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Utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform and Leadership Management on the Performance of Elementary School Principals in Kuta Buloh, South Aceh Regency

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the benefits of the Merdeka Mengajar platform and leadership management on the performance of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh, South Aceh Regency. This research method is qualitative with a case study model. The sample as a source of data in this study is the school supervisor as the person who provides guidance and administrative supervision of the principal and teachers at Elementary School Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh and State Elementary School 3 Kuta Buloh as the person who interacts directly and feels the impact of the leadership of the principal where the researcher conducted the research. Data collection techniques in this study were through observation, questionnaires and questionnaires. The data analysis process in qualitative research includes data reduction, data display, as well as drawing conclusions and verification. Based on the results of the analysis of the research questionnaire data on the Utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform and Leadership Management on the Performance of Elementary School Principals in Kuta Buloh, South Aceh Regency, it can be concluded that; the utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in elementary schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency is very high; Principal Leadership Management at Elementary Schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency has been running very well; The utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is very high and Principal Leadership Management is very good, having a positive effect on improving the performance of principals.

Keywords: Merdeka Teaching Platform, Leadership Management, Elementary School Principal Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources cannot be separated from an organization, this is because human resources are the key to determining the development of an organization. For that, it is necessary to develop human resources. The development of human resources can be done by mastering and improving Science and Technology (IPTEK). This also applies in the world of education, one of the human resources in the world of education is the Principal. The Principal

is required to have quality and quantity so that they are able to build and develop schools that compete globally.

The Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM) application is designed to facilitate teaching, student evaluation and training to improve competency for educators, it also functions to inspire colleagues. With this platform, Principals, Teachers, Educators and Students can improve their performance with creativity that is developed by themselves. Likewise, a good and effective principal leadership system and management will be able to improve the motivation and performance of the teachers they lead in working.

The world of education is certainly familiar with the term curriculum. Dr. H. Nana Sudjana (2005: 67) said that the curriculum is an intention and hope that is poured into the form of a plan or educational program implemented by educators in schools, the curriculum as an intention & plan, while its implementation is the teaching and learning process, and those involved in the process are educators and students. Furthermore, B. Bara, Ch (2008) conceptualizes the curriculum into 4 meanings, namely: (1) curriculum as a product; (2) as a program; (3) as a desired or achieved result; and (4) as a learning experience.

The curriculum is also explained in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 1 point 19, namely "The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials and methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals". In Indonesia, there are also several curricula that have been implemented, namely the 1947 curriculum, the 1952 curriculum, the 1964 curriculum, the 1968 curriculum, the 1975 curriculum, the 1984 curriculum, the 1994 curriculum, the 2004 curriculum, the 2006 curriculum, the 2013 curriculum to the latest, namely the independent curriculum (ditjen.kemdikbud.go.id). Curriculum changes are commonplace for the purpose of developing graduate competency improvement. Along with changes in the times and social conditions that cause changes in the curriculum, one of which is because of the Covid-19 outbreak

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the country since early 2020. Since then, a distance learning process has been implemented which has caused many obstacles related to the learning process in educational units, especially Elementary Schools. The 2013 Curriculum used in the pre-pandemic era is the only curriculum used by educational units for learning. During the 2020 to 2021 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Technology will issue guidelines for the use of the 2013 curriculum and the emergency curriculum (simplified K-13) as a reference for the curriculum of educational units. In this learning recovery, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology issued a policy that the implementation of the independent curriculum is carried out in stages. This can be interpreted that schools can still use the 2013 Curriculum as the basis for managing learning, as well as the Emergency Curriculum which is a modification of the 2013 Curriculum can still be used by these educational units. The Independent Curriculum as an option for all educational units in the data collection process is an educational unit that is ready to implement the Independent Curriculum. This is stated in the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Implementing the Curriculum in the Context of Learning Recovery.

In accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, support for the implementation of the independent curriculum can be done through the learning transformation process, with one focus being digital transformation (Muflihin & Warsito, 2024; Tamami et al., 2024). Therefore, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform known as PMM is an application that is expected to be able to support the development of the competence of educators and education personnel in Indonesia to be better.

Since 2023, the Merdeka Curriculum has begun to be implemented in schools. In this case, its implementation still faces various obstacles (Ndari & Mahmudah, 2023; Nurdianti et al., 2024). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has issued a policy regarding the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) as a means that can support and

facilitate teachers in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Optimizing resources is considered the most appropriate alternative to creating independent schools with high excellence (Rahayu et al., 2024).

The use of PMM in schools requires effective principal management, considering the central role of the principal in directing and managing the entire educational process. The principal as a leader in the field of education, must have a deep understanding of technology and the skills to integrate it optimally into educational strategies. Research shows that principal management has a significant impact on teacher performance (Rivayanti et al., 2020). With professional educational management expertise, it is hoped that the principal will be able to design effective school programs, create a supportive school environment, build the performance of school staff, and provide guidance to teachers in implementing the learning process (Rahayu et al., 2024).

Although PMM offers great opportunities, managing this platform also presents real challenges that must be faced by principals, especially in elementary schools. The paradigm shift from conventional learning to online learning requires adaptation from all parties involved, including teachers, students, and principals (Al Fajri & Andarwulan, 2023). In addition, the uneven distribution of internet networks in certain areas is also a serious problem. The current reality is that the Merdeka Teaching platform has not been optimally utilized in 38 provinces in Indonesia, in this case one of which is the province of Aceh.

Based on the researcher's pre-research observations, before the Merdeka Mengajar Platform existed, the conventional teaching and learning process was very monotonous, where the teacher became the center of attention and students became listeners and observers of the teacher while teaching. The presence of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform changes the pattern of the conventional teaching and learning process into a more balanced relationship of dependence between teachers and students, where student participation in the teaching and learning process is more dominant with discussions and the learning process does not have to be carried out in the classroom.

In general, all schools in Aceh province have implemented the teaching and learning process with the independent curriculum that utilizes the independent teaching platform in accordance with the policies of the Ministry of Education, one of which is schools in South Aceh Regency, especially elementary schools in Kuta Buloh. The use of the independent teaching platform should have a positive impact, because it facilitates the teaching and learning process, but in fact in Kuta Buloh I the effectiveness of the use has not been seen and has an impact on the performance of the principal. According to the researcher's pre-research observations, this is based on the unpreparedness of the principal to transform learning from conventional to digital-based learning.

Based on the description above, the researcher's pre-observation, in Kuta Buloh there are two elementary schools, namely Kuta Buloh State Elementary School and Kuta Buloh Muhammadiyah Elementary School. It was obtained from initial information that the elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh have utilized the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) and developed a good leadership management system as its function should be, but it is not yet perfect in its implementation.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative with a case study model. According to Robert K Yin in (Rosyada, 2020) explains that a case study is a study that focuses only on a single phenomenon that is happening in real life, with a comprehensive review and a variety of disciplines. Case study research is empirical research that investigates a single phenomenon that is happening in a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context cannot be determined clearly and clearly.

In other words, the social context that underlies the phenomenon is not the only context that can explain the meaning of the phenomenon, and can actually be explained by trying to analyze various relevant contexts. Therefore, the case study research must be carried out seriously, in depth, only one phenomenon, is happening, with a review of various disciplines. Then according to Yin also explained, according to the characteristics that focus only on a single phenomenon, then case study research can be carried out with the aim of exploring, explaining, and even describing.

According to Stake inside (Rosyada, 2020), there are four characteristics of case study research, namely holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathetic. Thus, case study research can find and explain cases comprehensively by analyzing other phenomena that have a contextual relationship to the incident being studied.

In this study, after the author collected data or information related to the discussion of the research on the Utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) and Leadership Management at SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh and SD Negeri 3 Kuta Buloh, the author then described it in the form of a narrative explanation.

