



## STRATEGIC INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL THROUGH LANGUAGE IN ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

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### ABSTRACT

Teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in improving education quality, especially in madrasahs with unique cultural and organizational characteristics. This study explores the strategic instructional leadership of the principal at MTs Al-Wasliyah Deli Serdang, focusing on the use of language as a key tool to enhance teacher professionalism. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and students. The results show that the principal employed several language-driven leadership strategies, such as modeling professional communication, conducting supervision with constructive feedback, facilitating professional dialogue, and providing motivation through verbal encouragement and training. These strategies helped improve teacher competence and fostered a collaborative school culture. Challenges included low teacher motivation, heavy administrative tasks, limited resources, and lack of external support. To overcome these, the principal used a collaborative and adaptive leadership style, emphasizing effective use of language to inspire, communicate goals, and strengthen relationships. In conclusion, language-based instructional leadership is essential in shaping teacher professionalism. The strategic use of language enables principals to guide, support, and empower teachers, ultimately contributing to a more effective and supportive learning environment in madrasahs.

***Keywords: Instructional Leadership; Language; Teacher Professionalism; Instructional Leadership Strategies***

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic era of globalization, the demand for quality education continues to rise. Twenty-first-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration are essential to face global challenges (Zubaidah, 2020; Saimon et al., 2023; Suyitno et al., 2021; Sari & Wardhani, 2020). These demands have triggered comprehensive transformations in educational systems worldwide. In this context, teacher professionalism becomes a key factor in improving education quality (Faizah & Kinasih, 2024; Sach, 2016; Taqorub et al., 2018). Professional teachers are capable of creating effective learning environments, fostering student motivation, and optimizing student

potential (Indicators, 2019). One critical factor contributing to teacher professionalism is the instructional leadership of school principals, particularly through the strategic use of language in communication, supervision, and motivation (Werdiningsih et al., 2023; Kartini et al., 2020).

Instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing teacher professionalism (Roja & Salim, 2023; Ainscow, 2020). In countries like the United States and Australia, principals focus on professional development through language-based strategies such as feedback, dialogue, and reflective communication to improve instructional quality (Leithwood et al., 2020). Collaborative leadership, where principals and teachers jointly design language-centered

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development programs, has proven effective in increasing teacher motivation and performance, with positive impacts on student learning (Lukita et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, especially within religious-based institutions like Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), principals are expected to lead not only administratively but also as instructional leaders who inspire through effective use of pedagogical and motivational language (Rohman & Asrori, 2022). Leaders who apply structured and constructive verbal communication contribute significantly to building an environment that supports professional growth (Megawati et al., 2021; Jaya et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, various challenges persist in implementing instructional leadership strategies, such as teacher demotivation, limited access to training, and minimal resource availability. These obstacles often lead to uncondusive environments and hinder teacher development (Hidayah et al., 2024; Jaya et al., 2025a). Addressing these issues requires principals to use language strategically not only to supervise but also to inspire, negotiate, and build trust.

Research on instructional leadership strategies, particularly those that utilize language as a leadership tool, is therefore crucial. This aligns with Hallinger and Heck (2015) framework, which emphasizes that principals must: (1) define the school's mission with clear and communicable goals, (2) manage instructional programs through continuous verbal feedback and evaluation, and (3) create a positive academic climate by empowering teachers through supportive dialogue and recognition.

This study aims to answer the question: "What instructional leadership strategies are implemented by the principal of MTs Al-Wasliyah Deli Serdang to enhance teacher professionalism through language?" MTs Al-Wasliyah was selected due to its strong commitment to instructional innovation and teacher development,

supported by community involvement. This research is expected to contribute meaningfully to the development of language-informed instructional leadership practices in madrasahs and enhance teacher professionalism, ultimately improving the quality of religious-based education in Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

### *Research Design*

This study employs a qualitative research design with an ethnographic approach to explore in-depth how the principal at one of the Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al Wasliyah in Deli Serdang implements instructional leadership strategies. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2019), ethnographic research seeks to describe the social dynamics of a group through both oral and written findings. This study specifically emphasizes how language is used strategically by the school principal in supervision, coaching, motivation, and training to enhance teacher professionalism (Irawan et al., 2020). The ethnographic approach allows the researcher to observe and interpret how leadership practices are communicated, especially through verbal language interactions, linguistic cues, and discourse styles employed by the principal in engaging with teachers.

