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Influence Of Leadership Style And Managerial Competence Of School Principals On Teacher Performance Through Interpersonal Communication Based On Stifin

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze and measure teacher performance as assessed by school principals in an educational institution. Where what is done is how the leadership style and managerial competence of the school principal through interpersonal communication based on the STIFIn concept affects the performance of teachers at Integrated Islamic Schools in Cilegon City. This research is a type of qualitative descriptive research, where research is carried out by collecting and analyzing data such as interviews, observations and document analysis. The results of our research are how the principal sees a case in which each teacher has varying performance, some of the teachers' performance complies with institutional rules, some lack discipline, lack of understanding of communication, and there are still teachers who cannot work as a team well. There are also teachers who ignore time. Therefore, researchers see this as more important and more important to measure the performance of teachers/employees which will later be used as a comparison before supervision is carried out and after supervision is carried out. Where we hope by measuring the extent to which hopes and achievements can be in accordance with what is expected, namely with the Vision and Mission that exists and applies in the school. Hopefully it can inspire and become a benchmark in the same experience.

Keywords: Leadership Style; Managerial Competence; Teacher Performance; Interpersonal Communication

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Introduction

Education is a deliberate and systematic effort to create a learning atmosphere and process in which students can actively develop their potential, ranging from spiritual and moral strength to intelligence, skills, and personal character (Zhahira, 2022). Through education, individuals transition from not knowing to knowing, from being unable to capable, and from not understanding to understanding. A strong education system is thus essential in producing a high-quality generation capable of contributing to national development.

In Indonesia, educational reforms since 1998 have aimed to guarantee human rights in optimizing individual potential for future welfare (Rosyada et al., 2021). Schools serve as formal institutions where teaching and learning occur under the supervision of teachers and educators. The quality of teacher performance is therefore a key factor in determining the success of educational processes within schools (Afriyanli & Sabandi, 2020). Several elements can influence teacher performance, including school leadership, managerial competence, and interpersonal communication.

Integrated Islamic Schools in Cilegon City provide a relevant context for this study, as they combine Islamic values with modern education, shaping unique organizational and instructional dynamics. Observations from ten such schools show that efforts to improve teacher performance involve strengthening understanding of teaching methods and enhancing self-knowledge through personality assessment based on intelligence engines (Aisyah & Mahdia, 2023).

Principal leadership style and managerial competence are important determinants of school effectiveness. Effective leadership fosters a positive work environment, ensures proper direction, and motivates teachers to work optimally. Managerial competence supports the organization of school activities and contributes to the achievement of educational objectives.

Interpersonal communication is another key factor that facilitates coordination, builds trust, and supports collaboration among school members. Effective communication between principals and teachers ultimately strengthens school operations and enhances teacher performance.

The STIFIn concept—Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, and Instinct—offers a personality and intelligence framework used to understand individual differences and improve communication quality (Diana & Sholehah, 2022). In school settings, applying STIFIn can support leaders in tailoring communication to teachers' personality types, thereby improving interaction effectiveness and overall teacher performance.

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A literature review reveals several gaps and inconsistencies in previous research. Studies indicate that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Sugiarti, 2020; Kholis, 2022). However, these studies primarily focus on leadership and motivation without integrating personality-based communication models such as STIFIn.

Furthermore, observations in Integrated Islamic Schools in Cilegon reveal weaknesses in cooperative behaviors among teachers and variability in the quality of interpersonal communication initiated by principals. These findings suggest the need to examine whether STIFIn-based interpersonal communication serves as an intervening variable influencing the relationship between leadership, managerial competence, and teacher performance.

Another gap lies in the limited number of studies conducted in the context of Integrated Islamic Schools, which have unique organizational cultures influenced by Islamic values. This distinct setting strengthens the rationale for exploring leadership dynamics and communication models more comprehensively.

Based on the identified gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership style and managerial competence on teacher performance, with STIFIn-based interpersonal communication serving as an intervening variable in Integrated Islamic Schools in Cilegon City.

Research purposes:

1. To determine the direct effect of the principal's leadership style on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication.
2. To analyze the direct effect of the principal's managerial competence on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication.
3. To determine the direct effect of the principal's leadership style on teacher performance.
4. To analyze the direct effect of the principal's managerial competence on teacher performance.
5. To assess the direct effect of STIFIn-based interpersonal communication on teacher performance.
6. To examine the indirect effect of the principal's leadership style on teacher performance through STIFIn-based interpersonal communication.

7. To examine the indirect effect of the principal's managerial competence on teacher performance through STIFIn-based interpersonal communication.

