The Relationship between Leadership Competency and Teaching Quality in Sarawak, Malaysia

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate headmasters' level of leadership competency and the effectiveness of teachers in facilitating learning (LF) in classrooms. Additionally, it used a quantitative survey approach with 113 respondents to investigate the relationship between these two variables through a questionnaire. The level of perception of the variables were evaluated using descriptive statistics, and the relationship between leadership competency and teacher quality in LF was determined using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results showed that teachers had excellent quality in LF and headmasters had a high degree of leadership competency. Furthermore, headmasters' leadership competency and teacher quality in LF had a strong positive correlation, with leadership competency explaining 25.3% of the variation in teacher quality. This suggests that leadership competencies play a crucial role in enhancing teacher quality in LF, which, in turn, has the potential to improve student learning outcomes. These findings highlight the significance of excellent leadership in educational settings and show that headmasters' leadership competency have a direct impact on how well teachers facilitate learning. The report emphasizes how crucial it is to keep funding school headmasters' efforts to build their leadership skills to create a learning environment that promotes excellent instruction and higher student accomplishment. The results have important implications for educational policy and practice, especially when it comes to improving schools' overall effectiveness through focused leadership development.
Keywords: Leadership Competency, Teacher Quality, Learning And Facilitating, Headmaster, Teacher

Introduction

Particularly in elementary education, the headmaster is extremely important in forming the educational environment and fostering the growth of future generations (Alias & Mansor, 2018; Ambon & Mansor, 2019). Staff morale, student learning, and overall school success are all significantly impacted by the headmaster's leadership competency (Tai & Abdull Kareem, 2020). The unique advantages and difficulties that Sarawak has to offer, including its varied socioeconomic circumstances, unique geography, and rich cultural variety, are remarkable (Jette, 2021). Acknowledging these factors, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has put in place several frameworks and policies to improve educational leadership. In particular, the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013–2025 (KPM, 2013) is a thorough plan intended to restructure Malaysia's educational system. Strong emphasis is placed by the MEB (2013–2025) on the qualities of exceptional school leaders who can successfully drive change and advancement in education. In this regard, a thorough understanding of the efficacy of these policies and their influence at the local level is offered by the evaluation of headmasters' leadership competencies in Sarawak from the viewpoint of the teachers.

The MOE has created certain frameworks and criteria to methodically improve leadership competencies (Ahmad, 2005). The Institut Aminuddin Baki (2006) document known as the Malaysian School Leadership Competency Standard (SKKSM) lists the fundamental skills that headmasters and principals of schools must possess. These skills include organizational, instructional, personal, and strategic leadership dimensions. These standards offer precise instructions for evaluating and fostering the growth of school leaders' leadership abilities. Furthermore, the Malaysian School Leadership Competency Standard (KOMPAS) 2.0 framework (KPM, 2020), which is an advancement over the original competency model, provides a more thorough and contextualized method of evaluating and developing leadership attributes in Malaysian school leaders. While addressing the requirements and difficulties of the Malaysian educational system, KOMPAS 2.0 is in line with international best practices. Through the integration of these standards, national objectives and international standards can relate to the assessment of school leadership competencies, especially in primary schools, guaranteeing a comprehensive and thorough review.

