 Muncang
Principals Performance Rating	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Organizational Performance Achievements	-	-	-	-	-

Source: School Principal E-Performance System (2025)

Based on the data in Table 1 regarding the School Principal Performance Assessment for 2025, all principals from the five educational institutions received a “good” performance rating. However, the column on organizational performance achievements was left blank, which means that the principals’ contribution to educational quality is not clearly reflected. This result indicates that the performance evaluation still focuses on administrative compliance rather than on actual professional competence.

Work motivation is a psychological condition that drives individuals to perform optimally, and in this study it is measured through five dimensions: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Utami, Istiatin & Mursito, 2024; Sari et al., 2024; Afandi, 2021). High work motivation is essential for school principals as it enhances commitment, responsibility, and the ability to make decisions and perform leadership duties professionally, thereby positively influencing school management and the quality of education

Table 2 Teachers' Initial Perception of the Principal's Competence

No	Factors	Freq.	Presentase (%)
1	Workload	16	36%
2	Work motivation	10	22%
3	School culture	8	18%
4	Work behavior	7	16%
5	Stakeholder support	4	9%
Total		45	100%

Source: Primary Data from Preliminary Observation (2025)

The results show that the most influential factor is workload at 36%, followed by work motivation at 22% and school culture at 18%. Work behavior and stakeholder support have smaller impacts at 16% and 9%, respectively. Overall, internal factors such as workload, motivation, and school culture play a more significant role in shaping work conditions than external support, indicating that efforts to improve performance should prioritize managing workload, boosting motivation, and fostering a positive school culture.

Tabel 3 Teachers' Initial Perception of the Principal's Work Motivation

No	Factors	Freq.	Percentage (%)
1	High workload	17	38%
2	Unfavorable work environment	13	29%
3	Inadequate work facilities	7	16%
4	Recognition and appreciation	5	11%
5	External support	5	7%
Total		45	100%

Source: Primary Data from Preliminary Observation (2025)

Based on the results, the most dominant factor affecting respondents' work conditions is high workload at 38%, followed by an unfavorable work environment at 29%. Inadequate work facilities ranks third at 16%, while recognition and appreciation and external support have smaller influences at 11% and 7%, respectively. Overall, the data indicate that internal factors such as workload and work environment are more significant than external support or incentives, suggesting that efforts to improve work conditions should focus on managing workload and enhancing the work environment.

School culture refers to the collective values, norms, habits, and systems embedded in the daily practices of the school environment. In this study, it is measured through three dimensions: the academic dimension, the social dimension, and the physical dimension. A well-established school culture facilitates principals in exercising effective leadership and managing the school in a professional manner. A positive school climate further strengthens their managerial, supervisory, and innovative capacities, thereby making a direct contribution to the enhancement of their professional competence (Liliedahl, 2021; Asriani, 2022; Taajarmo, 2023; Shaw, 2023).

Tabel 4 Teachers' Initial Perception of the Principal's School Culture

No	Factots	Freq	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of appreciation	15	33%
2	Lack of innovation	11	24%

3	Poor collaboration	9	20%
4	Lack of discipline	6	13%
5	Low work ethic	4	9%
Total		45	100%

Source: Primary Data from Preliminary Observation (2025)

The results indicate that the main factors inhibiting school culture are lack of appreciation for program success at 33%, lack of innovation and creativity at 24%, and poor collaboration at 20%. Lack of work discipline and low work ethic contribute less significantly, at 13% and 9%, respectively. Overall, the data suggest that internal cultural factors, especially recognition, innovation, and teamwork, play a major role in shaping a positive school culture. Efforts to improve school culture should focus on enhancing appreciation, fostering creativity, and strengthening collaboration among staff.

School literacy refers to the ability of school members to access, understand, and use information effectively to support learning and school management. In this study, it is measured through three dimensions: literacy habituation, literacy development, and literacy learning. Strong school literacy enables principals to make data-driven decisions and innovate, thereby strengthening their managerial and supervisory competence and enhancing their professional capability (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 of 2022; Aswita, 2022; Puspasari & Davit, 2021; Ilmi, Wulan & Wahyudin, 2021; Aryani & Punowo, 2023).

