

## Principal Performance and Teacher Work Discipline on Learning Quality at Kindergarten in Aceh Besar

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### *Abstract*

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**Keywords:**  
Principal  
Performance;  
Teacher Work  
Discipline;  
Learning Quality;  
Implementation.

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Performance can be defined as work achievement or execution, as well as the consequence of a work presentation. One of the variables influencing the performance of school principals and instructors is their ability to carry out their separate jobs. This study aims to determine: the performance of school principals, the implementation of teacher work discipline, an assessment of the impact of school principal performance and teacher work discipline on the quality of Kindergarten in Aceh Besar. This study employs a qualitative approach and descriptive approaches. The subjects of this study are principals and teachers from Aceh Besar Regency. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentary studies. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data display, and making conclusions. The findings of this investigation are as follows: 1) the performance of school principals in Aceh Besar significantly influences the quality of education in schools, as school principals perform their duties and functions effectively, ensuring that every activity is carried out in a directed and structured manner; 2) teacher work discipline in carrying out their duties and obligations significantly affects the quality of Kindergarten in Aceh Besar; and 3) there is an influence of the performance of school.

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### *Abstrak*

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**Kata kunci:**  
Kinerja kepala  
sekolah; disiplin  
kerja guru; mutu  
pembelajaran;  
penerapan.

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Kinerja dapat didefinisikan sebagai pencapaian atau pelaksanaan pekerjaan, serta hasil dari sebuah presentasi kerja. Salah satu variabel yang memengaruhi kinerja kepala sekolah dan instruktur adalah kemampuan mereka dalam menjalankan tugas masing-masing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan: kinerja kepala sekolah, implementasi disiplin kerja guru, dan evaluasi dampak kinerja kepala sekolah dan disiplin kerja guru terhadap kualitas Taman Kanak-Kanak di Aceh Besar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan deskriptif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah kepala sekolah dan guru dari Kabupaten Aceh Besar. Metode pengumpulan data mencakup observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumenter. Teknik analisis data mencakup reduksi data, display data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut: 1) kinerja kepala sekolah di Aceh Besar secara signifikan mempengaruhi kualitas pendidikan di sekolah, karena kepala sekolah menjalankan tugas dan fungsi mereka dengan efektif, memastikan setiap aktivitas dilakukan secara terarah dan terstruktur; 2) disiplin kerja guru dalam menjalankan tugas dan kewajibannya secara signifikan memengaruhi kualitas Taman Kanak-Kanak di Aceh Besar; dan 3) terdapat pengaruh kinerja kepala sekolah dan disiplin kerja guru terhadap kualitas Taman Kanak-Kanak di Aceh Besar.

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Article history:  
Received: 11-05-2024  
Revised 13-05-2025  
Accepted 12-09-2025

## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in Indonesia continues to be in the spotlight, especially in the context of early childhood education which is the initial foundation for human resource development. The results of studies by (Programme, 2020) and PISA (2018) show that Indonesia's ranking is still relatively low compared to other countries, indicating an urgency in improving the quality of education at all levels. In this context, the role of principals and teachers as the main actors in educational institutions is very crucial, because the quality of learning is greatly influenced by educational leadership and the discipline of teaching staff (James et al., 2022; Nizar, 2023; Philp-Clark & Grieshaber, 2024; Zulaika et al., 2021).

Various previous studies have highlighted the importance of principal leadership and teacher work discipline in improving the quality of education (Fiftiyansyah & Ali, 2024; Rohmadiyah et al., 2024; Shittu et al., 2025; Tihabsah et al., 2024). (Kuryani et al., 2021) emphasized that principals play a strategic role as managers, educators, and motivators. Meanwhile, (Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023; Sulastri et al., 2020) emphasized the importance of teacher work discipline in creating an effective learning process. However, most previous studies have focused on elementary and secondary education levels, not many have examined this phenomenon in depth in kindergarten (TK) education units, especially in areas with strong local socio-cultural characteristics such as Aceh Besar. This is where the gap that this study aims to fill.

This study specifically aims to explore and analyze the influence of principal performance and teacher work discipline on the quality of education at the kindergarten level in Aceh Besar District. The main focus of this study is to fill the gap in the literature related to managerial practices and professionalism of educators in TK in a unique local context. By taking a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between these variables and the dynamics of their implementation in the field.