Another sample as a source of data in this study is the school supervisor as a person who provides guidance and administrative supervision of the principal and teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh and SD Negeri 3 Kuta Buloh as a person who interacts directly and feels the impact of the leadership of the principal where the researcher conducted the research. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling combined with purposive sampling technique. The population that became the respondents of this study is as follows;

Table 1. Research Respondent Population

No	Respondents	Amount
1	School Supervisor	1 Person
2	Muhammadiyah Elementary School Kuta Buloh	10 People
3	Public Elementary School 3 Kuta Buloh	12 People
Total Population of Respondents		23 People

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Data collection techniques in this study are by observation, questionnaires and questionnaires. The data analysis process in qualitative research according to Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2014:246) includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study uses sources that have been determined in the previous chapter, namely, elementary school supervisors, principals, and all teachers, with the distribution of information in two different elementary schools. The schools used as research sites are SDN 3 Kuta Buloh and SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency. The results of data processing from various information obtained by the author are presented in the form of descriptions as follows.

Utilization of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM)

The Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM) application is designed to facilitate teaching, student evaluation and training to improve competency for educators, it also functions to inspire colleagues. With this platform, Principals, Teachers, Educators and Students can improve their performance with creativity that is developed independently.

The following are the results of the analysis of the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) to Performance of Elementary School Principals based on a questionnaire filled out by Muhammadiyah Elementary School teachers as shown in Table 4.1 below

Table 2. Results of PMM Analysis of Muhammadiyah Elementary School Teachers

No	Question	Average	Percentage %	Category
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1	I know and understand the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM)	4.89	97.78	Very high
2	At the school where I work, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform has been socialized	4.89	97.78	Very high
3	At the school where I work, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform has been socialized periodically.	4.89	97.78	Very high
4	At the school where I work, we have received information about the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.22	84.44	Very high
5	At the school where I work, teachers already use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.22	84.44	Very high
6	The Merdeka Mengajar platform is in line with current teaching needs	5.00	100.00	Very high
7	The Merdeka Mengajar platform suits me	4.44	88.89	Very high
8	I can improve my teaching skills after getting information about the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	5.00	100.00	Very high
9	I can develop various teaching methods through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.89	97.78	Very high
10	The Merdeka Mengajar platform has increased my knowledge and insight	4.44	88.89	Very high
11	The Merdeka Mengajar platform has developed my creative space in teaching	4.67	93.33	Very high
12	The Merdeka Mengajar platform is very useful in my career development	4.89	97.78	Very high
13	The Merdeka Mengajar platform must be socialized regularly to support the competence of school principals and teachers.	4.78	95.56	Very high
Average		4.71	94.19	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

The data in bold 2. above is in accordance with the results of the researcher's interview with the principal who stated that the utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh was very high. The same thing was also expressed by the Principal of SDN 3 Kuta Buloh, that the utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at the school was also very high, which statement was confirmed by the results of the monitoring data analysis of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SDN 3 Kuta Buloh as in table 3. below;

Table 3. Results of PMM Analysis for Teachers at State Elementary School 3 Kuta Buloh

No	Question	Average	Percentage %	Category
1	I know and understand the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM)	4.82	96.36	Very high
2	At the school where I work, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform has been socialized	4.64	92.73	Very high
3	At the school where I work, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform has been socialized periodically.	4.64	92.73	Very high
4	At the school where I work, we have received information about the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.45	89.09	Very high
5	At the school where I work, teachers already use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.55	90.91	Very high
6	The Merdeka Mengajar platform is in line with current teaching needs	4.55	90.91	Very high
7	The Merdeka Mengajar platform suits me	4.36	87.27	Very high

8	I can improve my teaching skills after getting information about the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.36	87.27	Very high
9	I can develop various teaching methods through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform	4.55	90.91	Very high
10	The Merdeka Mengajar platform has increased my knowledge and insight	4.64	92.73	Very high
11	The Merdeka Mengajar platform has developed my creative space in teaching	4.64	92.73	Very high
12	The Merdeka Mengajar platform is very useful in my career development	4.91	98.18	Very high
13	The Merdeka Mengajar platform must be socialized regularly to support the competence of school principals and teachers.	4.91	98.18	Very high
Average		4.62	92.31	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Based on the results of data analysis in tables 2 and 3 above, it can be seen that the utilization of the medeka pengajar platform in elementary schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency is very high.