Tabel 5 Teachers' Initial Perception of School Literacy

No	Factots	Freq	Percentage (%)
1	Low participation of school literacy	16	36%
2	Inadequate literacy facilities	10	22%
3	Limited reading activities	8	18%
4	Limited reading materials	6	13%
5	Difficult access to literacy resource	5	11%
Total		45	100%

Source: Primary Data from Preliminary Observation (2025)

The results show that the main factors affecting school literacy, according to teachers, are low participation of the school community at 36%, inadequate literacy facilities at 22%, and limited reading activities at 18%. Limited reading materials and difficult access to literacy resources contribute less, at 13% and 11%, respectively. Overall, the data suggest that both participation and availability of literacy resources play a key role in developing a strong school literacy culture. Efforts to improve literacy should focus on increasing community involvement, providing adequate facilities, and expanding reading activities and resources.

Based on the research, the professional competence of elementary school principals is influenced by teacher work motivation, school culture, and school literacy. Major obstacles include high workload, lack of appreciation, unsupportive environment and facilities, low community participation, and limited literacy resources. This indicates that principals' competence is not yet fully optimal, making this study important to identify the key factors that contribute to improving principals' professionalism.

Mulang (2021) examined the influence of competence, work motivation, and learning environment on human resource performance in general; however, the study did not specifically address elementary school principals as the research subjects. In addition, the study did not include school culture and school literacy as factors that potentially affect professional competence. Therefore, there remains a research gap concerning the influence of work motivation, school culture, and school literacy on the professional competence of elementary school principals. This study contributes by expanding the examination of work motivation specifically to elementary school principals and integrating school culture and school literacy as determinants of professional competence, thereby providing new empirical evidence to support policy development and strategies for enhancing the professionalism of educational leadership in primary schools.

Fuadi (2023) examined the improvement of teachers' competence in developing school literacy through professional coaching using a cooperative approach at SMKN 1 Almubarkeya. The study revealed that professional coaching with a cooperative approach effectively enhanced teachers' ability to design and implement school literacy programs more optimally. This approach was considered successful in encouraging active teacher participation, strengthening collaboration, and promoting a literacy-oriented culture within the school environment. Although this study is relevant to the development of school literacy, its focus remains limited to improving teachers' competence at the vocational high school level and does not specifically address elementary school principals. Furthermore, the research does not explore the influence of work motivation or school culture as factors that may affect professional competence. Therefore, while this study can serve as an initial reference for school literacy development strategies, it does not directly address the relationship between work motivation, school culture, and the professional competence of elementary school principals.

The urgency of examining the influence of work motivation, school culture, and school literacy on principals' professional competence in Bodeh District lies in the strategic need to improve the quality of basic education through effective and innovative school leadership. The variation in schools' conditions regarding motivation, culture, and literacy highlights the importance of identifying the most dominant factor influencing principals' competence as instructional leaders. This study is aligned with national education policies, such as Merdeka Belajar and school literacy strengthening, and provides an evidence-based foundation for local authorities in designing coaching and training programs for school principals that match the actual needs in the field. Bodeh District in Pemalang Regency was selected as the research location due to its representative number of elementary schools and diverse characteristics of teachers and principals, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the variables reviewed. The existing educational conditions in the district indicate a necessity to improve the quality of school leadership. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to offer empirical insights that can support the development of local education policies and strategic efforts to enhance principals' professional competence through the strengthening of work motivation, school culture, and school literacy.

Based on the identified issues and the need to analyze how work motivation, school culture, and school literacy contribute to the improvement of principals professional competence in the context of elementary education development in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency, this study is conducted to answer the following questions: to what extent does work motivation influence the professional competence of elementary school principals; how does school culture affect their professional competence; to what extent does school literacy influence the professional competence of elementary school principals; and whether work motivation, school culture, and school literacy simultaneously influence the professional competence of elementary school principals in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency.

Accordingly, based on the explanation and research framework, the researcher formulates the following hypotheses: H1: work motivation influences the professional competence of elementary school principals; H2: school culture influences the professional competence of elementary school principals; H3: school literacy influences the professional competence of elementary school principals; and H4: work motivation, school culture, and school literacy simultaneously influence the professional competence of elementary school principals in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2019:65), the quantitative approach is a method based on positivism philosophy, which examines populations through data collection using research instruments, and the data processing is conducted statistically to test hypotheses. The type of research used is causal research, which aims to test theories, measure variables, and identify relationships or cause-and-effect among variables. The

population in this study consisted of teachers and educational personnel from 25 elementary schools in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency, totaling 243 individuals. The sample size of this study was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 150 individuals. The data collection method used in this research was a questionnaire. The sampling frame in this study consisted of the official list of active teachers and education personnel at elementary schools in Bodeh District, Pemalang Regency, for the 2024/2025 academic year, which was obtained directly from the administrative records of each school and verified through coordination with school principals to ensure accuracy and completeness.