According to Alias et al. (2022), teachers are essential to changing the educational system and realising the goals of the country in the MEB. To generate exceptional human capital, the MEB places a strong emphasis on the development of professional teachers with the necessary skills and on raising the standard of teaching pedagogy in learning and facilitating (LF). Strong professional knowledge, including content, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge, is possessed by high-quality teachers in LF and has a major influence on the learning outcomes of their students (Baumert et al., 2010). The quality of teachers' LF is a critical component of educational change in this globalized era since it improves classroom performance and focusses on academic success. To improve the quality of instruction in LF, the MOE must develop policies and strategies that are in line with the demands of the current educational system. Nonetheless, some educators continue to place little emphasis on teaching quality (Pribudhiana et al., 2021). Teachers in LF that exhibit adequate knowledge, skills, and behavior, as well as teacher leadership, are considered high-quality educators. To guarantee that pupils learn as much as possible, teachers must attain the appropriate degree of instruction quality (Batjo & Ambotang, 2019).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between Sarawakian primary school headmasters' leadership competencies and teachers' teaching quality in LF. Teachers provide vital insights into the real-world application of leadership competencies since they are the main enforcers of educational regulations and work closely with school administrators (Kadir & Alias, 2022). Their opinions offer a ground-level perspective on how the quality of leadership affects student learning outcomes, teacher quality in LF, and school leadership. This research adds to the body of knowledge on educational leadership while also providing policymakers, educational planners, and school administrators with useful takeaways (Alias et al., 2010). The results of this study can offer initial insights for focused on teaching and learning, policy changes, and strategic initiatives aimed at improving the standard of primary education in Sarawak and throughout Malaysia through in-depth discussions and the identification of potential gaps in leadership competencies. Additionally, it is intended that the results of this research would support ongoing efforts to enhance educational leadership, which will eventually promote the development of a more efficient, inclusive, and equitable educational system in Malaysia (Omar et al., 2018; Tai & Kareem, 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine how headmasters' leadership competencies in Sarawak relate to teachers' quality in LF. The seven dimensions of the study are: ethics and spirituality, personal and social skills, management skills, leadership skills, transformative skills, instructional leadership, and, and visionary leadership. This study is also conducted to address three research objectives and one research hypothesis.

Research Objective
The research objectives of this study are as follows
To identify the level of leadership competency of headmasters in Sarawak.
To identify the level of teacher quality in learning and facilitating among teachers in primary schools in Sarawak.
To identify the relationship between the leadership competency of headmasters and the teacher quality in learning and facilitating among teachers in primary schools in Sarawak.

Hypothesis
There is a significant relationship between the leadership competency of headmasters and the teacher quality in learning and facilitating.

Literature Review
Leadership Competency
The success of school is largely dependent on the leadership competency of its school head, especially when it comes to creating an atmosphere that supports excellent instruction. A school leader's competence to effectively lead and influence their staff, students, and community towards the achievement of educational goals is referred to as leadership competency. This competency is made up of a variety of skills, knowledge, and traits. Several studies demonstrate how important leadership competency is in determining how well schools function generally, especially when it comes to student outcomes and instructional effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004). The Malaysian School Leadership Competency Standard (SKKSM) delineates the essential proficiencies needed by school administrators, stressing their part in converting educational institutions into learning

environments equipped to tackle the ever-changing demands of the field of education (IAB, 2006).

A headmaster's ability to motivate and effectively lead their team is built upon the first four dimensions of leadership competency: personal and social skills, management skills, leadership skills, and ethics and spirituality. To build trust and respect within the school community, headmasters must adhere to moral and ethical standards through their guiding principles, which are a part of ethics and spirituality (Mansor, 2006). A leader's capacity for effective communication, teamwork, and fostering strong bonds with stakeholders is referred to as their personal and social skills. These abilities are essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive school climate (Goleman, 1998). To ensure that schools run smoothly and achieve their goals, management skills are crucial for the effective organisation and administration of school resources (Bush & Glover, 2014; Noor et al., 2018). Leadership skills, on the other hand, encompass the ability to motivate and guide others, setting a clear vision for the school and leading the team towards achieving that vision (Alias & Mansor, 2018).

The next three dimensions are more advanced competencies that allow leaders to foster innovation and major breakthroughs in their schools: transformative skills, instructional leadership, and visionary leadership. To improve teaching methods and adjust to new educational needs, transformative abilities entail the ability to lead change and support creativity (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The MEB (2013–2025) places a strong emphasis on instructional leadership, which is defined as a leader's capacity to directly affect teaching quality by assisting and advancing teachers' instructional practices (Hallinger, 2003). To keep the school innovative and adaptable to changing circumstances, visionary leadership also entails establishing long-term objectives and motivating the school community to strive towards a common vision of academic success (Nanus, 1992; Noraini et al., 2018). Collectively, these dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and developing leadership competency, which is crucial for enhancing teaching quality and overall school effectiveness.