### *Research Subjects*

This study involves one school principal with at least two years of experience, 3–5 teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching, and three students from different grade levels selected for their academic performance and activeness. Participants are chosen purposively to ensure diverse perspectives based on gender, social background, and academic level. All informants participate voluntarily, with informed consent, and the research upholds ethical standards by ensuring data

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confidentiality and protecting participant rights.

**Data Collection Techniques**

## 1) Observation

The researcher conducts non-participatory observation to identify instructional leadership strategies used by the principal (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Focus is placed on observing language use in professional contexts, such as how the principal communicates feedback, gives instructions, and provides encouragement to teachers. Observations take place over two weeks, with the researcher present 15 minutes before learning sessions to monitor interactions.

## 2) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted to gather in-depth data (Sugiyono, 2021). Interviews with the principal occur once or twice a week, focusing on how leadership is communicated linguistically. Teacher interviews are conducted in an informal setting to ensure openness and comfort. Student interviews are administered via Google Forms, allowing students to respond freely and reflectively on their perceptions of the principal's language use and leadership style.

## 3) Documentation

The researcher collects various documents (Miles & Huberman, 2019), including:

- School Strategic Plan (SSP)
- Lesson Plans (RPP)
- Teacher manuals
- School profiles

These documents are used to cross-check the instructional and linguistic strategies communicated by the principal.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is conducted using a thematic coding approach. The steps include:

- 1) Organizing all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents into a unified dataset.
- 2) Identifying language-related themes, such as types of feedback, motivational discourse, and directive language patterns used by the principal.
- 3) Iteratively coding the data and interpreting emerging patterns.
- 4) Holding analyst discussions to clarify interpretations and avoid bias.

Conducting triangulation between observations, interviews, and documentation to strengthen the credibility and linguistic validity of the findings.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students, supported by field observations and documentation, a number of findings were identified that explain how instructional leadership strategies are implemented by the principal in efforts to enhance teacher professionalism. The analysis reveals that the principal not only fulfills administrative duties but also takes on the role of an active, exemplary, and inspiring instructional leader. The strategies employed encompass various approaches, including role modeling, supervision, professional coaching, and support for teacher capacity development. From the research findings, four main themes emerged (a) The Principal's Role Modeling as the Foundation of Instructional Leadership, (b) Supervision and Monitoring of Learning Activities, (c) Professional Dialogue Space as a Medium for Teacher Collaboration, (d) The Principal's Support for the Development of Teacher Professionalism. Each of these findings is discussed as follows:

***The Principal's Role Modeling as the Foundation of Instructional Leadership***

Role modeling is a key element of effective instructional leadership. At MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang, the principal's

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exemplary conduct serves as a vital foundation for fostering a professional work culture, building trust, and establishing harmonious relationships between school leaders and educators. Based on interviews and observations, the principal not only delivers instructions and policies but is also actively involved in daily activities that reflect values such as discipline, care, and a strong commitment to the quality of education.

In the researcher's observations, the principal consistently arrives earlier than the teachers, greets students one by one at the school gate, and enters classrooms to greet or motivate students and teachers. The principal's presence is not merely symbolic but represents a genuine involvement in the educational process. This was confirmed by one of the teachers: *"Our principal arrives early in the morning and goes straight into the classroom. Sometimes she teaches, and sometimes she just sits and observes. But we feel that it's a sign of her concern for our teaching process."* (Teacher M)

Another teacher shared that the principal's friendly, approachable demeanor and openness to discussion make the teachers feel appreciated and motivated. The role modeling in communication also significantly influences the school's working climate. As expressed by Teacher H: *"She always arrives on time and never scolds anyone in public. If something goes wrong, she will call us in privately and talk kindly. That makes us feel comfortable and not pressured."* (Teacher H)

This role modeling aligns with the first dimension in Hallinger and Heck (2015) instructional leadership model defining the school mission in which the leader instills core institutional values through concrete actions, not just vision statements. Additionally, Malik et al. (2020) emphasizes that effective leaders are those who consistently model the professional values they wish to see implemented in the school.

In this context, the principal's role

modeling not only fosters respect among teachers and students but also motivates teachers to reflect on their commitment to their educational duties. Even students acknowledge the principal as a calm and approachable figure. One student shared: *"The principal is punctual, kind, friendly, and often enters the classroom to greet us. When the teachers see this, they become more enthusiastic in teaching..."* (Students Z and A)

From these findings, it is evident that role modeling is not merely symbolic it serves as a strategic and effective tool in building a healthy, harmonious, and competitive learning environment. A principal who is able to serve as a role model will more easily inspire teachers to improve their professionalism and the overall quality of learning on an ongoing basis.