The following is the research hypothesis:

H1 : It is suspected that the Principal's Leadership Style has a Positive and Significant Direct Influence on STIFIn-Based Interpersonal Communication.

H2 : It is suspected that the Principal's Managerial Competence has a Positive and Significant Direct Influence on STIFIn-Based Interpersonal Communication.

H3 : It is suspected that the Leadership Style has a Positive and Significant Direct Influence on Teacher Performance.

H4 : It is suspected that the Principal's Managerial Competence has a Positive and Significant Direct Influence on Teacher Performance.

H5 : It is suspected that the STIFIn-Based Interpersonal Communication has a Positive and Significant Direct Influence on Teacher Performance

H6 : It is suspected that the Leadership Style has a Positive and Significant Indirect Influence on Teacher Performance through STIFIn-Based Interpersonal Communication

H7 : It is suspected that the Principal's Managerial Competence has a Positive and Significant Indirect Influence on Teacher Performance through STIFIn-Based Interpersonal Communication

Theory

Teacher performance

Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Permendiknas) No. 41 of 2007, Teacher Performance is a teaching achievement resulting from activities carried out by teachers in their main tasks and functions in concrete realization is a logical consequence as a professional in the field of education. According to Burhanudin, Teacher Performance is a description of the quality of work possessed by teachers and is manifested through mastery and application of teacher competencies. According to (Afriyanli & Sabandi, 2020) Teacher performance is the ability of a teacher to carry out an action in accordance with the goals that have been set, which include aspects of planning the teaching and learning process, implementing the teaching and learning process, creating and maintaining optimal classes, controlling optimal learning conditions, and assessing learning outcomes. According to (Sugiarti, 2020) Teacher Performance is behavior or responses that provide results that refer to what they do when they face a task. The performance of teaching staff or teachers concerns all

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activities or behaviors experienced by teaching staff, the answers they make, to provide results or goals. Leadership Style

Leadership style according to (Amirudin & Abu Bakar, 2023) is a leadership model, namely the behavior used by a leader when he is trying to influence others in an organization. The term style is simply the same as the way a leader influences his subordinates or followers. In terms of efforts to align perceptions between people who will influence and people whose behavior is influenced, its position becomes very important. Putting this understanding, it then becomes logical that scientists often measure the success of leaders by studying their leadership style. This study aims to see the leadership style of the principal. This study uses a research approach in the form of a library research or literature study. Leadership includes methods of commanding in ensuring organizational intentions, motivating participant attitudes to achieve goals, commanding to improve groups and their culture. universities are academic communities that need a vanguard to utilize the potential in the school environment (Dwi Suseno & Kuwartika,2023.; Wildan Nuryanto et al., 2024).

A democratic attitude is seen from a pattern of high obligation attitudes and high tolerance rules. Leaders apply a very caring nature, both in how to boost the welfare of teachers and employees. In democratic leadership, the principal plays a strong role in ensuring the obligations and responsibilities of each educator and employee, and continues to observe in adequate proportions. The principal as the highest leader who is very influential and determines the progress of the school, must have administrative abilities that have high commitment and flexibility in carrying out his duties. Good principal leadership must strive to improve teacher performance through instructional staff training programs (Basrowi & Ali, 2023). Therefore, the principal must have the personality or nature and capacity and skills to lead an educational institution (Ali Yusuf, 2023.; Muti et al.,2023; Muti'ah et al., 2024; Nuryanto et al., 2024).

Managerial Competence

The principal's managerial competence includes various skills and knowledge needed to manage and lead a school effectively. Several theories and definitions of principal managerial competence according to experts (Zhahira, 2022) state that managerial competence is the underlying characteristics of an individual related to effective or superior performance in a particular job or situation. This study aims to (1) determine the principal's managerial competence, (2) supporting and inhibiting factors, and, (3) efforts to overcome the principal's

inhibiting factors in improving teacher performance. This study uses an inductive descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection using observation, interview, interview, and documentation methods (Purwaningsih & Tri Bowo Santoso, 2024).

The results of this study are that there are still many obstacles or problems related to the implementation of principal managerial. In general, these problems include: lack of principal supervision, principals rarely hold meetings to discuss improving teacher performance and the results of achievements regarding the implementation of supervision. In fact, the purpose of supervision is to help teachers see clearly the goals of education and try to achieve those goals by fostering and developing better teaching methods and procedures. supporting factors for the principal in carrying out his role to improve teacher performance are the fulfillment of teacher needs, adequate facilities and infrastructure, a conducive school environment, and the establishment of synergistic communication relationships between school components (Basrowi et al., 2024).