According to Sugiyono (2024:219), a questionnaire consists of a series of written questions or statements presented to respondents to be answered according to their actual conditions. This instrument was used to obtain data related to work motivation, school culture, school literacy, and the professional competence of school principals. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis to illustrate the condition of each research variable, followed by assumption testing and hypothesis testing. The hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression, multiple linear regression and coefficient of determination analysis with the assistance of SPSS software to identify the influence relationships among variables. Classical assumption tests in regression aim to ensure the model is valid and the estimates are accurate. The normality test checks whether the residuals are normally distributed, the multicollinearity test examines high correlations among independent variables, the heteroscedasticity test ensures the residuals have constant variance, the autocorrelation test detects correlations among residuals over time, and the linearity test ensures a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Simple regression is used to analyze the influence of each independent variable, such as work motivation, school culture, or school literacy, on the professional competence of school principals individually. Meanwhile, multiple regression is used to examine the simultaneous effect of these three variables on professional competence, as well as to determine which variable contributes most dominantly. Both methods are chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between determining factors and the professional competence of school principals. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables can explain the dependent variable. In this study, R^2 indicates the percentage influence of work motivation, school culture, and school literacy on the professional competence of elementary school principals, making it essential for assessing the effectiveness of the regression model.

Result

Table 3 Simultaneous Test Results

ANOVA ^a						
		Sum of				
Model		squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64544.730	3	21514.910	36.282	.000
	Residual	86577.864	146	592.999		
	Total	151122.593	149			

A. Dependent variable: komp. Profesional

B. Predictors: (constant), Motivasi Kerja, Budaya Sekolah, Literasi Sekolah

Source : Primaty Data Processed by SPSS (2025)

The results of the calculation show that the significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, and the calculated F-value of $36.282 > F$ -table value of 2.67. This confirms the feasibility of the regression model and its ability to explain the correlation between the variables. The professional competence of elementary school principals is significantly influenced simultaneously by work motivation, school culture, and school literacy. Therefore, H4 is accepted and H0 is rejected, indicating that the

professional competence of elementary school principals is significantly affected by the three independent variables collectively.

Table 4. Coefficient Determination Test Results

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.654 ^a	.427	.415	24.352	

a. Predictors: (Constant), X3 : Literasi Sekolah, X1 : Motivasi Kerja, X2 : Budaya Sekolah

b. Dependent Variable: Y : Kompetensi Profesional

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on Table 4, work motivation, school culture, and school literacy contribute 42.7% to the professional competence of elementary school principals, with an R^2 value of 0.427. This indicates that the remaining 57.3% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that all three variables have a simultaneous effect on principal competence, meaning that hypothesis 4 (H_4) is accepted.

Table 5. Partial Test Results

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
1	(constant)	-16.141	10.156		-1.589
	X1	.266	.040	.452	7.207
	X2	.357	.068	.331	5.268
	X3	.370	.060	.387	6.153

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

The partial test results show that work motivation (X1) has a t -value of 7.207 > t -table value of 0.1655, with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. This indicates that work motivation significantly influences the professional competence of elementary school principals. Therefore, H_1 is accepted. School culture (X2) has a t -value of 5.268, > t -table value of 0.1655, with a significance value of 0.000. This demonstrates that school culture also significantly influences the professional competence of elementary school principals. Thus, H_2 is accepted. School literacy (X3) has a t -value of 6.153, > t -table value of 0.1655, with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. Accordingly, H_3 is accepted.

Table 6. Regression Simple Test of Variable X1 on Y Results

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	49.796	6.647		7.491
	X1 : Motivasi Kerja	.272	.047	.430	5.791

a. Dependent Variable: Y : Kompetensi Profesional

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on Table 6, it is known that the constant value (a) of the Professional Competence variable (Y) is 49.796. The coefficient value of X1 is 0.272, which means that there is a positive relationship between work motivation and the professional competence of elementary school principals. Therefore, H_1 is accepted.

Tabel 7 Coefficients Of Determinant Test of Variable X1 on Y

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.430 ^a	.485	.480	.961413807151738

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on tabel 7, presented in the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.430, indicating a moderate relationship between work motivation and the professional competence of primary school principals. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.485, meaning that 48.5% of the variation in professional competence is explained by work motivation, while the remaining 51.5% is influenced by other variables outside the model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.480 suggests that the regression model is sufficiently stable and reliable for prediction. In addition, the Standard Error of the Estimate of 0.961 indicates that the prediction error of the model is relatively low

Table 8. Results of Simple Linear Regression Test of Variable X2 on Y

Coefficients ^a					
Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	56.574	7.973		7.096	.000
X2 : Budaya Sekolah	.326	.084	.302	3.857	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y : Kompetensi Profesional

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on Table 8, it is known that the constant value (a) of the Professional Competence variable (Y) is 56.574. The coefficient value of X2 is 0.326, which means that there is a positive relationship between school culture and the professional competence of elementary school principals. Therefore, H₂ is accepted.