***Supervision and Monitoring of Learning Activities***

One of the key dimensions of instructional leadership is the principal's direct involvement in supervising and monitoring the implementation of learning activities. At MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang, the principal acts not only as an administrator but also as an active academic supervisor who observes, evaluates, and guides teachers in the teaching and learning process. The supervision conducted by the principal goes beyond checking teaching administration it also includes direct classroom observations. The principal regularly visits classrooms to see how teachers deliver material, how students respond, and how the classroom environment is managed. These observations are conducted in a planned manner each semester and occasionally on a spontaneous basis to capture the natural dynamics of learning.

This supervision activity is complemented by document analysis of teaching tools, such as Lesson Plans (RPP),

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teaching journals, and records of student learning outcomes. After conducting classroom observations and evaluating documents, the principal invites the respective teacher for a reflection forum, either individually or in groups. These forums aim to provide feedback, assess the teaching approaches used, and collaboratively plan improvements. In an interview, the principal emphasized that the purpose of supervision is not merely to control but to continuously foster teacher development. She stated: “...*I don't want teachers to always feel they are being watched. I want them to feel supported. When I enter the classroom or check their documents, it's not to find faults, but to find areas we can improve together...*” (Principal)

This statement illustrates the humanistic and constructive approach adopted by the principal in carrying out supervisory duties. The supervision is conducted in a spirit of partnership, not judgment. Teachers are not left to work alone but are guided and supported to conduct effective, innovative, and engaging learning for students.

Monitoring also takes the form of informal weekly evaluations, where teachers can discuss class progress, learning obstacles, and student achievements. These evaluations are not only administrative but also serve as tools to identify learning issues and design relevant solutions. The principal turns the staffroom into a space for open dialogue, where teachers feel safe to share challenges and ideas without fear of being judged. In addition, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted during the “rembu guru” forum at the end of each semester. In this forum, teachers are asked to reflect on student learning outcomes, attendance and participation levels, and the effectiveness of the methods used. The principal then compiles a recap report from the supervision results to form the basis for planning future teacher training, mentoring, and task assignments.

Conceptually, the supervision strategy implemented by the principal aligns with Rusdarti et al. (2021) instructional leadership model, particularly in the dimension of managing the instructional program, where educational leaders are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is effectively implemented, learning activities meet their goals, and teachers are supported throughout the process. Moreover, this type of supervision also reflects a professional coaching approach, as explained by Irawan et al. (2020), who asserts that supervision is not merely a formality of control but a systemic form of mentoring for continuous improvement. Based on field observations, the supervision carried out by the principal at MTs Al-Washliyah also encourages the development of a reflective work culture. Teachers become more open to feedback and more willing to self-evaluate because the supervision process is conducted with respect. This creates an atmosphere that prioritizes not just administrative compliance but also meaningful pedagogical improvement.

Thus, it can be concluded that the supervision and monitoring carried out by the principal not only lead to technical improvements in teacher performance but also strengthen a healthy professional relationship between leadership and teachers. Meaningful supervision plays a vital role in building a participative and high-quality learning culture.

***Professional Dialogue Spaces as a Medium for Teacher Collaboration***

Professional dialogue spaces are one of the key aspects in building a collaborative school culture focused on improving the quality of learning. At MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang, the principal does not merely regard teachers as policy implementers but as active partners in making pedagogical decisions. This is realized through the establishment of regular discussion forums, both formal and informal, where teachers are

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given the opportunity to express their opinions, challenges, and ideas for improving instruction.

The principal consistently holds monthly meetings called the forum rembuk guru (teacher deliberation forum). In these forums, teachers discuss learning achievements, teaching strategies used, and the obstacles they face in the classroom. As expressed by Teacher A: *"...This forum is held once a month. The principal opens a Q&A session where teachers can express their concerns and teaching obstacles in the classroom. I think this is an important step in enhancing our professionalism..."* (Teacher A)

The atmosphere in these forums is generally open and supportive. The principal serves as a facilitator rather than a sole evaluator. Teachers are encouraged to share their experiences even failures with the purpose of mutual learning and collective growth.