Interpersonal Communication Based on the STIFIn Concept

According to (Sholeh et al., 2022), the concept of interpersonal communication based on the STIFIn concept. STIFIn stands for Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, and Instinct, which is an approach to understanding a person's intelligence and personality. The concept of STIFIn-based Interpersonal Communication combines the principles of interpersonal communication with an understanding of STIFIn intelligence types (Basrowi et al., 2024).

Farid Poniman (2009) in the article (Pasmawati, 2019) has concluded that the basic functions of S-T-I-F when associated with Ned Hermann's theory of brain quadrants, then the four basic functions are fixed personality traits that originate from the brain hemispheres (types of intelligence) and are most often used. There are also several theories that are also used as references in the formation of STIFIn personality, namely The 4MAT Learning System developed by Bernice McCarthy referring to four types of Kolb cycles: Divergens (why?), Assimilators (what?), Convergens (how?) and Accommodators (How?). Another model that is also indirectly related is VARK (visual, auditory, reading, kinaesthetic) and the expansion of the Myers-Briggs theory (MBTI). If we look at the theories of C.G. Jung and Myers-Briggs without including introvert and extrovert orientations, the results will be the same as the HBDI Model (Basrowi & Ali, 2023b; Tonich & Basrowi,2023). Then what about the theory for the fifth intelligence in STIFIn, namely the Instinct (In) type? Farid refers to Paul MacLean's Triune Brain theory where there is a reptilian brain. He further explained that this fifth intelligence lies in the function of

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the Hindbrain or Middle Brain (cerebellum, medulla, midbrain, pons, and brain stem [compilation of Luria A.R.'s thoughts 1970. The Functional Organization of the Brain]).

According to (Aisyah, Suhendra, & Ali, 2022) if seen genetically, this introvert-extrovert orientation apparently comes from the way the white layer and gray layer work in the brain. If the white layer is more active, then it is introverted. If the gray layer is more active, then it is an extrovert. These two layers are found in the limbic brain and neocortex, while not in the midbrain.

Methods

Place and Time of Research

The research took place at the Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Cilegon City, Banten Province. The research lasted for three months, starting from April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024.

Research Method

The method used in this study is a descriptive quantitative approach. The design is intended to examine the relationship between variables and explain why the relationship exists, so confirmatory studies and exploratory studies are used. The variables in question are the leadership style and managerial competence of the principal as independent variables and interpersonal communication based on the STIFIn concept as a mediator variable, and teacher performance as the dependent variable.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population in this study was the Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Cilegon City, Banten Province. Where the Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SDIT) has the status of an Integrated Islamic Private School, there are 10 schools in Cilegon City. in this study, the calculation uses the Slovin formula.

Table 1.

List of Population and Research Samples

No	School	Population	Sample – Principals	Sample – Teachers	Total Sample
1	SDIT Tahfidz Daarul Mu'minin	42	1	29	30
2	SD Unggulan Uswatun Hasanah	35	1	26	27
3	SDIT Insantama	15	1	11	12

4	SDIT Al Khairiyah	6	1	4	5
5	SDIT Al Hanif	2	1	1	2
6	SDIT Raudatul Jannah	3	1	2	3
7	SDIT Al Muhajirin	3	1	2	3
8	SDIT Al Muqorrobin	2	1	1	2
9	SDIT Al Mumtaz	2	1	1	2
10	SDIT KH Washid	2	1	1	2
Total		112	10	78	88

Source: https://dapo.kemdikbud.go.id/pd/2/286000

Researchers directly obtain or collect their data sources. Primary data is also referred to as original data or new data that is up to date. Where this data reflects current conditions in the field. Therefore, to obtain primary data, researchers must collect it directly. Techniques that can be used to collect primary data include distributing questionnaires, observation, and documentation. Based on the calculation using the Slovin formula with a total population of 112 respondents, the required sample size is 88 individuals at a 95% significance level. This sample consists of 10 principals and 78 teachers.

Data Analysis Techniques

To estimate the path between the constructs shown in the research model, the study used SmartPLS, which is software that functions to analyze data and perform statistical calculations both parametric and non-parametric with windows.

Results

Outer Model

After going through two modifications, a measurement model was obtained that met the criteria. As shown in Figure 4.5, all items have a loading value greater than 0.60 so that it can be said that all question items for each variable used in this study are valid and can be used for the next analysis stage. The following is a picture of the processed results of the Smart PLS 3 application.