Principal Leadership Management

Principal leadership is an important factor and determines whether or not a school is successful in achieving its goals.. A good and effective school principal leadership system and management will be able to increase the motivation and performance of the teachers they lead at work. The following is an analysis of the leadership data of the Kuta Buloh Muhammadiyah Elementary School principal based on a questionnaire filled out by the teacher council, as in table 4. below,

Table 4. Results Of The Analysis Of Leadership Management Of Muhammadiyah Elementary School Principals

No	Question	Average	Percentage %	Category
1	At the school where I work, the management and leadership system has been implemented well.	5.00	100.00	Very high
2	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system is running well.	5.00	100.00	Very high
3	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves teacher discipline.	4.33	86.67	Very high
4	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves teacher competence.	5.00	100.00	Very high
5	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves the comfort of the teachers' working environment.	4.78	95.56	Very high
6	At the school where I work, teachers feel well protected	4.67	93.33	Very high
7	At the school where I work, the Principal's ideas were well received by fellow teachers.	5.00	100.00	Very high
8	At the school where I work, the Principal's ideas are always well received by fellow teachers and school staff.	4.44	88.89	Very high
9	At the school where I work, the principal plans activities that are in accordance with the capabilities of the human resources available at the school.	4.89	97.78	Very high

10	At the school where I work, human resources are empowered according to their potential.	4.89	97.78	Very high
11	At the school where I work, the principal makes operational instructions for every school activity.	5.00	100.00	Very high
12	At the school where I work, the principal understands the school's needs.	4.44	88.89	Very high
Average		4.79	95.74	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Based on the results of the questionnaire data analysis in table 4. above, we can see that the leadership management system of the principal of Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh Elementary School has been running very well. This is also confirmed based on the results of the author's interview with Mr. Kamarudzaman as the school supervisor. Not only Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh Elementary School, according to Mr. Kamarudzaman, at SDN 3 Kuta Buloh which is one of the objects of the author's research, leadership has also been carried out very well. This is also confirmed from the results of the questionnaire data analysis that the author gave to teachers at SDN 3 Kuta Buloh, as in table 5. below;

Table 5. Results Of Leadership Management Analysis Of The Principal Of State Elementary School 3 Kuta Buloh

No	Question	Average	Percentage %	Category
1	At the school where I work, the management and leadership system has been implemented well.	4.09	81.82	Very high
2	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system is running well.	4.36	87.27	Very high
3	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves teacher discipline.	4.55	90.91	Very high
4	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves teacher competence.	4.45	89.09	Very high
5	In the school where I work, the principal's management and leadership system improves the comfort of the teachers' working environment.	4.45	89.09	Very high
6	At the school where I work, teachers feel well protected	4.64	92.73	Very high
7	At the school where I work, the Principal's ideas were well received by fellow teachers.	4.82	96.36	Very high
8	At the school where I work, the Principal's ideas are always well received by fellow teachers and school staff.	4.55	90.91	Very high
9	At the school where I work, the principal plans activities that are in accordance with the capabilities of the human resources available at the school.	4.64	92.73	Very high
10	At the school where I work, human resources are empowered according to their potential.	4.55	90.91	Very high
11	At the school where I work, the principal makes operational instructions for every school activity.	4.73	94.55	Very high
12	At the school where I work, the principal understands the school's needs.	4.45	89.09	Very high
Average		4.52	90.45	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Based on tables 4. and 5. above, it can be seen that the leadership management system of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency has been running very well.