The basic hypothesis of this study is that good principal performance, which includes aspects of leadership, supervision, and program management, as well as teacher work discipline in carrying out their professional duties, significantly contributes to improving the quality of early childhood education. Therefore, this paper not only provides a practical contribution to the management of early childhood education units, but also offers a theoretical contribution to the development of studies on educational leadership and teacher work ethic in school environments.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on the post-positivism paradigm, as explained by (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), to understand social phenomena in depth in a natural context. This study focuses on the meaning of principal performance and teacher work discipline in relation to the quality of kindergarten education. The study was conducted from March to May 2023, with study locations in three kindergartens in Aceh Besar Regency, namely Pembina Suka Makmur Kindergarten, Bunda Kandung Kindergarten, and Khairani Kindergarten. The selection of locations was carried out purposively, taking into account the diversity of management and human resource conditions in each educational unit.

We used participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies as data collection methods. Observations were used to directly observe the interactions between principals and teachers in learning and school management activities. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using semi-structured guides with

key informants, namely principals, teachers, and administrators of each kindergarten. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, with the following criteria: having a minimum of two years of work experience and understanding managerial practices and learning dynamics in schools. Meanwhile, documentation includes document analysis such as the School Work Plan and Budget (RKAS), teacher absences, and principal supervision instruments.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively by following the Miles and Huberman interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was carried out by filtering important information from the results of observations and interviews that were relevant to the focus of the study. The reduced data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate tracing patterns and relationships between variables. The process of drawing conclusions was carried out inductively based on the tendency of field findings by triangulating between methods and between sources to ensure the validity and credibility of the data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### *The Implementation of Principal Performance*

This study includes school principals, teachers, and administrators from various schools. The study is conducted at the kindergartens of Pembina Suka Makmur, Bunda Kandung, and Khairani in Aceh Besar. The processed data gathered from diverse sources is provided in a descriptive format.

The school principal's performance is a concrete representation of programme implementation inside the school, beginning with the planning, execution, and evaluation of all school activities. Furthermore, the specific findings of the research on the performance indicators that school administrators must possess to improve the quality of early childhood education in Aceh Besar schools will be presented.

*First*, The Principals as Educators. In addition to being a leader, the school principal serves as an educator, responsible for developing the professional skills of all school personnel. To strengthen the competence of educators and education personnel, the school principal must provide ongoing supervision and direction. As a result, field findings on the performance of school principals in Aceh Besar Kindergarten show that each principal has fulfilled the duty of an educator by leading and aiding teachers and staff in carrying out their responsibilities maximally.

The duty of the school principal as an educator entail instructing teachers and staff to perform optimally and in line with existing legislation. The principal also creates plans to assist instructors in developing their competencies, such as instructional administration and pedagogical skills, through academic supervision and training. These acts help teachers become professional educators within the school. Overall, school principals at Aceh Besar Kindergarten have fulfilled their responsibility as educators by assisting their staff in adhering to established standards, so contributing to the enhancement of educational quality in Aceh Besar Kindergarten.

The above is in accordance with the results of observations and interviews with school principals, where the principal plays an important role as an educator and manager in the kindergarten environment. One of the principals at Pembina Suka Makmur Kindergarten explained: "We routinely supervise teachers, at least once a semester. In this supervision, I not only assess performance, but also provide direction and input so that they can develop according to early childhood learning standards.

*Scound*, The principals as managers. The school principal serves as both a leader and an educator, directing and aiding the school staff in their duties. This educational function entails improving the professional competencies of all school professionals through ongoing coaching and direction. Each principal of Aceh Besar Kindergarten has fulfilled their job as an educator by mentoring and supporting teachers and staff, ensuring that their responsibilities are carried out maximally. By assisting personnel in adhering to specified standards, the principal creates a climate favourable to good teaching and learning.

The principal also functions as a manager, overseeing the execution of school programmes and activities. This managerial capacity comprises establishing educational initiatives as well as organising the school's structure and operations to ensure programme implementation is orderly and efficient. Through rigorous planning, the principal ensures that all aspects of teaching and learning run smoothly and securely. The principals at Aceh Besar Kindergarten perform managerial tasks such as annual programme planning and budgeting, as described in the School Work Plan and Budget (RKAS).

Furthermore, the principal is instrumental in developing programmes that prioritise student welfare and involvement, with input from all stakeholders. These programmes are closely aligned with the school's vision and mission, to improve educational and learning experiences. For example, programmes that promote religious literacy among kindergarten pupils demonstrate the school's dedication to holistic development. Furthermore, the principal's planning includes a wide range of learning activities, such as teacher training and extracurricular activities, displaying a complete commitment to student enrichment and academic growth.