Tabel 9 Coefficients Of Determinant Test of Variable X2 on Y

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.301 ^a	.591	.585	1.01567600843325

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on tabel 9 in the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.301, indicating a low relationship between school culture (X2) and the professional competence of primary school principals (Y). The R Square value of 0.591 means that 59.1% of the variation in professional competence is explained by school culture, while the remaining 40.9% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.585 indicates that the regression model is stable and appropriate to be used for prediction. Furthermore, the Standard Error of the Estimate of 1.016 shows that the prediction error of the model is relatively small and still acceptable.

Table 10. Results of Simple Linear Regression Test of Variable X3 on Y

Coefficients ^a					
Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	57.256	6.863		8.343	.000
X3 : Literasi Sekolah	.329	.074	.344	4.452	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y : Kompetensi Profesional

Based on Table 10, it is known that the constant value (a) of the Professional Competence variable (Y) is 57.256. The coefficient value of X2 is 0.329, which means that there is a positive relationship between school culture and the professional competence of elementary school principals. Therefore, H₃ is accepted.

Tabel 11 Coefficients Of Determinant Test of Variable X2 on Y

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.346 ^a	.420	.414	.999313952699603

a. Predictors: (Constant), X3

Source: Processed Data from SPSS (2025)

Based on the simple regression analysis in the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.346, indicating a low to moderate relationship between school literacy (X3) and the professional competence of primary school principals (Y). The R Square value of 0.420 means that 42.0% of the variation in professional competence is explained by school literacy, while the remaining 58.0% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.414 indicates that the regression model is fairly stable and moderately suitable for predicting the dependent variable. Furthermore, the Standard Error of the Estimate of 0.999 shows that the prediction error of the model is relatively small and still acceptable.

Discussion

The Influence of Work Motivation (X1) on the Professional Competence of Elementary School Principals (Y)

The results of the study indicate that work motivation (X₁) has a positive and significant influence on the professional competence of elementary school principals, with a regression coefficient of 0.272 and a significance value of 0.000. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.485 shows that 48.5% of the variation in professional competence is explained by work motivation, while the remaining 51.5% is influenced by other factors not included in the model, such as leadership style, academic supervision, work experience, or work environment. These findings confirm that work motivation is a relatively dominant internal factor in enhancing principals' professional competence.

In practical terms, improving the professional competence of school principals can be achieved by strengthening their work motivation through strategies such as performance-based incentives, continuous professional development opportunities, and establishing a supportive and collaborative work environment. Future studies are recommended to further investigate the remaining 51.5% of influencing factors, such as leadership characteristics or organizational culture, and to employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into how motivation contributes to educational leadership practices.

The Influence of School Culture (X2) on the Professional Competence of Elementary School Principals (Y)

The results of the simple linear regression analysis in Table 8 show that the constant (a) for the professional competence variable (Y) is 56.574. The regression coefficient of school culture (X₂) is 0.326, meaning that an improvement of one unit in school culture leads to an increase of 0.326 units in principals' professional competence. The t-value of 3.857 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirms that school culture has a significant positive effect on professional competence. Therefore, hypothesis H₂ is accepted. Based on Table 9, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.301, indicating a low relationship between school culture and professional competence. However, the R Square value of 0.591 shows that 59.1% of the variability in professional competence is explained by school culture, while the remaining 40.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The Adjusted R Square of 0.585 demonstrates that the model is stable and reliable, with an acceptable prediction error reflected by a Standard Error of 1.016.

Practical implications suggest that enhancing the professional competence of principals can be achieved by strengthening school culture through collaborative practices, establishing shared values, and fostering a positive work climate. This may include encouraging open communication, building trust among school stakeholders, and implementing consistent school norms. For future research, it is recommended to explore other factors contributing to the remaining 40.9%, such as leadership style, work environment, supervision quality, or organizational commitment. Researchers are also encouraged to employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insight into how school culture influences leadership performance in real school settings.