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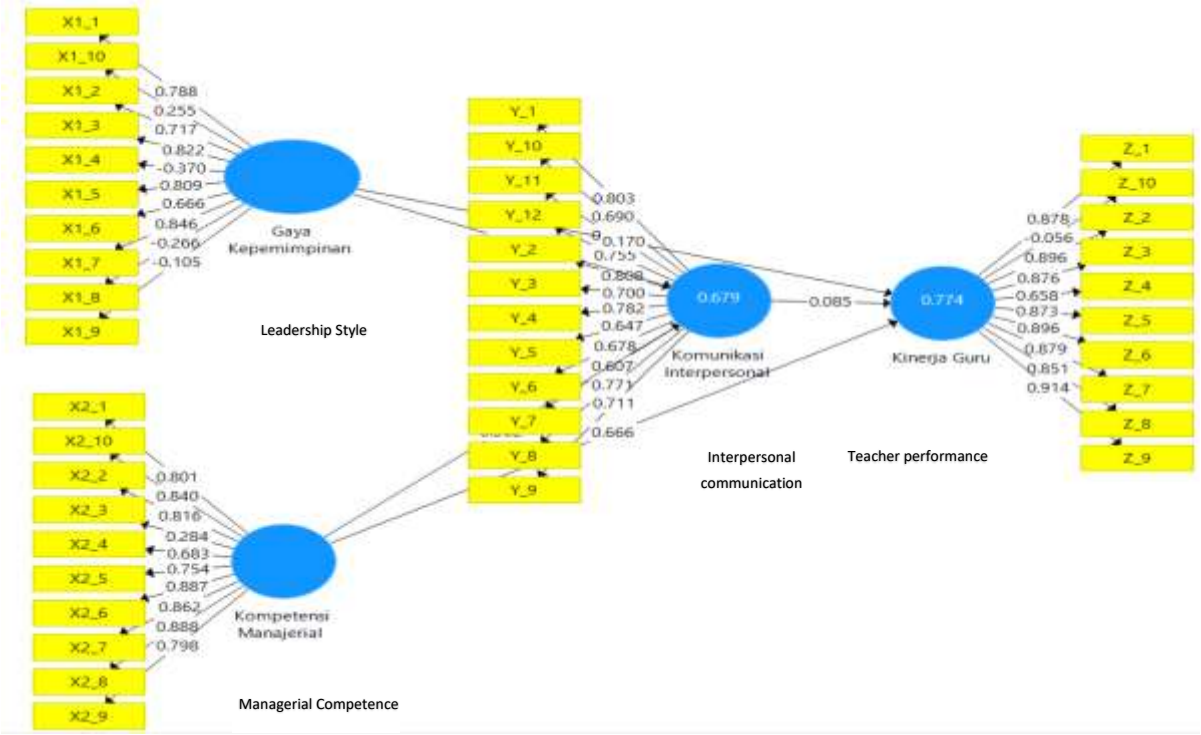
Figure 1
Smart Pls 3 Output Results



Based on the data shown in Table 2 below, all latent variables in this study have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of more than 0.50, a Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.60, and a Composite Reliability value of more than 0.70. This shows that these latent variables have good reliability and have met the requirements specified for the validity and reliability of the research instrument. An AVE value of more than 0.50 indicates that more than 50% of the variance of the indicators measuring the latent variable can be explained by the latent variable, indicating a good ability of the indicator in measuring the latent variable.

A Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.60 indicates adequate internal consistency, while a Composite Reliability value of more than 0.70 indicates high consistency of the latent

variable as a whole. By meeting these three criteria, it can be concluded that the instrument used in this study has good reliability and is suitable for further analysis.

The following table shows the Measurement Results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, Cronbach's Alpha value, and Composite Reliability value.

Table 2.

AVE Value, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability Value

Description	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Leadership Style	0.391	0.712	0.740
Managerial Competence	0.608	0.921	0.937
Interpersonal Communication Based on STIFIn Concept	0.537	0.921	0.933
Teacher Performance	0.667	0.925	0.946

Source: Output Results of Smart PLS 3.0 Calculation

Inner Model

Structural model evaluation is used to determine the significance of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables through the t-test and to see the path coefficient of each relationship. A variable can be said to have a significant influence if the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-statistics value is greater than 1.96.

A small p-value indicates that the probability of error in rejecting the null hypothesis is very low, so that the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable can be considered significant. Meanwhile, a large t-statistics value indicates that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is quite strong. Thus, through this evaluation, we can determine how large and significant the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is in the model being studied.

Table 3.