DISCUSSION

After processing and analyzing data on the principal questionnaire and teacher questionnaire, the results obtained were that The utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform and Leadership Management on the Performance of Elementary School Principals in Kuta Buloh, South Aceh Regency is very high, where the Merdeka Mengajar platform and principal leadership management have a very significant positive impact on improving the performance of the principal himself.

In this study, data triangulation was used to ensure the accuracy of findings by comparing information from different sources, techniques, and times. The approach used to increase the validity and reliability of research results by combining various data sources, data collection techniques, or data collection times.

The data in this research is primary data that the author obtained directly from the source. The sources for this research were 1 supervisor of elementary schools in Kuta Buloh, 1 principal of SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh, 1 principal of SDN 3 Kuta Buloh, 11 persons of the Teachers Council of SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh and 9 persons of the Teachers Council of SDN 3 Kuta Buloh. With a total number of resource persons 23 people.

The data in this study were obtained through two events, namely interviews with elementary school supervisors and elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh. Data collection in this study was carried out from 12 to 18 November 2024.

Utilization of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM)

Since 2023, the Merdeka Curriculum has begun to be implemented in schools. Although there are still many obstacles in its implementation. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has issued a policy regarding the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) as a means that can support and facilitate teachers in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study aims to determine the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) on the performance of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency.

The same research was also conducted by Dewi Kartikasari, et al. (2023) in the Gatot Subroto Cluster area, the Ungaran Timur District Education Coordinator, Semarang. Although all elementary schools in the cluster have implemented the Merdeka Teaching curriculum by utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, the results of the study show that in the Gatot Subroto Cluster area, the implementation of the Merdeka Teaching curriculum still encounters many obstacles, including teachers still relying on textbooks, lack of literacy, minimal references, and difficulty in accessing digital and internet, whereas in order to implement the Merdeka Curriculum properly, teachers are required to increase their reading literacy, increase references, and improve the quality of teacher competence, and be able to manage their time well. Teachers must also have easy access to digital and the internet.

In this study, it was found that the utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in elementary schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency was very high. After processing and analyzing data on the questionnaire filled out by the teacher, the results of the final data analysis were obtained as shown in table 6 below,

Table 6. Results of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) Questionnaire Data Analysis

Evaluation	Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh	Elementary School SDN 3 Kuta Buloh
Average	4.71	4.62
Percentage %	94.19	92.31
Category	Very high	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Based on the results of the questionnaire data analysis in table 6 above, it can be seen that Utilization of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) on the performance of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency is very high, with a questionnaire data analysis value of SD Muhammadiyah of 4.71 or equivalent to 94.19% while the questionnaire data analysis value of SDN 3 Kuta Buloh is 4.62 or equal to 92.31%. This is in accordance with the opinion of Sanusi et al., 2022 who said Principals and teachers who teach various subjects in class are required to utilize the platform in learning.

The results of the research analysis show that elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh already understand that the use of the Merdeka Teaching platform can have a positive effect on the performance of the principal himself. Where by utilizing the Merdeka Teaching platform, principals can improve the quality and capacity of their leadership. This is in accordance with the opinion of Wibowo, 2016, who said that principals have a central role in improving the quality of learning in schools.

This opinion is supported by the answer of the elementary school supervisor, Mr. Kamarudzaman during the interview session when the author asked, "Does PMM affect the performance of the principal, if so, what is the effect?". Based on this question, the school supervisor answered that PMM has a significant impact on the performance of the principal, especially in strengthening their capacity as educational leaders. Some of the effects are as follows:

Principal Competency Strengthening, PMM provides various digital resources and training designed to improve principals' managerial, pedagogical, and leadership skills. With access to relevant training modules, teaching materials, and educational strategies, principals can develop their ability to manage schools more effectively; Enhanced Transformational Leadership, PMM encourages principals to become inspiring and adaptive leaders to change, especially in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Thus, principals are encouraged to be more proactive in directing teachers and students towards achieving optimal learning outcomes; Access to Technology and Information, With PMM, principals have access to educational technology that makes it easier for them to manage administration, monitor teacher performance, and evaluate student learning outcomes. This can improve the operational efficiency of schools; Data-Based Approach, Through PMM, principals are encouraged to use data in decision making, such as analyzing student learning outcomes, teacher professional development needs, and evaluating the effectiveness of school programs. This data-based approach helps them be more focused and measurable in improving the quality of education; Collaboration and Professional Networks, PMM opens up a space for collaboration between principals through online or offline learning communities. This allows principals to share good practices and experiences, which in turn enriches their perspectives and skills; Motivation and Rewards, PMM provides recognition for the principals' efforts in implementing educational initiatives, for example through active participation in training or the school's success in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. These awards can increase the principals' motivation to perform better.

The benefits above were also felt directly by the principal, when the author asked the principal of an elementary school in Kuta Buloh "Since the launch of PMM, what benefits have you felt and what impact does it have on your performance?" The principal at the Kuta Buloh elementary school answered that since the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, they have been greatly facilitated in learning and accessing new knowledge and skills that are useful in school development. Some of the benefits felt by the principal are (a) easy and fast access to learning resources, (b) can improve managerial and pedagogical skills, (c) a collaborative approach based on data, (d) provides convenience in implementing the independent curriculum, and (e) adding and developing professional networks.

From the benefits felt, of course it greatly influences the performance of the principal himself. Some of the benefits are (a) More Proactive and Innovative Leadership, (b) Efficiency in School Management, and (c) Improving the Quality of Education in Schools.

From the description above, we can see that the utilization of the Merdeka Teaching platform in elementary schools in Kuta Buloh is very high, and this has a very good effect on improving the performance of school principals in improving school progress.

Principal Leadership Management

Leadership is an effort by a leader to influence others so that the work program that is prepared and the tasks that are given run according to expectations in order to achieve the goals that are set efficiently and effectively. Meanwhile, according to (Akmaluddin et al., 2023) it is stated that leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive to achieve group goals voluntarily.

The principal is an educator with the expertise to lead all human resources in a school, both teachers and students, who must be managed with optimal management to achieve common goals.

According to the elementary school supervisor during the research interview, the elementary school principal in Kuta Buloh had implemented a good leadership management system and it was in accordance with one of the standards issued by the government which is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 13 of 2007. This opinion is then supported by the results of questionnaire data analysis from the leadership management of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh, as shown in table 7 below.

Table 7. Results of Principal Leadership Management Questionnaire Data Analysis

Evaluation	Muhammadiyah Elementary School Kuta Buloh	SDN 3 Kuta Buloh
Average	4.79	4.52
Percentage %	95.74	90.45
Category	Very high	Very high

Source: processed by researchers 2024

Based on the results of the questionnaire data analysis in table 7. above, it can be seen that the leadership management of elementary school principals in Kuta Buloh is very good with the results of the analysis value at SD Muhammadiyah Kuta Buloh having an average value of 4.79 or equal to a success rate of 95.74%, while the results of the questionnaire data analysis at SDN 3 Kuta Buloh also have a very high value with an average value of 4.52 or equal to a success rate of the principal's leadership reaching 90.45%.

From the results of the data analysis, we can see that the principal's leadership management at elementary schools in Kuta Buloh is very good, and this has a very good effect on improving the principal's performance in improving the quality of education and school progress. This is in accordance with the opinion of (Nurohiman, 2023) that states the position of principal is a very strategic position, because it is one of the determining factors for success in an educational unit.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of research questionnaire data on the Utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) and Leadership Management on the Performance of Elementary School Principals in Kuta Buloh, South Aceh Regency, it can be concluded that; the utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) in elementary schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency is very high; Principal Leadership Management in Elementary Schools in Kuta Buloh, Meukeuk District, South Aceh Regency has been running very well; The very high utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) and very good Principal Leadership Management have a positive effect on improving the performance of school principals.

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