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# The Effect of Principals' Instructional Leadership, Work Culture, And Teachers' Work Motivation on The Performance of Public Elementary School Teachers in Pulau Petak District

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher performance is a key factor in determining the quality of education and is influenced by individual abilities, principal leadership, work culture, and teachers' work motivation. Principals' instructional leadership is crucial in guiding and facilitating teachers to conduct effective learning, while a positive work culture and high work motivation can sustainably improve teacher performance. This study analyzes the influence of principals' instructional leadership and work culture on teacher performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation, in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District, Kapuas Regency. Using a quantitative survey method, the study involved 119 teachers selected from a population of 170 via proportional random sampling. Data were collected through validated and reliable Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using path and multiple regression analysis. Results indicate that principals' instructional leadership, work culture, work motivation, and teacher performance are in the high to very high categories. Principals' instructional leadership and work culture have significant direct effects on both work motivation and teacher performance, while work motivation also significantly affects teacher performance. Moreover, instructional leadership and work culture indirectly influence teacher performance through work motivation. These findings highlight that enhancing teacher performance requires strong instructional leadership, a supportive work culture, and high teacher motivation. The study suggests that school management should continuously strengthen leadership and cultivate a positive work environment to boost teachers' motivation and performance, and it encourages further research on additional factors influencing teacher performance.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Schools as formal educational institutions play a strategic role in achieving national education goals, particularly in preparing qualified and competitive human resources. The

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quality of teachers' performance largely determines the success of educational implementation in schools, as teachers are the main actors who interact directly with students in the learning process. Teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge, but also as mentors, facilitators, and role models in character building and the development of students' potential.

Teachers' performance reflects the level of success in carrying out professional duties, including lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation [1], [2]. Robbins states that performance can be measured through indicators such as quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence [3]. Teachers with high performance tend to be capable of creating innovative, effective learning that is oriented toward students' needs. Nevertheless, various studies indicate that teachers' performance in Indonesia still faces challenges related to professionalism, the use of technology, and work motivation [4], [5].

One factor that significantly influences teachers' performance is principals' instructional leadership. Instructional leadership emphasizes the role of school principals in focusing policies, supervision, and decision-making on improving the quality of learning [6]. Principals who demonstrate effective instructional leadership are able to direct, guide, and motivate teachers to enhance their professional competence and performance. Empirical evidence shows that instructional leadership has a positive and significant effect on the performance of elementary school teachers [7].

In addition to instructional leadership, school work culture is another important factor influencing teachers' performance. Work culture refers to a system of values, beliefs, and habits that develop within the school environment and guide the behavior of school members in carrying out their duties [8], [9]. A positive work culture, characterized by discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and quality orientation, creates a supportive working climate and encourages improved teacher performance. Conversely, a weak work culture may reduce work enthusiasm and hinder the achievement of educational objectives [10].

Another factor that deserves attention is teachers' work motivation. Motivation represents internal and external drives that influence teachers' enthusiasm, commitment, and seriousness in performing their tasks [11]. Teachers with high work motivation tend to demonstrate stronger dedication, responsibility, and initiative in the learning process, which in turn has a positive impact on their performance [12], [13].

Preliminary observations conducted in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District indicate that teachers' performance has not yet reached an optimal level. This condition is reflected in inadequate lesson planning, monotonous teaching methods, limited use of information technology, as well as weaknesses in timeliness and work independence. These findings suggest that principals' instructional leadership, school work culture, and teachers' work motivation have not functioned optimally in supporting improvements in teachers' performance.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between instructional leadership, work culture, and work motivation on teachers' performance in a partial manner. However, studies that analyze the simultaneous influence of these three variables, particularly in the

context of public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District, remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study is important in providing a more comprehensive empirical overview.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the effect of principals' instructional leadership, work culture, and teachers' work motivation on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District, both directly and indirectly. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational administration studies and to serve as a practical basis for recommendations to improve teacher performance quality at the elementary school level.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design. Four variables were examined, consisting of instructional leadership ( $X_1$ ) and work culture ( $X_2$ ) as independent variables, teachers' work motivation ( $Z$ ) as a mediating variable, and teachers' performance ( $Y$ ) as the dependent variable. The indicators of instructional leadership included continuous improvement, learning culture, assessment, teachers' professional development, school management, ethics, and respect for diversity. Work culture indicators comprised honesty, mutual trust, cooperation, reading culture, discipline, cleanliness, achievement orientation, as well as reward and reprimand practices. Teachers' work motivation was measured through two dimensions, namely motivational factors, which included achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the nature of work, and maintenance factors, which covered interpersonal relationships, job security, administrative policies, income, position, and working conditions. Teachers' performance indicators consisted of quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence [14].