Results of Direct and Indirect Influence

Influence	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Leadership Style -> Interpersonal Communication	2,519	0.012
Principal Managerial Competence -> Interpersonal Communication	4,625	0.000
Leadership Style -> Teacher Performance	1.446	0.149
Principal Managerial Competence -> Teacher Performance	4.561	0.000
Interpersonal Communication -> Teacher Performance	0.711	0.477
Leadership Style -> Teacher Performance -> Interpersonal Communication	0.647	0.518

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Principal Managerial Competence -> Teacher Performance -> Interpersonal Communication	0,629	0.530

Source: Output Results of Smart PLS 3.0 Calculation

Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis one is obtained, namely the influence of Leadership Style on STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication, which has a positive value of 0.303. This means that if the leadership style increases by one point, then Interpersonal Communication will also increase by 0.326. In addition, the T-statistic value for hypothesis one is 2.519 which is greater than 1.96 (2.519> 1.96), and the p-value is 0.012, which is less than 0.05 (0.012 <0.05).

Therefore, it can be concluded that hypothesis one in this study is accepted, namely the principal's leadership style has a positive and significant influence on STIFIn concept-based communication. Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis two, namely the influence of Principal Managerial Competence on STIFIn-based Interpersonal Communication, is positive at 0.562. This means that if the Principal's managerial competence increases by one point, interpersonal communication will increase by. However, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 4.625, which is smaller than the threshold of 1.96 (4.625> 1.96), and the p-value is 0.000, which is greater than 0.05 (0.000 <0.05).

Based on these data, it can be concluded that hypothesis two is rejected, indicating that Principal Managerial Competence does not have a significant influence on STIFIn-based Interpersonal Communication. Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis three, namely the influence of leadership style on Teacher Performance, is 0.170 This means that if Interpersonal Communication increases, then Teacher Performance will decrease by However, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 1.446 which is smaller than the threshold of 1.96 (1.44 <1.96), and the p-value is 0.150, which is greater than 0.05 (0.150> 0.05).

Based on these data, it can be concluded that hypothesis three is rejected, Leadership Style shows that it does not have a significant influence on Teacher Performance. Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis four, namely the influence of the Principal's Managerial Competence on Teacher Performance, is positive at 0.666 If this path coefficient value indicates a negative relationship between two variables. This means that an increase in one variable will be followed by a decrease in another variable This means that if Interpersonal Communication based on the STIFIn concept increases by one point, then Teacher Performance

will decrease by 0.544. However, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 4.625, which is greater than the threshold of 1.96 (4.625 > 1.96), and the p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the fifth hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely the principal's managerial competence has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance.

Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for the fifth hypothesis, namely the influence of Interpersonal Communication on Teacher Performance, is positive at 0.085. This means that if the Leadership Style increases by five points, Teacher Performance will increase by 0.090. However, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 0.711, which is smaller than the threshold of 1.96 (0.719 < 1.96), and the p-value is 0.472 which is greater than 0.05 (0.472 > 0.05). Based on these data, it can be concluded that hypothesis five is rejected, indicating that STIFIn Concept-Based Interpersonal Communication does not have a significant influence on Teacher Performance.

Indirect Influence

Table 4.
Path Coefficient of Principal Managerial Competence on Teacher Performance Through Interpersonal Communication Based on STIFIn Concept

Description	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Leadership Style on Teacher Performance through Interpersonal Communication Based on the STIFIn Concept	0,026	0,021	0,040	0.647	0.518

Source: Smart PLS 4.1 Calculation Output Results

Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis six which evaluates the influence of Leadership Style on teacher performance through STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication as a mediator, is Positive at 0.026. This shows that STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication negatively mediates the influence of leadership style on teacher performance. In addition, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 0.647, which is greater than the threshold of 1.96 (0.647 <1.96), and the p-value is 0.518 which is smaller than 0.05 (0.518> 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that hypothesis six is rejected, indicating

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that interpersonal communication negatively and insignificantly mediates the influence of leadership style on teacher performance.

Table 5.
Path Coefficient of Principal Managerial Competence on Teacher Performance Through STIFIn Concept-Based Interpersonal Communication

Description	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Principal's Managerial Competence on Teacher Performance through Interpersonal Communication based on the STIFIn concept	0,048	0,057	0,076	0,629	0,530

Source: Output Results of Smart PLS 4.1 Calculation

Based on the table above, the path coefficient value for hypothesis seven which evaluates the influence of principal managerial competence on teacher performance through STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication as a mediator, is positive at 0.048, indicating that STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication positively mediates the influence of managerial competence on teacher performance. In addition, the T-statistic value for this hypothesis is 0.629, which is greater than the threshold of 1.96 (0.629> 1.96), and the p-value is 0.530, which is smaller than 0.05 (0.530> 0.05). Based on these data, it can be concluded that hypothesis seven is rejected, because STIFIn concept-based interpersonal communication shows that it negatively and significantly mediates the influence of principal managerial competence on teacher performance.