Based on the 2022/2023 School Work Plan and Budget (RKAS) document, it can be seen that the principal allocates a budget for teacher training, project-based learning activities, and character building for children. Furthermore, as a motivator, the principal encourages the creation of a positive and participatory environment. A teacher from Khairani Kindergarten stated: "The principal is very supportive of us. He often encourages us before the activity starts and gives simple rewards when we achieve our learning targets." The results of observations also support this statement. In one morning briefing activity, the principal gave open appreciation to teachers who succeeded in developing thematic learning media based on the school's environment.

*Thirt*, The principals as administrators. The school principal is an administrator who organises and manages all programmes and activities in a methodical and controlled manner. This administrative function entails overseeing all aspects of educational service at the institution. Effective management has a substantial impact on the school's function as an educational institution, ensuring that education is delivered efficiently and effectively. According to research findings on principals at Aceh Besar Kindergarten, all principals have great administrative skills and can successfully organise the school's learning procedures.

Aceh Besar Kindergarten principals guarantee that all teachers carry out their tasks in compliance with the Ministry of Education and Culture's requirements, which are administered by the Aceh Besar Education Office. The principal guides these duties to ensure that they are consistent with the standards specified by the educational authorities. The principal carefully directs and coordinates the tasks of educators and educational staff, considering their abilities and competence. The principal's role in relaying regulations and directions from the Aceh Besar Education Office is critical to achieving overall educational development.

Furthermore, the principals at Aceh Besar Kindergarten actively support and serve the school community by assisting educators in improving their classroom teaching skills. Teacher empowerment, mentoring, and training focused on developing academic, professional, social, and personal competencies can all help to improve classroom learning quality. This guidance covers both internal mentoring from the principal or senior instructors and external mentoring from supervisors or other educational institutions.

*Fourth*, The principals as supervisors. The school principal's job as a supervisor is equally important, in addition to other obligations. When a principal has good management and clear goals, reviewing the implementation of school programmes is critical. This review, also known as academic supervision, seeks to uncover any issues that teachers face during the learning process in classrooms. The principal's capacity to improve teachers' professional capabilities demonstrates his or her supervisory abilities. A competent supervisor is differentiated by their ability to organise, carry out, and use the outcomes of supervision programmes for teacher improvement and growth.

Academic supervision activities for instructors are often held at least once or twice per semester. At the start of each semester, the principal collaborates with the school development team to prepare academic supervision based on considerations and prior supervision results. Each instructor receives academic supervision through direct observation in the classroom during instructional sessions. Continuous supervision is essential for identifying flaws and obstacles faced by teachers throughout classroom instruction.

In addition to academic monitoring activities, the principal of Aceh Besar Kindergarten explains that interactions with the relevant teachers are also required. These sessions are intended to inquire about the teachers' plans for improving students' abilities and character. The principal guides and provides feedback to instructors facing unique obstacles, aiding them in resolving any issues that arise throughout their teaching duties.

*Fifth*, The principals as leaders. In general, a school principal's responsibility is to lead the school community in programme creation, decision-making, and educational quality improvement. Leadership requires a strong personality marked by honesty, confidence, responsibility, a willingness to take risks, magnanimity, and the capacity to comprehend the needs of teachers, staff, and students. It entails having a clear vision and understanding of the school's mission, making sound decisions, and communicating effectively. The principal's position has a considerable impact on the direction of learning in the school, requiring them to complete a variety of responsibilities to develop the school while keeping in mind the previously stated vision and goal.

Every decision is made with the principal's consideration and approval, whether it is for instructional administration or the development of student-related programmes. The principal has a critical responsibility in this regard, directing and supporting in the development of teachers' potential to become professionals in their professions. Aside from the principal, supervisors play an active role in improving the competence of teachers and educators in carrying out their different jobs at the school. The findings show that the principal of Aceh Besar Kindergarten fulfils their job as a school leader responsible for shaping learning within the school.

*Sixth*, The principals as motivators. The final measure of a principal's performance is their function as an innovator and motivator for the school community, allowing them to carry out their responsibilities more effectively and efficiently. This task is critical inside an institution/organization since it encourages excellent behaviour at work, and the principal sets an exemplary standard and develops a positive culture in the workplace. When a positive school environment is formed, it provides a comfortable and safe setting for all members of the school community, including the wider community. This capacity has a substantial impact on the school's programmes aimed to achieve its vision, mission, and educational excellence in the Aceh Besar community.