The population of this study included all public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District who were actively teaching during the current academic year, based on the 2024 Dapodik data from the Ministry of Education. According to these data, the total number of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District was 170 teachers [15]. Based on this population, the sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5 percent in order to obtain a representative number of respondents. The sampling technique applied was proportional random sampling, ensuring that each school was proportionally represented according to its number of teachers. Sugiyono explains that a research sample represents part of the population's characteristics and size [14].

The Slovin formula used to determine the sample size was as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

$n$  : the sample size,

$N$  : the population size

$E$  : the error tolerance level of 5 percent (0.05).

Based on a population of 170 public elementary school teachers with a 5 percent margin of error, the minimum required sample size was 119 respondents.

The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire using a Likert scale, developed based on the indicator grid of each variable. Prior to distribution, the instrument was tested for validity using the product-moment correlation method and for reliability using

Cronbach's Alpha. The collected data were then subjected to prerequisite analysis tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and homogeneity tests. Data analysis was conducted using regression analysis and path analysis to examine both direct and indirect effects. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the main model, while simple regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between independent variables and the mediating variable. The Sobel test was employed to assess the significance of mediation effects. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software.

Multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine the influence and relationship among more than two independent variables. In this study, the first to third hypotheses (H1 – H3) were tested using multiple regression analysis to examine the effects of instructional leadership (X<sub>1</sub>), work culture (X<sub>2</sub>), and work motivation (Z) on teachers' performance (Y). Furthermore, the fourth (H4) and fifth (H5) hypotheses were tested using simple regression analysis to analyze the effects of instructional leadership (X<sub>1</sub>) and work culture (X<sub>2</sub>) on teachers' work motivation (Z). Path analysis was employed to test the sixth (H6) and seventh (H7) hypotheses, which aimed to identify causal relationships among variables, including both direct and indirect effects. To confirm the significance of indirect effects through the mediating variable, this study applied the Sobel test.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Prerequisite Testing and Summary of Analysis Results

Table 1. Summary of Regression and Path Analysis Results

Path – Variables	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Remarks
Instructional Leadership (X <sub>1</sub> ) → Teachers' Work Motivation (Z)	0.912	-	Significant
Work Culture (X <sub>2</sub> ) → Teachers' Work Motivation (Z)	0.654	-	Significant
Instructional Leadership (X <sub>1</sub> ) → Teachers' Performance (Y)	0.523	-	Significant
Work Culture (X <sub>2</sub> ) → Teachers' Performance (Y)	0.073	-	Significant
Teachers' Work Motivation (Z) → Teachers' Performance (Y)	0.343	-	Significant
Instructional Leadership (X <sub>1</sub> ) → Teachers' Performance (Y) through Teachers' Work Motivation (Z)	-	0.313	Significant
Work Culture (X <sub>2</sub> ) → Teachers' Performance (Y) through Teachers' Work Motivation (Z)	-	0.224	Significant

The prerequisite analysis stage was conducted through normality testing using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, multicollinearity testing, and homogeneity testing. The results of the normality test indicated that all variables had significance values (Sig.) greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. The multicollinearity test showed that all variables had tolerance values above 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10, which means that no multicollinearity problems were detected. Furthermore, the homogeneity test produced significance values greater than 0.05, indicating that the variances among groups were homogeneous. Therefore, all prerequisite tests were fulfilled,

and the data were deemed appropriate for further analysis. A summary of the analysis results is presented in Table 1 above.