Discussion

Leadership style on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication

The finding that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication (coef. = 0.303; t = 2.519; p = .012) reinforces the idea that the behaviour of school principals shapes the quality of interaction among school stakeholders. This relationship suggests that when leaders demonstrate clarity, support, and adaptability, communication becomes more aligned and effective, especially when assessed using a personality-based framework such as STIFIn. This is consistent with the broader understanding that effective communication in educational institutions is often rooted in the leader's ability to regulate their own interpersonal approach.

Previous studies have similarly emphasized that leadership behaviours influence communication climates within schools. Afriyanli and Sabandi (2020) demonstrated that school leaders who practise constructive and participative leadership tend to foster open, trustworthy communication patterns among teachers. Their findings provide empirical support for the notion that leadership actions directly shape interaction norms, which aligns with the positive linkage identified in the present research.

Moreover, the result is in line with personality-sensitive communication theories, which argue that communication effectiveness increases when messages are tailored to the personality orientation of the communication partner. Diana and Sholehah (2022) showed that leaders who adapt their communication style based on personality cues tend to achieve better relational outcomes and improved mutual understanding. Within the STIFIn framework such leadership adaptability becomes even more crucial.

Overall, the convergence between the present findings and previous research highlights the essential role of leadership style in shaping interpersonal communication that is nuanced, personalised, and psychologically informed. The integration of leadership theory and personality-based communication frameworks such as STIFIn provides a clearer explanation of why well-executed leadership behaviours promote communicative harmony within schools. This reinforces the view that effective school leadership is inseparable from the capacity to align communication strategies with the unique personality dynamics of teachers and other school members.

Managerial competence STIFIn-based interpersonal communication

The finding that managerial competence has a strong positive and significant effect on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication (coef. = 0.562; t = 4.625; $p < .001$) indicates that principals who excel in planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling school activities also tend to foster more effective communication patterns aligned with STIFIn principles. This suggests that managerial mastery does not only ensure administrative efficiency but also enhances the interpersonal dynamics needed for smooth collaboration within the school environment. When principals manage processes systematically, they create clear expectations and structured interactions that support personality-based communication approaches.

This result is consistent with previous findings that underscore the importance of managerial skills in shaping communication systems in schools. Afriyanli and Sabandi (2020) found that principals with strong managerial abilities were more capable of developing

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communication climates that facilitated transparency and coordination. Their research emphasised that organisational routines and structured management practices directly improve how information is shared and understood among school members, supporting the direction of the present study's findings.

Further support comes from Rosyada et al. (2021), who highlighted that managerial competence contributes to the establishment of organisational systems that enable teachers to communicate and collaborate more effectively. They argued that when principals implement clear workflows and communication protocols, interpersonal exchanges become more intentional and aligned with organisational goals. This aligns with the STIFIn framework, which stresses the importance of tailoring communication to individual personality functions while maintaining clear structural guidance from school leaders.

Overall, the alignment between the present results and previous literature suggests that managerial competence is a foundational element in fostering STIFIn-based interpersonal communication. Principals who manage schools with clarity, structure, and strategic direction naturally create communication environments that accommodate personality differences and support harmonious interaction. This reinforces the notion that managerial competence is not only essential for organisational performance but also for creating psychologically attuned communication patterns within educational institutions.

Leadership style on Teacher performance

The finding that leadership style does not have a significant direct effect on teacher performance (coef. = 0.170; t = 1.446; p = .149) stands in contrast to the dominant pattern in previous studies. Prior research generally reports that effective leadership—whether transformational, instructional, or situational—directly boosts teacher motivation, organizational commitment, and ultimately performance (Sugiarti, 2020; Kholis, 2022). In those studies, leadership behaviors such as providing clear direction, inspiring teachers, and offering constructive feedback were shown to translate into measurable improvements in teaching quality and productivity. The discrepancy with the present findings therefore suggests that the leadership–performance link may not always operate in a uniform or universal manner across educational settings.

Several plausible explanations can help clarify this divergence. First, it is possible that in the context of integrated Islamic schools in Cilegon, leadership style exerts its influence on performance primarily through indirect pathways rather than through a direct effect. This is consistent with theoretical models proposing that leadership often shapes teacher outcomes through mediators such as interpersonal communication, work climate, teacher self-efficacy, or managerial systems rather than through leadership behaviors alone. If so, unmeasured or context-specific mediators may play a more dominant role in this setting. Such patterns echo findings by S. Aisyah et al. (2022a), who caution that leadership does not automatically translate into improved performance without the presence of supportive organizational processes.

Another possible explanation involves differences in measurement between studies. Variation in how leadership style is operationalized—whether transformational, democratic, spiritual, or instructional—and how teacher performance is defined may influence the observed statistical relationships. Some studies employ self-report performance measures, while others use supervisor evaluations or objective indicators, which can affect the sensitivity of detecting leadership impacts. The present study's operationalization, particularly with the integration of the STIFIn framework in interpersonal communication, may reflect a more nuanced relational context that moderates the direct role of leadership.