### *The Implementation of Teacher Work Discipline*

Teacher work discipline is more than just an intellectual idea; it manifests in the tangible activities made by educators to meet the high expectations and competencies inherent in their vocation. It represents a firm commitment to carrying out tasks with precision and dedication, guided by set norms and standards. Within the educational landscape of Aceh Besar Kindergarten, teachers demonstrate an unshakeable commitment to fulfilling their tasks and a profound sense of accountability in their endeavours.

The educational environment within Aceh Besar Kindergarten tells a riveting story of educators' unwavering dedication and precise attention to their pedagogical responsibilities. Teachers take a comprehensive approach to education, meticulously planning, carrying out, and evaluating the teaching-learning process, leaving no stone unturned in their pursuit of academic success. Syllabuses, lesson plans, teaching plans (RPP), and assessment instruments are essential instructional materials that serve as the foundation for effective teaching approaches and ensure the delivery of high-quality education.

Teachers in Aceh Besar Kindergarten carefully prepare their instructional materials before beginning the teaching-learning process. This preparation has two purposes: to assist educators in planning lessons that are targeted to the requirements of their students and to create a road map for instructional delivery during class. Teachers methodically create syllabi, teaching plans (prota), lesson plans (prosem), teaching implementation plans (RPP), and evaluation tools as part of their commitment to professional discipline, considering their specific skills and professional requirements.

The diligent fulfilment of teaching responsibilities demonstrates the professionalism inherent in educators' work. It emphasizes their commitment to and sustaining the ideals of integrity that are fundamental to the teaching profession. The findings of this study show that every teacher in Aceh Besar Kindergarten preserves the dignity of the state and government, putting the interests of children and the larger educational community ahead of personal gain.

Teachers not only uphold these essential values, but they also display honesty in administrative work and important matters. By embodying these ideals, educators not only develop a strong work ethic but also contribute to measurable performance outcomes, so improving the quality of education in their schools. A tenacious spirit at work is crucial, providing a catalyst for self-awareness and the pursuit of greatness, especially given the critical role teachers play in determining the nation's future path.

Teachers in the three kindergartens studied showed a high level of discipline. They were on time, adhered to the teaching schedule, and prepared complete learning materials. This is reflected in the February 2023 absence recap document at Bunda Kandung Kindergarten, which noted that 100% of teachers were fully present for one month. One teacher said that she always prepared lesson plans and teaching materials a week in advance so that she could adjust the material to the needs of the children in the class and avoid rushing in teaching. The lesson plan documents collected from kindergarten teachers showed that they designed learning with an integrative thematic approach, containing objectives, core activities, and detailed child development assessments.

In terms of professionalism, the teachers also showed a high level of social responsibility. The principal of one kindergarten said that when a child had learning difficulties, the teacher proactively approached and discussed with the parents as a form of concern for the child's development.

The influence of the principal's performance and teacher discipline on the quality of learning is clearly seen from the results of data triangulation through observation, interviews, and documentation. It was found that the quality of learning in kindergartens increased along with the synergy between the two factors. In the observed learning activities, the classroom atmosphere looked conducive, the children were active, and the teacher used interesting teaching media. The supervision report of the principal of Khairani Kindergarten noted that the teacher had carried out the learning according to plan, utilized self-made teaching aids, and demonstrated creativity in delivering the material (2023 Even Semester Supervision Document). With the support of strong leadership and consistent teacher discipline, learning in kindergarten becomes more focused and of high quality. This finding strengthens the conclusion that the performance of the principal and teacher discipline are key to improving the quality of early childhood education.

Overall, the performance of TK teachers in Aceh Besar displays strict adherence to regulations, which contributes to the nation's educational goals. They respond positively to disciplinary measures, adhering to school arrival and departure hours and classroom schedules. Teachers carefully follow both stated and unwritten school norms.

Furthermore, their yearly performance assessments (SKP) show that they routinely meet their allocated targets. Their dedication to meeting objectives and earning credit points is evident in their classroom instructional activities. According to the research, teachers demonstrate proficiency in the use of teaching aids and technology. Furthermore, they demonstrate expertise in maintaining and utilising educational facilities and resources, which improves the learning environment.