Teaching Quality in LF
Exceptional teachers surely develop exceptional pupils in our global culture (Rosnah et al., 2013). Since they collaborate closely with students to carry out teaching and learning activities, teachers are the primary contributors to a school's performance (Jaya & Hidayat, 2020; Wulandri & Supriyoko, 2022). Teachers are still regarded as crucial to the LF process in the contemporary educational system since even the most sophisticated devices, such as computers, radios, tape recorders, and radios, cannot take the position of a teacher (Jaya & Hidayat, 2020). The efficiency with which teachers provide their students with instructional resources has a substantial impact on their learning outcomes (Jette, 2021). Consequently, it is hard to dispute that a teacher's quality significantly affects the quality of education.

The LF process and school quality are two interconnected and crucial elements (Ku Ahmad, 2004). Administrators, teachers, and schools are deemed to be suitably professional (Jaya & Hidayat, 2020). To improve student learning outcomes, professional teachers should employ efficient instructional strategies with skill (Bahriadi et al., 2022). According to Jaya & Hidayat (2020), enhancing the pedagogical quality of teachers need to be an ongoing focus that is

closely tied to elements of classroom management. A teacher can directly contribute to high-quality education and practice outstanding teaching by placing a high priority on student success.

Delivering high-quality teaching skills requires careful planning (Mohd Rusdin & Ali, 2019). Prioritizing careful planning and preparation is a crucial part of a teacher's job while implementing LF (Zulkifly et al., 2021). Teachers should create Daily Lesson Plans (DLP) with learning objectives and activities before the LF is conducted to ensure full preparation (Mohd Rusdin & Ali, 2019). If the teacher does not prepare ahead of time, the implementation of LF will not go as planned. Inadequate teacher preparation for LF may have an impact on student learning outcomes. Furthermore, learning outcomes function as a gauge of how well LF planning is working. These include students' knowledge, abilities, and value practices throughout the LF process.

The LF process's planning, implementation, and assessment phases are used to track how well a teacher is instructing their students. To generate more innovative and better LF in line with current advancements, LF should be successfully implemented employing a variety of support resources (Chuah & Amin, 2022). Slavin (1987) identified four criteria that can be used to assess the quality of education provided by a school: the quality of the teachers, the breadth of the curriculum, the availability of incentives, and enough time. Thus, a teacher's quality has a big impact on how well they can impart knowledge, skills, and values to their students in the classroom (Ling & Norasmah, 2018). The capacity of teachers to plan and carry out instruction in the classroom continues to be a determining factor in the quality of education (Keller et al., 2017). As stated by Keller et al. (2017), a teacher's competence influences their actions, behavior, lesson planning, and interactions with students. In conclusion, teaching strategies directly impact the quality of LF as teaching strategies are a key element that influences the level of their pedagogy.

Teachers now evaluate their pupils in the classroom using a variety of techniques. Since assessment is an ongoing process that gathers data on student performance to identify strengths and shortcomings, it is essential in LF (Naila et al., 2022). Students receive a variety of suitable enrichment and corrective exercises required for the LF process after the evaluation is finished. If one of the three elements; planning, implementation, and assessment is not given equal weight, the LF process, which encompasses the three features, will not lead to a successful LF implementation. According to (Rusdin & Ali, 2019), these three elements combine to create a high-quality teaching and learning process for teachers that can support students' academic progress and school achievement. However, poor teachers could negatively affect pupils' performance in the long run (Feng & Sass, 2017). This is since student learning environments and teachers' pedagogical approaches have an impact on the quality of education (Mustapha et al., 2020). It is a truth that teachers' pedagogical competency has a significant impact on pupils' academic progress. If teachers constantly enhance the quality of their instruction, they will become more adept at teaching at any level of education (Mustapha et al., 2020; Wolde, 2021).