Finally, contextual characteristics of integrated Islamic schools in Cilegon may attenuate the direct link between leadership style and teacher performance. Factors such as strong collective norms, the presence of religious or value-based organizational cultures, or limited administrative resources may reduce the extent to which leadership behaviors independently drive teacher performance. In such environments, teachers' performance may depend more on structural support, managerial competence, or internal motivation derived from religious and institutional values rather than leadership style alone. This reinforces the need to view leadership impacts as contingent upon contextual, organizational, and mediating variables rather than inherently direct.

Managerial competence on Teacher performance

The strong and significant positive influence of principal managerial competence on teacher performance (coef. = 0.666; t = 4.561; p < .001) highlights the centrality of the principal's managerial role in shaping teacher outcomes. This finding aligns with a broad body of educational management literature showing that effective planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising directly strengthen teachers' instructional effectiveness (Afriyanli & Sabandi,

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2020). Unlike leadership style, which often influences teachers through relational or motivational pathways, managerial competence provides the structural, procedural, and operational foundation that enables teachers to meet performance expectations. Thus, in the context of integrated Islamic schools in Cilegon, managerial competence appears to function as a more immediate and powerful determinant of teacher performance.

These findings are reinforced by prior research demonstrating that principals who excel in managerial tasks, such as instructional supervision, administrative control, and performance monitoring, foster more efficient teaching environments and higher levels of teacher accountability (Rosyada et al., 2021; Sugiarti, 2020). Studies also indicate that teachers tend to perform better when school management systems are clear, well-organized, and consistently implemented. The present results strengthen this argument by showing that managerial competence not only matters but has a substantially stronger effect than leadership style in this particular educational context. This suggests that managerial clarity and consistency may be more salient drivers of teacher performance than inspirational or relational leadership behaviors.

Another interpretation is that the managerial responsibilities of principals in integrated Islamic schools may be particularly complex, requiring strong administrative coordination to balance academic expectations with religious, cultural, and character-based programs. Such institutions often rely on structured routines, tight coordination, and high levels of administrative oversight to maintain program quality. In environments like these, managerial competence may exert a more direct influence on teachers' daily tasks, workload distribution, and instructional focus. This contextual specificity could explain why managerial competence is more predictive of performance than leadership style, as principals' managerial decisions directly affect classroom practice and resource accessibility.

Finally, the prominence of managerial competence over leadership style in predicting teacher performance supports theoretical models that emphasize structural and systemic factors within school organizations. While leadership may shape long-term culture and motivation, managerial competence has a more immediate impact on operational efficiency and teacher task execution. This distinction aligns with prior conclusions that leadership effects are often mediated or moderated by organizational systems, whereas managerial competence exerts more direct effects on teacher outcomes (Aisyah et al., 2022a). The present findings

therefore contribute to a growing recognition that strong managerial capacity is indispensable for improving teacher performance, particularly in school contexts characterized by complex operational demands.

STIFIn-based interpersonal communication to Teacher performance

The finding that STIFIn-based interpersonal communication does not significantly influence teacher performance (coef. = 0.085; t = 0.711; p = .477) contrasts with theoretical expectations derived from personality-aligned communication models. STIFIn theory assumes that communication tailored to an individual's dominant "intelligence engine" should enhance clarity, reduce misunderstanding, and increase behavioral alignment (Diana & Sholehah, 2022). In practice, however, the present results indicate that improvements in communication quality may not automatically translate into measurable gains in teacher performance. This suggests that relational enhancements alone might be insufficient to affect observable performance indicators within the timeframe of the study.

Previous research supports this interpretation by showing that communication quality often improves psychological or relational outcomes—such as trust, motivation, or interpersonal harmony—before influencing performance outcomes (Rosyada et al., 2021). In other words, the effect pathway may operate indirectly or over an extended period, making short-term performance changes less detectable. STIFIn-based communication may therefore strengthen interpersonal rapport or team cohesion without immediately enhancing instructional effectiveness, classroom management, or productivity. Such lagged effects have been noted in broader communication and leadership literature, where interpersonal mechanisms contribute gradually to performance metrics.

Another explanation concerns measurement alignment. The instruments used to assess STIFIn-based interpersonal communication may capture behavioral tendencies related to personality matching, while the teacher performance instrument may measure more concrete and observable outputs. If these constructs operate on different timeframes—short-term communication behavior versus medium-term performance changes—the statistical link may appear weaker. Variation in the fidelity of STIFIn implementation across principals could also reduce the consistency of its effects. Not all principals may apply STIFIn communication principles with the same depth, accuracy, or frequency, which may dilute the observable impact at the sample level.