Furthermore, TK teachers in Aceh Besar excel at their instructional roles, offering direction and support to pupils throughout the learning process. This advice comprises providing understanding and direction to students with learning issues. Notably, teachers adhere to restrictions established by both the Aceh Besar Education Office and school administration. Overall, no severe transgressions have been reported among TK teachers in Aceh Besar, with small infractions usually resulting in moderate reprimands for minor rule violations.

**Table 1.** *Principal Performance and Teacher Discipline on the Quality of Kindergarten Education in Aceh Besar*

Aspect	Finding Indicators	Information
Principal performance	As an educator	Guiding teachers through regular supervision and training
	As a manager	Compiling RKAS, managing annual programs and student activities
	As an administrator	Arrange learning procedures according to the rules of the Department of Education
	As a supervisor	Conduct academic supervision twice per semester, provide learning feedback
	As a motivator	Providing motivation and creating a conducive and enjoyable school environment
Teacher work discipline	Compliance with schedules and regulations	Teachers are present on time, follow the lesson schedule, and comply with school regulations.
	Learning planning	Prepare the syllabus, lesson plans, prota, and prosem carefully
	Use of media and methods	Teachers use learning media and technology appropriately and according to student needs.
	Ethics and professional responsibility	Teachers demonstrate responsibility, honesty, and concern for students and the teaching and learning process.
Kindergarten education quality	Quality of teaching and learning process	Increased due to synergy between the principal's performance and teacher discipline in carrying out their duties.
	Suitability of school programs to student needs	School programs are designed based on the vision, mission and needs of early childhood.

## Discussion

### *The Implementation of Principal Performance*

The principal's performance has an impact on how well students learn in schools. This is because the principal serves as a core driving force, which is particularly beneficial in improving the quality of learning in the school. As a result, the principal must exhibit their greatest performance using the competencies they possess. This viewpoint is consistent with (Hadis & Nurhayati, 2021) said that performance, commonly referred to as "performance" etymologically, encompasses 'the act of performing', work performance, demonstration of work, and execution of a task or work behaviour (Apriyani et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2024; Henik, 2024; Suryanto et al., 2024; Zaini et al., 2023). (Ardiansya et al., 2022) add that the principal, as a change agent in their environment, must be creative and imaginative in their work. The talents of a school's principal have a significant impact on transformation in the educational environment (Gunansyah et al., 2021; Odo, 2023; Podungge et al., 2020).

The statement emphasises the critical role that school leaders play in the educational process at their institutions. Principals have a wide range of

responsibilities aimed at improving the quality and efficacy of education delivered by the school. These tasks include developing programmes that provide beneficial results for students, providing mentorship and direction to both professors and students, and thoroughly assessing the success of various educational initiatives. Principals work hard to ensure that educational programmes are not only well-executed, but also have a sense of coherence and orderliness. Their main goal is to establish an atmosphere that promotes optimal learning outcomes and student growth.

Kindergartens in Aceh Besar have provided exceptional leadership and direction to their school communities. They have effectively performed their jobs as managers, administrators, supervisors, and motivators. All of these competencies have been implemented in the practices of principals at the Kindergartens, and this has had a substantial impact on increasing the quality of learning in their particular schools. Mastering these multiple competencies enables school leaders to drive the enhancement of teacher quality in their schools, both through programme implementation and direct teacher guidance. According to research conducted by Rafid (2020), school principals are aware of the demand for them to offer their best performance to improve the competency and quality of education people.

The school principal's planned programmes indicate the principal's managerial function in guiding and organising programmes that have an impact on improving learning quality in the classroom. The capacity of a manager is related to the school principal's ability to establish educational programmes and structure school organisations and processes, resulting in order and consistency in the implementation of educational programmes at the school. (Darwina et al., 2019) emphasise that the school principal, as a manager, must optimise these managerial talents to carry out management duties such as planning, organising, directing, and managing operations to achieve predefined goals with available resources. According to this viewpoint, the school principal's abilities as an educator and management are critical for efficiently conducting the learning process at the school and improving the competency of professional teachers in completing their obligations as educators (Iqbal & Sheeraz, 2021).