### 3.2 Direct Effect of Instructional Leadership on Teachers' Performance in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The results of this study indicate that principals' instructional leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District. The regression analysis yielded a coefficient value of 0.523, with a calculated  $t$  value of 21.758 and a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This result implies that every one-unit increase in principals' instructional leadership leads to an increase of 0.523 units in teachers' performance. Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that principals' instructional leadership makes a substantial contribution to improving teachers' performance.

The descriptive analysis of the instructional leadership variable shows that the dimension of creating a positive learning climate obtained the highest mean score of 4.52. This finding indicates that school principals have successfully established a conducive, fair, and inclusive school environment that supports the improvement of instructional quality. The dimensions of learning assessment and ethics also achieved high mean scores of 4.50, reflecting principals' commitment to maintaining fairness in assessment practices and providing moral exemplars. In contrast, the school management dimension recorded the lowest mean score of 4.38, although it remained within the high category. This condition suggests the need to strengthen consistency in the implementation of standard operating procedures, improve the efficiency of resource utilization, and enhance the use of technology to support instructional processes.

Teachers' performance as the dependent variable achieved an average score of 4.24, with the majority of teachers classified within the high to very high category (78.1%). The independence sub-variable obtained the highest mean score of 4.31, while the lowest score was observed in the indicator related to initiative in performing tasks without waiting for instructions (4.05). This result indicates that although teachers' performance is generally good, strengthening independence and initiative remains necessary.

These findings are consistent with Fullan's view, which emphasizes that instructional leadership is not merely oriented toward technical management, but also toward motivating and inspiring teachers to innovate [16]. Hallinger, as cited in Emmanouil et al., states that instructional principals aim to create positive learning environments by motivating teachers, sharing a clear vision, and supporting professional development [17]. Similarly, Obi, as cited in Enueme and Egwunyenga, argues that effective principals should actively involve teachers in professional development through supervision, training, seminars, and workshops to improve instructional quality [18].

The results of this study are also in line with the findings of Aslam et al. [19], who reported that principals' instructional leadership contributes significantly to improving teachers' performance through curriculum mission development, professional learning communities, and the creation of a conducive academic climate. Consistent results were also reported by Rusdiansyah [20], who found that instructional leadership significantly affects

teachers' performance, where principals' guidance, supervision, and motivation improved teachers' discipline and work performance in public senior high schools in Banjarmasin City. Furthermore, Werdiningsih et al. [21] confirmed that instructional leadership, together with professional competence, accounted for 54.1% of the variance in vocational school teachers' performance. Nasution et al. [22] also reinforced these findings by demonstrating that instructional leadership, motivation, and work discipline significantly influenced teachers' performance, with a contribution of 88.6%.

In addition, earlier studies by Aslamiah et al. [23], Normianti et al. [24], Sanyoto et al. [25], Elisabet [26], Sumaryana [27], Marks and Printy [28], as well as Qadarsih and Aslamiah [29], consistently confirm the positive influence of instructional leadership on teachers' performance.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that principals' instructional leadership has a direct, positive, and significant effect on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District. The effectiveness of instructional leadership not only enhances instructional quality but also strengthens teachers' professionalism, responsibility, and dedication in carrying out their professional duties.

### 3.3 Direct Effect of Work Culture on Teachers' Performance in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The results of the analysis show that work culture has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District. The regression analysis produced a coefficient value of 0.073, with a calculated  $t$  value of 4.265 and a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that every one-unit increase in work culture leads to an increase of 0.073 units in teachers' performance. Although the magnitude of its contribution is smaller than that of instructional leadership, this finding confirms that work culture remains an important factor in supporting teachers' performance improvement.

The descriptive analysis indicates that the work culture of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District falls within the high category, with an overall mean score of 4.38. The team orientation dimension recorded the highest mean score of 4.66, reflecting strong cooperation, harmonious communication, and adequate work facilities within the school environment. High mean scores were also observed in the dimensions of attention to detail (4.54) and innovation and risk taking (4.42), indicating teachers' carefulness, confidence, willingness to develop, and readiness to implement instructional innovations. The aggressiveness (4.34) and people orientation (4.32) dimensions were also classified as high, demonstrating openness in communication, a sense of security, and teachers' professional responsibility. Meanwhile, the stability dimension recorded the lowest mean score of 4.03, suggesting the need to strengthen work consistency and mutual support in task implementation, although overall work culture has developed positively and supports teachers' performance improvement.