In addition to the monthly forum, there are also internal MGMP (Subject Teacher Working Group) activities initiated by the principal, which serve as a medium for improving subject-specific competencies. These MGMP sessions allow teachers of the same subject to discuss syllabi, instructional methods, assessment strategies, and appropriate teaching media. These meetings enable teachers to adapt materials to student needs and align teaching practices across classrooms, achieving standardization without sacrificing individual creativity.

Beyond formal forums, the principal also fosters a culture of informal discussions in the teachers' lounge or during teaching breaks. In these moments, professional dialogue continues even in a relaxed setting. This shows that professional dialogue is not just a structural routine but has become part of the school's living work culture. As shared by Teacher S: *"Usually after training, the attending teacher is required to share and talk about the experience in our forum. But it's not like a rigid presentation, more like a*

*relaxed discussion, asking questions, and comparing methods. So, we feel like we're learning together."* (Teacher S)

This practice encourages horizontal knowledge sharing among teachers. Instead of relying solely on external training that not all teachers can access, this school maximizes its internal potential through a peer-learning approach. Teachers who attend training share their knowledge with their colleagues so that the entire teaching team benefits equally. This reflects a distributed leadership approach, in which leadership is strategically distributed among members of the teaching team.

According to the theory put forward by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), structured and continuous professional dialogue is one of the indicators of a working environment that supports teachers' professional development. Healthy professional interactions enhance teachers' confidence, strengthen collegial ties, and create a continuous reflection cycle essential for quality instruction. This also aligns with the principles of instructional leadership, particularly the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate as described by .

Observational findings confirm that these dialogue spaces have a tangible impact on teachers' working patterns. Teachers become more open to feedback, more critical in evaluating their own practices, and more willing to make independent improvements. Furthermore, the collaboration nurtured through these forums encourages instructional innovations aligned with student needs. Teachers no longer work in isolation but as part of a professional community that strengthens one another.

In conclusion, the creation of professional dialogue spaces by the principal is not merely an administrative strategy, but a transformative effort to build a strong learning community. Active, reflective, and collaborative dialogue becomes a crucial foundation in shaping professional, adaptive

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teachers who continue to grow in response to the dynamics of education.

***The Principal's Support for Teachers' Professional Development***

The professional development of teachers is not solely determined by individual willingness, but is heavily influenced by systemic support within the work environment, particularly from educational leaders. At MTs Al-Wasliyah Deli Serdang, the principal plays a central role in creating a productive, open, and sustainable ecosystem for teacher development. The support provided encompasses administrative, academic, and psychosocial aspects, all of which directly impact the capacity building and motivation of teachers.

One of the most tangible forms of support offered by the principal is facilitating access to training and competency enhancement activities. Teachers are given opportunities to attend training programs, seminars, and workshops, both internally organized by the school and externally held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, education departments, or professional training institutions. The principal does not merely approve teacher participation but actively seeks information, provides recommendations, and even covers transportation or administrative costs whenever possible. As noted by Teacher Y: *"She opens opportunities for us, for example, if there is information about training, she makes it available for all teachers, anyone who wants to attend. Sometimes she even covers our transportation or administrative costs. Also, if we want to pursue higher education, she gives permission."* (Teacher Y)

Moreover, the principal is highly supportive of teachers who are pursuing further education. This support goes beyond formal permissions and includes flexible teaching schedules to help teachers manage their academic and teaching responsibilities.

This approach demonstrates that the principal considers individual teacher development an integral part of the school's strategy for improving the overall quality of education.

Support is also provided in the form of improved teaching facilities that enhance the teaching and learning process. Equally important is the psychological and emotional support. The principal fosters a warm, open, and supportive work environment. Teachers feel valued, heard, and not judged when they make mistakes. This work culture encourages teachers to continue learning without fear or pressure. In this context, the principal acts not only as a manager but also as a mentor and motivator.

Recognizing teacher achievements is another strategy used to boost professional enthusiasm. Teachers who demonstrate improved performance, actively participate in school activities, or successfully complete training are often acknowledged during staff meetings or entrusted with additional responsibilities. Though simple, this form of appreciation serves as a powerful motivator for enhancing work commitment.

This approach aligns with the ideas of Ceballos et al. (2020) on the importance of professional capital in education, wherein teachers are not merely technical workers, but professionals who need to be empowered intellectually, socially, and morally. Supporting teacher development is not merely an administrative duty, but a long-term investment in building institutional quality.