In addition to managerial abilities, the principal of TK Aceh Besar excels as an academic supervisor in their school. The ability to develop teachers' professional capabilities demonstrates their supervisory abilities. A good supervisor's capacity is demonstrated by their ability to create supervision programmes, implement them, and use the results of supervision to enhance and grow teachers. According to (Nasution et al., 2020), the term "supervision" comes from English and means "oversight." Supervision is a service that helps teachers improve their teaching, learning, and curriculum. Supervision is a service provided to teachers to improve them. (Nasution et al., 2020) explain that in terminology, supervision is a word that was originally applied to traditional supervision, which includes inspection work, and overseeing in the sense of identifying errors and locating flaws with the goal of correction.

According to the declaration, school principals must be proficient in academic supervision, as evidenced by the objectives of supervision, which are designed to support teachers encountering problems during the learning process. As a result, the school principal can serve as a mentor and assist teachers in resolving classroom concerns (Faradila & Daryono, 2024; Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025; Zamroni & Barnoto, 2024). This has been proved by the school principals of the Kindergartens through their involvement in academic supervision, which aims to improve the competency of educators at the school.

The next measure of performance competence is the ability to innovate and motivate others. Field observations show that all school principals have fulfilled their roles as innovators and motivators in enhancing their teachers' abilities and creativity in the learning process, particularly at the preschool level, where children require enjoyable learning experiences that are consistent with their playful nature. School principals are expected to provide programmes that are both child-friendly and fun. Although the definitions of innovation and motivation differ, innovation is defined as the ability to seek, discover, and accept new ideas from others and implement reforms in schools, whereas school principals' ability to motivate refers to their ability to manage the physical work environment, regulate the non-physical work environment, and establish reward and punishment policies. These skills can also help school principals improve the quality and motivation for learning, making it even more desirable. In this way, performance reflects a synergistic combination of abilities and motivation at work. Thus, an individual's performance can be measured by their productivity in carrying out their tasks (Apriyani et al., 2023).

### *The Implementation of Teacher Work Discipline*

Teacher work discipline refers to the tangible effort done by teachers following the demands of their vocation and the skills they possess. Teachers must maintain discipline while carrying out their obligations as instructors. Work discipline is a specific effort that instructors must make to improve the quality of learning in schools. This is consistent with expert statements about the relationship between teacher work discipline and improved learning quality in the classroom. According to the author, work discipline comprises being aware of and eager to follow business rules as well as prevalent social standards (Relisa et al., 2019; Wulandari et al., 2021). According to (Apriyani et al., 2023), work discipline is a tool that managers use to interact with employees, urging them to change their behaviour and cultivating awareness and readiness to comply with organisational norms.

According to the findings of the aforementioned research, teachers at TK Aceh Besar have shown good work discipline in schools. Work discipline refers to the methods used by teachers at the Kindergarten, such as sticking to their duties as educators by following the obligations and regulations in existence, both those imposed by the government and those established by the school administration. This field also includes creating learning resources to guide students through the instructional process. (Relisa et al., 2019; Rizalini et al., 2021) identify numerous elements that influence teacher performance: 1) personality and dedication, 2) professional development, 3) communication, 4) community relations, 5) discipline, 6) well-being, and 7) work environment. As a result, these criteria can be used as references by teachers to improve their job discipline.

All teachers at the Kindergarten have exhibited discipline in carrying out their responsibilities to design and formulate learning materials, demonstrating their accountability and adherence to laws. Teachers' professionalism in their job acts as a criterion for educational performance and has the potential to improve education quality in schools. This opinion is mirrored by (Jajuli et al., 2022) who say that "one way to improve the quality of education, aside from preparing professional staff, is the need for learning media to ensure that learning objectives are effectively achieved.. Inappropriate learning media may prevent learning objectives from being met. In addition to harmonising with teaching materials, media use should take into account

learning objectives, student population, and school facilities (Enes et al., 2024; Rohmadi et al., 2024). (Nurhayati, 2021) says that the quality of education is critical since knowledge is constantly evolving, with the introduction of new fields of study and even more specialised areas of competence.

Teachers at the Kindergarten have exhibited genuine care for students' difficulties, sensitivity to their requirements, and a commitment to giving the best service possible to students, parents, and community members. According to research findings, teachers at the Kindergarten are enthusiastic about supporting, directing, and overcoming challenges that students have during their learning journey. Furthermore, teachers aim to provide the greatest possible service to children, parents, and the community, demonstrating their professional competencies (Desmiati et al., 2023; Reksiana et al., 2024). Competence is defined as a set of information, skills, and abilities that individuals master and integrate into themselves, allowing them to perform cognitive, cognitive, and psychomotor behaviours to the best of their ability (Pandipa, 2020). According to Sulastri et al. (2020), instructors' professional competency is critical in promoting a better learning process and motivating students to succeed. A professional teacher may execute successful teaching strategies and engagingly provide materials, with a focus not just on learning objectives but also on the whole development of student's cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor elements (Istiqlal et al., 2024; Wicaksono et al., 2024).