Teachers' performance as the dependent variable recorded an average score of 4.24, with most respondents categorized as having high to very high performance (78.1%). The highest indicator was the ability to maintain good interpersonal relationships (4.54), while the relatively lower indicator was initiative in performing tasks without waiting for

instructions (4.05). These findings indicate that a positive work culture plays an important role in fostering teachers' performance, although further strengthening of initiative and reward mechanisms remains necessary.

These results align with Robbins and Judge, who state that work culture functions as a shared value system that shapes productive work behavior within organizations [8]. Balela et al. [30] found that work culture has a positive and significant effect on the performance of public junior high school teachers, where values of cooperation, discipline, and professional responsibility play a crucial role in shaping teachers' work behavior. A conducive work culture has been shown to support sustainable improvements in teachers' performance. This study also reinforces the findings of Dahlan et al. [10], Aslamiah [31], and Sumaryana [27], who concluded that a positive work culture can enhance teachers' performance through the development of professional attitudes and work responsibility.

Thus, work culture serves as an important supporting factor in sustainably improving the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District, particularly through strengthening values of cooperation, discipline, and commitment to professional duties.

### 3.4 Direct Effect of Work Motivation on Teachers' Performance in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The results of the study indicate that teachers' work motivation has a direct, positive, and significant effect on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District. The regression analysis produced a coefficient value of 0.343, with a calculated  $t$  value of 18.153 and a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This finding implies that every one-unit increase in work motivation leads to an increase of 0.343 units in teachers' performance. Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected, confirming that work motivation is a crucial factor in improving teachers' performance.

The descriptive analysis of the work motivation variable shows that most teachers possess high to very high levels of motivation, with an overall mean score of 4.34. The motivational factor dimension obtained a mean score of 4.33, with high scores recorded for indicators related to commitment to achieving high performance (4.42) and enjoyment in carrying out teaching duties (4.44). The maintenance factor dimension achieved a slightly higher mean score of 4.35, particularly in indicators concerning communication among teachers (4.69) and harmonious relationships with school principals (4.52). These findings indicate that, in addition to intrinsic motivation, a supportive work environment plays a substantial role in shaping teachers' work motivation.

Teachers' performance as the dependent variable recorded an average score of 4.24, with the majority of teachers classified within the high to very high category. This result demonstrates that high levels of work motivation directly affect teachers' quality, quantity, effectiveness, timeliness, and independence in carrying out their professional duties. However, perceptions regarding income adequacy (4.12) and the suitability of positions with individual competencies (4.11) remained relatively lower, suggesting the need for greater attention to teachers' welfare and task distribution.

These findings are consistent with Herzberg's motivation theory, which emphasizes motivation as a key determinant of individual performance quality [32]. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, as discussed by Robbins and Judge, also supports these results by explaining that the fulfillment of self-actualization needs, such as achievement, recognition, and professional development, encourages individuals to perform optimally [33].

The results of this study are further supported by previous research. Heryana reported that teachers require adequate knowledge and skills to create conditions that motivate their performance [34]. Suriansyah found that work motivation has a substantial influence on teachers' performance, as highly motivated individuals tend to exert their full abilities and skills in their work [35], [36]. Hasanah and Suriansyah demonstrated that instructional leadership supported by teachers' work motivation can enhance instructional effectiveness and overall teacher performance [37]. Other studies by Akinyi [38], Rahardjo [39], and Septiana [40] also confirm that work motivation has a positive effect on teachers' performance.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that work motivation has a direct, positive, and significant effect on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District. High work motivation, derived from both intrinsic drives and supportive school environments, plays a vital role in enhancing teachers' professionalism, productivity, and the quality of learning outcomes.