Research Methodology
In every study, choosing a suitable research design tries to make the processes, methods, measurements, and data analysis clear to explain the data collecting strategies employed, the

kind of sample, and issues like financial limits and time limitations that must be addressed (Saunders et al., 2019). To determine the design of this study, the researcher used the research methodology model (as seen in Figure 1), which was derived from Saunders et al. (2019). According to Saunders et al. (2019), there are a few basic questions that must be answered to assess the reliability of study analytic methods and data gathering strategies. Every significant research design concern should be addressed in turn, following the order specified by the Research Onion design (Saunders et al., 2019). The six essential layers of the Research Onion (Saunders et al. 2019); philosophy, theory development approach, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, and methodologies and procedures, help to clarify these issues.

This study has chosen to use a quantitative survey research strategy because survey research is suitable for testing theory (hypothesis) and providing empirical evidence (Saunders et al., 2019), besides involving a deductive approach as well as a large sample size (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Hardy & Bryman, 2004). (Cohen et al., 2017) also argue that the determination of this survey method is to survey issues, problems, and phenomena that will be studied. Therefore, this method allows generalizations to be made on the collected data by adhering to every procedure and step in the research which is the procedure of selecting samples from a large population, constructing survey instruments, the need to conduct pilot studies, determining the validity and reliability of instruments, and the acquisition and analysis of data.
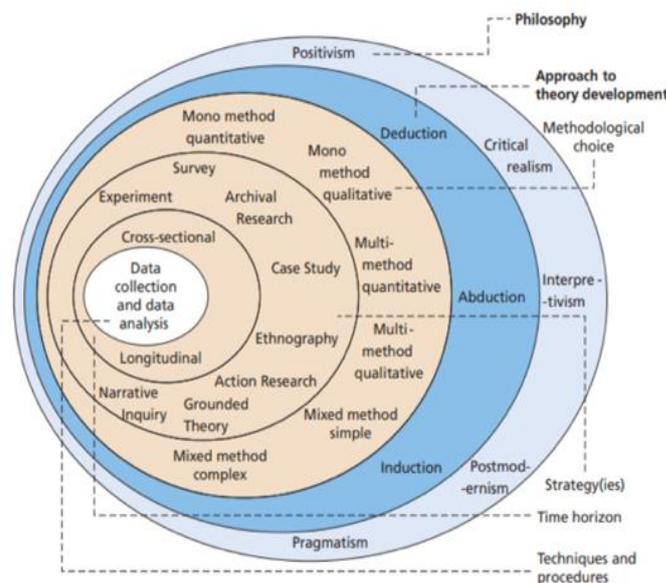

Figure 1 : Research Onion Model (Saunders et al., 2019)

Table 1
Summary of Research Design Selection

Layer	Selection
Philosophy	Positivism
Approach to theory development	Deductive
Methodological choice	Mono method quantitative
Strategy	Survey
Time horizon	Cross sectional
Techniques and procedures	Questionaire

Population and Sample
Teachers employed in primary schools run by the Sarawak State Education Department (SSED) make up the population of this pilot research. There are 113 respondents in all, which corresponds to a sample size. This figure is consistent with Cooper & Schindler (2011) suggestion that the optimal sample size for pilot study be between 25 and 100 participants.

Sampling Techniques
The cluster sampling technique has been found to be the most suitable to be used in this study. Based on this technique, the sampling frame is a complete list of clusters rather than a complete list of individual cases in the population (Saunders et al., 2019). To this study, the complete list of clusters refers to the 30 District Education Offices (PPD) in Sarawak.