More broadly, this support reflects the implementation of the promoting a positive school learning climate dimension in Rusdarti et al. (2021) instructional leadership framework. School or madrasah leaders are expected to create a working environment that supports learning, strengthens teamwork, and provides resources for staff development. In this case, MTs Al-Wasliyah Deli Serdang has demonstrated real practices in line with this dimension through the principal's active involvement in strengthening teacher

capacity.

Based on observations, it can be concluded that the support provided by the principal is not temporary but rather continuous and structured. Teachers are encouraged to keep progressing within a supportive and respectful work environment. In such a context, the principal acts as a driver of professionalism, focusing not only on outcomes but also on the meaningful process of each teacher’s growth. Thus, the principal’s strategies do not only strengthen individual professionalism but also foster the development of a collective learning community that is dynamic and adaptive to contemporary challenges. This kind of working environment is essential for madrasahs to deliver quality education that is both competitive and value-driven.

**Table 1.** Instructional Leadership Strategies of the Principal

| No | Strategic Aspect      | Forms of Implementation  |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1  | Modeling              | Leading by example in discipline, building positive relationships with teachers        |
| 2  | Monitoring            | Classroom observations, lesson plan evaluations  |
| 3  | Professional Dialogue | Monthly teacher discussion forums, workshops, internal subject teacher meetings (MGMP) |
| 4  | Developmental Support | Access to training, permission for further studies                                     |

From the students’ perspective, the head of the madrasah is seen as a leader who supports comfortable and enjoyable learning.

As stated by students A, Z, and S: *"The principal is my favorite teacher because she is friendly and motivates me to be excited about learning. I admire her when she gives direction and encouragement to the teachers to guide us in ways that make us feel comfortable in class. I once saw her give an award to a teacher who had just been promoted."* (Students A, Z, S)

They noted that the principal often motivates teachers, creates a positive working atmosphere, and builds good relationships with students. This shows that instructional leadership strategies not only impact teachers but are also directly felt by students in the form of increased comfort and learning enthusiasm.

In the process of implementing instructional leadership, the principal of MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang faces various internal and external challenges. These challenges are not only technical but also include psychological, structural, and complex organizational cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, the principal manages to face these obstacles with an adaptive and collaborative approach, showing her capacity as an educational leader who responds to real field conditions.

One of the main internal challenges is the low motivation of some teachers to improve their competencies. Not all teachers have the same awareness and enthusiasm for participating in training or developing new teaching methods. Some tend to be satisfied with traditional approaches that they are used to. The principal stated: *"There are one or two teachers who still see training as a burden, especially if they have to go out of town or do it online outside of teaching hours. But I try to approach them one by one, give them understanding gradually. I also set an example by joining the training myself."* (Principal)

This approach reflects what Leithwood et al. (2020) call transformational support, which is the effort of leaders to build internal motivation by setting examples, fostering

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personal relationships, and nurturing collective awareness of the need for change.

Another challenge is the heavy administrative workload for teachers, which consumes their time and energy, thereby limiting their focus on improving teaching. The principal addresses this by simplifying internal administrative formats and allocating special time at school for teachers to complete reports together. Instructional leadership principle, where leaders are responsible for reducing non-pedagogical burdens so that teachers can concentrate on the teaching and learning process.

Another issue is the disparity in teachers' competencies, especially in using technology. Some teachers, particularly seniors, struggle to operate online learning apps or create digital teaching media. To overcome this, the principal implements peer coaching by appointing tech-savvy teachers to mentor their colleagues who need help. The principal explained: *"If I force every teacher to master it at once, they'll get stressed. So I created small learning groups, and assigned tech-savvy teachers to assist others."* (Principal)

This strategy shows a participatory leadership approach that trusts teachers' potential as agents of change and supporters of one another. Concept of collaborative professionalism, where mutual support and acknowledgment of each teacher's capacity form the foundation of professionalism.

Externally, a significant challenge is the lack of support from students' parents for the madrasah's programs, especially those aimed at improving the quality of teaching. Some parents do not understand that teacher quality correlates directly with their children's learning outcomes. They rarely attend parent meetings and are not enthusiastic about participating in school activities. The principal stated: *"Many parents still think that school is the teachers' responsibility. When we invite them to meetings, only a few show up. But I don't give up I reach out through the school*

*committee, local community leaders, and even via the parents' WhatsApp group."* (Principal)

This strategy reflects efforts to build school-community partnerships, who emphasizes the importance of cooperation between schools and families in supporting student success.