The Influence of School Literacy (X3) on the Professional Competence of Elementary School Principals (Y)

The results of the simple linear regression analysis in Table 10 reveal that the constant value (a) of the professional competence variable (Y) is 57.256. The regression coefficient for school literacy (X_3) is 0.329, indicating that a one-unit increase in school literacy leads to an increase of 0.329 units in the professional competence of elementary school principals. The t-value of 4.452 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirms that school literacy has a significant positive effect on professional competence. Thus, hypothesis H_3 is accepted. Based on Table 11, the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.346 indicates a low to moderate relationship between school literacy and principals' professional competence. The R Square value of 0.420 shows that 42.0% of the variation in professional competence is explained by school literacy, while the remaining 58.0% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The Adjusted R Square of 0.414 confirms that the regression model is moderately stable, with an acceptable prediction error as shown by a Standard Error of 0.999.

Practical implications suggest that efforts to improve principals' professional competence can be supported by strengthening school literacy practices, such as developing a literacy-friendly environment, increasing access to learning resources, and integrating literacy programs into school culture and leadership policies. Encouraging principals to model literacy behavior, engage in continuous learning, and facilitate literacy-based initiatives may further enhance their competence. Future research is recommended to investigate the remaining 58.0% of influencing factors, which may include leadership effectiveness, digital literacy, professional development experience, or stakeholder engagement. The use of qualitative or mixed-method approaches is also suggested to obtain deeper insights into how literacy practices contribute to leadership performance within educational settings.

The Influence of Work Motivation (X1), School Culture (X2), and School Literacy (X3) on the Professional Competence of Elementary School Principals

The simultaneous test results a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the threshold of 0.05, and an F-calculated value of 36.282, which exceeds the F-table value of 2.67. These results indicate that the regression model is feasible and that work motivation, school culture, and school literacy collectively have a significant effect on the professional competence of elementary school principals. Accordingly, hypothesis H_4 is accepted and H_0 is rejected, confirming that the three independent variables simultaneously influence principals' professional competence. Furthermore, as shown in Table 4, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.427, meaning that 42.7% of the variation in professional competence is explained jointly by work motivation, school culture, and school literacy, while the remaining 57.3% is affected by other factors not included in this study, such as leadership style, managerial skills, training experience, or policy implementation.

Implications of these findings emphasize the importance of integrating motivational strategies, strengthening school culture, and promoting literacy-oriented programs as part of leadership development initiatives for school principals. Educational policymakers and stakeholders are encouraged to design targeted interventions that enhance intrinsic motivation, foster a collaborative and value-driven school environment, and support literacy practices embedded in school leadership. Future research is recommended to explore the remaining 57.3% by expanding

the model with additional variables such as instructional leadership, professional development engagement, or organizational support and by considering qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing principals' professional competence.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that work motivation, school culture, and school literacy each have a positive and significant effect on the professional competence of elementary school principals, both individually and simultaneously. These results emphasize the importance of strengthening internal factors and school-based practices to improve principal performance. Practical implications include implementing strategies to enhance principals' motivation through performance-based rewards and continuous professional development, fostering a positive and collaborative school culture built on shared values and communication, and promoting literacy programs that support instructional leadership and lifelong learning. These efforts are expected to contribute to sustainable improvement in school leadership quality.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the variables explored by incorporating factors such as leadership style, academic supervision, organizational support, or digital literacy that may influence principals' competence. Researchers are also encouraged to employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insight into the mechanisms behind these influences, allowing for more comprehensive and context-based understanding of professional competence development in educational leadership.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers and Educational Staff

Teachers and staff, as key members of the school community, are encouraged to actively contribute to fostering a cooperative and supportive work environment. In addition to applying their knowledge, they should collaborate with educators and school administrators to build an environment where professionalism, excellence, and mutual respect are valued.

Recommendations for Elementary School Principals

Principals are advised to enhance work motivation and commitment by providing recognition, fostering responsibility, and creating a supportive work environment, while serving as role models of work ethic and discipline. They can strengthen school culture by promoting collaboration, discipline, and open communication through routine activities such as assemblies, academic discussions, and reflective sessions. Additionally, principals should advance literacy by implementing regular reading programs, establishing corner libraries, and integrating digital technology into learning, thereby reinforcing a literacy-focused culture and enhancing their professional competence in managing an innovative, knowledge-based school.

Recommendations for Futur Research

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope of variables by including factors such as pedagogical or managerial leadership, teacher collaboration, or school resources. Additionally, employing qualitative or mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insights into how work motivation, school culture, and literacy practices interact to influence principals' professional competence, offering a more comprehensive understanding of effective school leadership.

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