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Finally, evidence from N. Aisyah and Mahdia (2023) indicates that knowledge of teachers' "intelligence engines" can strengthen teacher confidence, classroom interaction, and self-leadership. This suggests that the benefits of STIFIn may depend on conditional factors such as teacher experience, teacher openness to personality-based approaches, or the principal's competence. These moderators were not examined in the present study but could explain why the direct relationship was not significant. The current findings therefore imply that STIFIn-based communication may exert influence only under certain conditions or through indirect pathways rather than through direct and immediate effects on performance.

Leadership on teacher performance, with STIFIn-based communication as mediator

The findings show that both indirect pathways—leadership style → STIFIn-based interpersonal communication on teacher performance (indirect effect = 0.026; t = 0.647; p = .518) and managerial competence on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication → teacher performance (indirect effect = 0.048; t = 0.629; p = .530)—were statistically non-significant. Although the raw output reported these as "negative mediations," the coefficients were very small and practically close to zero. This indicates that STIFIn-based interpersonal communication does not function as an effective mediator between leadership or managerial competence and teacher performance in this sample. This pattern aligns with the earlier finding that STIFIn communication itself does not significantly predict teacher performance, thereby limiting its potential mediation role.

These results diverge from classical mediation models in the leadership literature, where communication quality frequently acts as a mechanism through which leadership affects teacher motivation, satisfaction, and performance (Afriyanli & Sabandi, 2020). In many school-leadership studies, communication serves as a critical behavioral channel linking leadership inputs to teacher behaviors and outputs. However, the absence of mediation in the present study suggests that STIFIn-based communication may represent a different type of communication construct—more focused on personality alignment than on instructional coaching, supervision, or performance management—thereby reducing its ability to transmit leadership influence toward performance outcomes.

Furthermore, prior research on personality-based communication frameworks, including STIFIn, indicates that their strongest impact tends to occur in the relational domain, such as

improving rapport, trust, emotional harmony, and conflict minimization (Diana & Sholehah, 2022). Such relational improvements do not always translate directly into short-term performance gains unless coupled with structured managerial practices, such as supervision, feedback, workload regulation, or pedagogical support (Rosyada et al., 2021). This may explain why STIFIn-based communication showed significant relationships with leadership and managerial competence, but did not function as a conduit for performance change.

Finally, the literature also notes that teacher performance is influenced by a combination of structural and psychological variables, including workload, professional development, leadership support, and intrinsic motivation (Sugiarti, 2020; Kholis, 2022). If these structural factors are stronger determinants of teacher performance in Integrated Islamic schools in Cilegon, the influence of communication, especially personality-aligned communication, may be overshadowed. As noted by N. Aisyah and Mahdia (2023), the benefits of STIFIn understanding may emerge more through self-understanding and classroom leadership rather than through direct performance enhancement. Thus, the present findings imply that while STIFIn-based communication enriches interpersonal dynamics, it does not operate as a mediating mechanism in the leadership–performance or managerial competence–performance pathways.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and hypothesis testing, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the principal's leadership style has a positive and significant influence on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication. This indicates that principals who demonstrate stronger leadership behaviors tend to foster more effective interpersonal communication patterns aligned with the STIFIn framework.

Second, the principal's managerial competence also shows a positive and significant influence on STIFIn-based interpersonal communication. This suggests that principals who are more competent in planning, organizing, and managing school operations are more capable of building clear, structured, and personality-sensitive communication with teachers.

However, STIFIn-based interpersonal communication does not significantly influence teacher performance and therefore does not mediate the relationship between either leadership style or managerial competence and teacher performance. Thus, although leadership and managerial skills improve the quality of interpersonal communication, these communication improvements do not directly translate into measurable changes in teacher performance within the scope of this study.

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Overall, the main implication of this study is that leadership style and managerial competence are important predictors of STIFIn-based interpersonal communication in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools in Cilegon City. Efforts to enhance school leadership and managerial practices may therefore focus on strengthening communication processes, while acknowledging that additional factors beyond communication likely shape teacher performance.

Author Contribution Statement

Karmilah Ilyas: Conceptualization and Research Design; Data Curation and Investigation; Methodology; Project Administration; Writing, Original Draft; Writing - Review & Editing**.**

Uli Wildan Nuryanto: Methodology; Writing , Review & Editing; Validation.

Yolla Sukma Handayani: Formal Analysis and Visualization; Writing, Review & Editing. Validation, Visualization; Writing - Review & Editing.

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