In addition, the lack of facilities and infrastructure hinders the implementation of teacher development programs. For example, not all classrooms are equipped with projectors or technological learning tools. To address this, the principal partners with training institutions and digital communities that are willing to provide free training or teaching aids. This initiative shows the principal's resourcefulness, the ability to find alternative problem-solving methods through external networks.

A final major challenge is the rigid and uniform national education policy. Madrasahs, with their unique characteristics, often have to comply with policies that do not fully reflect their realities. For example, thematic curricula or digital reporting models designed for public schools may not consider the specific conditions and resources of madrasahs. The principal stated: *"We have to follow the same system as public schools, even though we have limitations and unique values. But I encourage teachers to comply, while we adjust it to fit the character of the madrasah."* (Principal)

This attitude shows a high level of strategic adaptability. The principal does not reject the policy but adapts it while preserving the essence of madrasah values. According to Rahmawati and Supriyanto (2020), leaders who can navigate between national policy and local needs are more successful in maintaining the effectiveness of value-based educational institutions.

Overall, the various challenges faced by the principal are not avoided but are addressed through participatory, dialogical, and innovative approaches. The principal's strategies demonstrate that the success of

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instructional leadership greatly depends on the ability to foster collective spirit, build cooperation, and position teachers and the community as active partners in change. In other words, challenges are not absolute obstacles but learning spaces for leaders to strengthen strategies, build trust, and realize a sustainable educational vision.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight that role modeling is a pivotal element of effective instructional leadership, particularly in shaping a professional and respectful school culture. At MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang, the principal demonstrates leadership not just through directives but through consistent behavior that reflects values such as discipline, empathy, and commitment to quality education. This includes arriving at school early, greeting students and teachers, and engaging directly in classroom activities. As Ulfa and Shalahuddin (2023) states, “leaders define the school’s mission not only through vision statements but also by modeling expected behaviors,” emphasizing that leadership must be enacted, not merely declared. This modeling extends to communication style and language, where the principal uses respectful, supportive language that fosters trust and motivation.

This leadership approach also aligns with Schildkamp et al. (2019) view that effective school leaders are those who consistently embody the professional values they wish to promote among staff. By using inclusive, non-threatening language and offering constructive feedback privately, the principal creates a safe environment for professional growth. Teachers feel appreciated and supported, which increases their intrinsic motivation and willingness to innovate in their teaching practices. The principal’s verbal interactions and language choices contribute significantly to the emotional climate of the school, reinforcing a culture of mutual respect and shared goals.

Moreover, students perceive the principal’s presence and behavior as

inspiring, which positively influences their attitudes toward learning. The language used by the principal calm, friendly, and affirming helps create a welcoming school environment where students feel seen and encouraged. These findings reinforce the idea that role modeling, especially through consistent actions and professional language, is not merely symbolic. It is a deliberate and strategic leadership tool that nurtures a productive, harmonious educational ecosystem and drives continuous improvement in both teaching quality and student engagement.

**4. CONCLUSION**

Drawing from the research findings, it can be inferred that the principal of MTs Al-Washliyah Deli Serdang has demonstrated a high level of effectiveness in executing instructional leadership strategies aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism. These strategies include role modeling, consistent monitoring of teaching and learning processes, the establishment of professional dialogue spaces, and sustained support for teacher capacity development. The principal, functioning as a facilitator, motivator, and mentor, fosters a language-rich and positive working environment where communication is respectful, inclusive, and supportive. Despite facing challenges such as low teacher motivation, administrative workload, and limited parental involvement, the principal has addressed these issues through collaborative and participatory approaches. These leadership strategies have contributed significantly to improving instructional quality and fostering a learning atmosphere that students find more enjoyable and engaging.

In this context, language plays a crucial role in shaping school culture. The principal’s effective use of language through motivational communication, constructive feedback, and encouraging discourse reinforces values of professionalism, trust, and collaboration among teachers and students. This aligns with research by Hallinger (2010) and Robinson (2011),

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which emphasizes the importance of communication and language use in enacting leadership and influencing school climate.

For future research, it is recommended to examine the long-term impact of instructional leadership on teacher efficacy and student academic outcomes across various educational settings, particularly in linguistically diverse or rural schools. Comparative studies could also explore how the use of language by school leaders both verbal and non-verbal affects teacher engagement, classroom interaction, and learner participation. Moreover, further investigation into how culturally responsive language practices enhance instructional leadership could provide deeper insight into fostering inclusive and equitable school environments.

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