### 3.5 Direct Effect of Instructional Leadership on Teachers' Work Motivation in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The results indicate that principals' instructional leadership has a direct, positive, and significant effect on teachers' work motivation in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District. The regression analysis yielded a coefficient value of 0.912, with a calculated  $t$  value of 21.758 and a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The standardized beta coefficient of 0.781 reflects a strong and dominant influence. This result indicates that stronger instructional leadership by school principals leads to higher levels of teachers' work motivation. Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The descriptive analysis shows that teachers' work motivation falls within the high category, with an average score of 4.34. The majority of teachers (78.1%) were categorized as having high to very high motivation levels, indicating that principals' instructional leadership effectively fosters teachers' work enthusiasm. The motivational factor sub-variable recorded a high mean score of 4.33, particularly in indicators related to commitment to improving performance (4.42) and enjoyment in carrying out teaching duties (4.44). Meanwhile, the maintenance factor obtained a higher mean score of 4.35, especially in indicators concerning communication among teachers (4.69) and harmonious relationships with school principals (4.52). These findings suggest that instructional leadership contributes significantly to the creation of a conducive working climate.

These results align with Hick's theory, as cited in Aslamiah et al., which states that principals' instructional leadership behavior can predict academic achievement by enhancing teachers' motivation [23]. Townsend emphasized that leadership has a significant

influence on all aspects of school performance, including motivating educators [41]. In addition, Sheppard, as cited in Enueme and Egwunyenga, argued that **instructional leadership plays a crucial role in improving** teachers' professionalism through continuous support, monitoring, and development [18].

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research. Hasanah and Suriansyah found that principals' **instructional leadership has a significant effect on** teachers' work **motivation** [37]. Andriani et al. demonstrated that instructional leadership is positively associated with increased teacher motivation in performing professional duties [42]. Studies by Aslamiah [31] and Setiyati [43] further confirmed that stronger instructional leadership **is associated with higher levels of** teachers' **work motivation**. Moreover, recent research by Sukma et al. reinforced these findings by showing that principals' instructional leadership is positively related to teachers' achievement motivation and professional competence [44].

Thus, **it can be concluded that principals' instructional leadership has a direct, positive, and significant effect on** teachers' work motivation **in public elementary schools in** Pulau Petak District. **Principals** who provide clear direction, guidance, and instructional role models not only improve instructional quality but also strengthen teachers' work motivation, which ultimately enhances performance and overall educational quality.

### **3.6 Direct Effect of Work Culture on Teachers' Work Motivation in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District**

The results show that work culture has a direct, positive, and significant effect on teachers' work motivation in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District. The regression analysis produced a coefficient value of 0.654, with a calculated  $t$  value of 6.742 and a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.346 indicates that 34.6% of the variance in teachers' work motivation can be explained by work culture, while the remaining variance is influenced by other factors such as leadership style, welfare, and individual characteristics. Thus, a stronger work culture is associated with higher levels of teachers' work motivation.

The descriptive analysis indicates that teachers' work culture falls within the good to very good category, particularly in aspects of cooperation, discipline, responsibility, commitment to tasks, and harmonious working relationships. This conducive work culture creates a comfortable and supportive working atmosphere oriented toward achieving school goals, thereby encouraging teachers to demonstrate enthusiasm, perseverance, and dedication in carrying out instructional duties.

These findings are consistent with Robbins and Judge, who state that work culture functions as a shared value system that influences individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and motivation within organizations [8]. A positive work culture fosters a sense of belonging, pride, and organizational commitment, which ultimately strengthens members' work motivation, including teachers.

The results are also consistent with previous studies, including those by Syalwa [45], Khadijah et al. [5], and Aslamiah [46], which concluded that a conducive work culture has a significant effect on teachers' work motivation. Work environments that emphasize

honesty, discipline, cooperation, and appreciation have been shown to enhance teachers' motivation to work more professionally and responsibly.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that work culture has a direct, positive, and significant effect on teachers' work motivation in public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District. Strengthening work culture oriented toward professionalism, collaboration, discipline, and appreciation is essential for sustaining teachers' work motivation, which ultimately supports improved performance and instructional quality.