Based on the preceding discussion, it is possible to conclude that both the school principal's performance and teacher discipline play critical roles in improving classroom learning quality. So far, the research findings show that the school principal has a positive impact on the quality of learning in the classroom because they carry out their duties following regulations and their competencies, assisting teachers in improving their competencies as educators, resulting in professional and structured classroom teaching. As a result, the quality of learning at the Kindergarten in Aceh Besar has improved.

### ***The Principal Performance and the Teacher Discipline Work on Learning Quality***

As previously discussed, the work of the school principal and the discipline of teacher performance has a considerable impact on increasing the quality of learning in schools. Both factors are critical to the success of classroom learning. The school principal has efficiently carried out their duties and functions, ensuring that the planned programmes are well implemented and on track to achieve their goals. Furthermore, this is backed by the discipline of teacher performance, as they follow all regulations and faithfully carry out all obligations allocated to them by the principal (Madkan et al., 2025; Nurdi & Ahmad, 2025).

As previously discussed, the work of the school principal and the discipline of teacher performance has a considerable impact on increasing the quality of learning in schools. Both factors are critical to the success of classroom learning. The school principal has efficiently carried out their duties and functions, ensuring that the planned programmes are well implemented and on track to achieve their goals. Furthermore, this is backed by the discipline of teacher performance, as they follow all regulations and faithfully carry out all obligations allocated to them by the principal. So yet, no instructors at Kindergarten in Aceh Besar have been penalised orally or in writing for significant infractions at school. The assistance of the school principal and the teachers' good discipline have resulted in an improvement in the quality of learning at Kindergarten in Aceh Besar. (Zahara & Sinurat, 2023) reported similar

findings. 1) The school principal's leadership style has a significant positive influence on teacher performance; 2) Job satisfaction has a significant positive influence on teacher performance; and 3) Organisational commitment and job satisfaction work together to improve teacher performance. (Nurhayati, 2021) discovered that the school principal's performance and teacher discipline help to improve educational quality.

According to the findings of these studies, the school principal's performance and teacher discipline can help improve teacher competency. This is due to the school principal's support and encouragement of teachers to work professionally. When a school has both effective school leadership and appropriate teacher discipline, it acts as a catalyst for improving the school's learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

Several main results arise from the research on the Principals Performance and Teacher Work Discipline in Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education in Aceh Besar. To begin, school principals' effective performance has a substantial impact on the overall quality of education in schools. Principals who efficiently carry out their roles and responsibilities guarantee that all activities are well-structured and directed, which contributes to the improvement of educational standards. Second, the discipline with which instructors carry out their tasks and obligations has a significant impact on the quality of early childhood education in Aceh Besar. Teachers who maintain high levels of discipline have a good impact on the educational environment, helping to increase education quality. Finally, there is a clear association between school principal performance and teacher discipline, indicating that both criteria are important in improving early childhood education quality in Aceh Besar. This emphasises the necessity of strong leadership and disciplined work habits in providing a learning environment that promotes growth and development in early childhood education settings.

Overall, the findings of this study found that the performance of the principal and the work discipline of teachers have a greater impact than expected on the quality of early childhood education in Aceh Besar. This finding challenges the old assumption that these factors only play a role as administrative complements, and instead shows that effective leadership and professional discipline are the main foundations in creating a quality learning environment. This opens up a new discussion about the importance of strengthening leadership competencies at the early childhood education level which has so far received little attention in academic studies.

Scientifically, this study strengthens the results of previous studies on the importance of leadership and work discipline in the world of education, while challenging the validity of findings that tend to generalize leadership models across all levels of education. This study also introduces a locally based contextual approach as an important variable in assessing the effectiveness of the performance of principals and teachers, which can enrich scientific discourse in the field of educational leadership and early childhood school management.

However, this study has several limitations. Its scope is limited to three kindergartens in Aceh Besar with a relatively small number of informants, so generalizing the findings to different regions or contexts needs to be done with caution. In addition, other factors such as variations in cultural and social backgrounds have not been fully explored. Therefore, further studies with larger samples and more diverse approaches are needed to gain a more comprehensive and applicable understanding of this issue.

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