### 3.7 Indirect Effect of Instructional Leadership on Teachers' Performance through Work Motivation in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The findings indicate that principals' instructional leadership not only has a direct effect on teachers' performance but also an indirect effect through work motivation. Path analysis results show that the direct effect of instructional leadership on teachers' performance was 0.523 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, the effect of instructional leadership on teachers' work motivation was 0.912 ( $p < 0.05$ ), and teachers' work motivation significantly affected performance with a coefficient of 0.343 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Based on these relationships, the indirect effect of instructional leadership on teachers' performance through work motivation was calculated at 0.313 ( $0.912 \times 0.343$ ). The Sobel test produced a  $t$  value of 9.46 with a significance level of  $p < 0.001$ , indicating a statistically significant mediation effect. Therefore, teachers' work motivation functions as a partial mediator, whereby instructional leadership continues to exert a direct influence on performance, but its impact becomes stronger through work motivation.

These findings support the motivation theory proposed by Robbins and Judge, which emphasizes motivation as a key mediating factor in the relationship between leadership and performance [33]. Mulyasa also asserted that principals, as instructional leaders, must create conducive working climates, provide recognition, and develop positive work cultures to sustain teachers' motivation, which ultimately enhances performance [47].

Previous studies further support these findings. Usman reported that work motivation significantly mediates the relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' performance [48]. Studies by Aslamiah et al. [23], Elisabet [26], and Marks and Printy [28] similarly demonstrated that effective instructional leadership fosters teachers' motivation, which subsequently improves performance.

Thus, it can be concluded that principals' instructional leadership has an indirect, positive, and significant effect on teachers' performance through work motivation. Principals who provide guidance, support, and conducive working environments enhance teachers' motivation, which in turn strengthens professionalism and performance effectiveness.

### 3.8 Indirect Effect of Work Culture on Teachers' Performance through Work Motivation in Public Elementary Schools in Pulau Petak District

The results indicate that work culture influences teachers' performance both directly and indirectly through work motivation. Directly, work culture had a positive effect on teachers' performance with a regression coefficient of 0.073 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Although this direct

effect was relatively smaller than those of other variables, it remained statistically significant.

Path analysis revealed that work culture significantly affected teachers' work motivation with a regression coefficient of 0.654 ( $t = 6.742$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Teachers' work motivation, in turn, significantly affected performance with a coefficient of 0.343 ( $t = 18.153$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these relationships, the indirect effect of work culture on teachers' performance through work motivation was calculated at 0.224 ( $0.654 \times 0.343$ ). The Sobel test yielded a  $t$  value of 6.29 ( $> 1.96$ ), indicating a significant mediation effect.

These findings emphasize the critical role of work motivation in strengthening the influence of work culture on teachers' performance. In other words, a positive work culture enhances teachers' motivation, which subsequently leads to improved performance. This result aligns with Hoy and Miskel's view that work culture represents a system of shared values, norms, and beliefs that create harmonious working environments conducive to motivation and performance [49]. Robbins and Judge also emphasized that positive organizational culture shapes productive behavior, increases satisfaction, and ultimately improves individual performance [33].

Consistent findings were reported by Syalwa [45], Khadijah et al. [5], and Guo et al. [50], as well as by Liliyana [51] and Mappamirring [52], who confirmed that a strong work culture fosters work motivation, which subsequently enhances teachers' performance.

Therefore, it can be concluded that work culture has an indirect, positive, and significant effect on teachers' performance through work motivation. A work culture grounded in values of discipline, cooperation, honesty, cleanliness, and appreciation enhances teachers' work motivation, which in turn strengthens performance and improves instructional quality.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of principals' instructional leadership, school work culture, and teachers' work motivation in shaping the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pulau Petak District. Strong instructional leadership, a supportive work culture, and high teacher motivation collectively foster professionalism, dedication, and the effective delivery of learning, ultimately enhancing educational quality.

The findings imply that school management should prioritize the continuous development of principals' instructional leadership through coaching, supervision, motivational support, and integration of instructional technology. Schools are encouraged to cultivate a positive work culture that emphasizes collaboration, consistency, and recognition, while teachers are advised to sustain high levels of motivation through professional responsibility, initiative, and engagement in ongoing development activities. Education authorities may utilize these insights to inform policies aimed at improving teacher quality and school performance.

This study is limited to public elementary schools in Pulau Petak District, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope by including other educational levels, regions, and additional variables influencing teacher

performance, such as emotional intelligence, organizational support, or community engagement.

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that enhance teacher performance and offering actionable guidance for school leaders, teachers, and policymakers to improve the quality of education.

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