The Instruments
The instrument used to measure the level of headmasters' competency in this study consists of 33 items are adapted from the Leadership Competency Instrument developed by the Razak School of Government (RSOG) in 2017, along with 10 items adapted from the Malaysian School Leadership Competency Standard (KOMPAS) 2.0 Instrument (2020). Meanwhile, to measure the quality of teachers' LF, the researcher used the instrument from Standard 4 (LF) of the Malaysian Education Quality Standard (SKPM) 2017, which has been rebranded as SKPM Kualiti@Sekolah. Items are measured based on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Data Collection Procedures
The data collection for the survey was carried out online using the Google Forms application. Before the study was conducted, an application to conduct the study from the Planning and Policy Research Division of the MOE, Sarawak State Education Department, District Education Office, and primary school heads was made. After receiving approval and consent from the headmasters, the Google Forms link was sent to the schools involved via email and the WhatsApp application.

Data Analysis Technique
The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 29.0 was used to analyze the data. The study data were analyzed with descriptive statistics to obtain mean values, standard deviations, and percentages. To interpret the average mean scores, the mean value categories used in this study were adapted from Fauzi et al. (2014) to determine the level of mean of leadership competency and teacher quality in LF. This average mean score is very

suitable for interpretation for the seven-point interval scale in this study (Table 2). The researcher also used the Pearson Correlation Test as an inferential statistic to determine the relationship between CPD practices and the quality of teachers' LF. In this study, the researcher used the interpretation of correlation coefficient values by Cohen et al. (2011) as shown in Table 3.

Table 2
Mean Score and Interpretation

Average mean score	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.99	Very low
2.00 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.99	Moderate
4.00 – 4.99	Slightly high
5.00 – 5.99	High
6.00 – 7.00	Very high

Source: (Fauzi et al., 2014)

Table 3
Strength Level of Correlation Coefficient Value (R)

Correlation coefficient value (r)	Correlation strength
> 1.00	Very strong
0.51 – 1.00	Strong
0.21 – 0.50	Medium
0.01 – 0.20	Weak

Source: (Cohen et al., 2011)

Results
The research findings that were obtained first explained the level of leadership competency and teacher quality in LF, and subsequently the relationship between the two variables.

Level of Leadership Competency
The results of this research are discussed based on the research questions. The initial findings were descriptive findings related to leadership competency as an independent variable and teachers' quality in LF as a dependent variable. Apart from that, the researchers intended to determine the inference findings about the relationship between leadership competency and the quality in LF by teachers in schools. A total of 113 distributed questionnaires were successfully collected.

Tables 4 and 5 show summaries of the mean score analysis to measure the level of leadership competency and the level of teacher quality in LF in primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. Table 4 shows that the overall leadership competency level of primary school headmasters in Sarawak is high, with a mean score of 5.86 and a standard deviation of 0.92. The visionary leadership dimension recorded the highest score (mean = 6.09; SD = 0.56), followed by the instructional leadership dimension (mean = 5.91; SD = 0.90), the transformative skills dimension (mean = 5.89; SD = 0.91), the ethics and spirituality dimension, which shares the

same mean score (mean = 5.86; SD = 1.06) with leadership skills (mean = 5.86; SD = 0.95), the management skills dimension (mean = 5.80; SD = 0.99), and lastly, the personal and social skills dimension (mean = 5.71; SD = 1.07). These findings clearly indicate that the headmasters in Sarawak are highly competent in their leadership towards efficient school management.

Table 4
Mean Score and Sd for the Level of Leadership Competency

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Leadership competency	5.86	0.92	High
Ethics and spirituality	5.86	1.06	High
Personal and social skill	5.71	1.07	High
Management skill	5.80	0.99	High
Leading skill	5.86	0.95	High
Transformative skill	5.89	0.91	High
Instructional leadership	5.91	0.90	High
Visionary	6.09	0.87	Very High

Table 5 shows that the overall quality of LF among primary school teachers in Sarawak is at a very high level, with a mean score of 6.08 and a standard deviation of 0.55. The implementation dimension recorded the highest score (mean = 6.14; SD = 0.56), followed by the planning dimension, which is also very high (mean = 6.09; SD = 0.59), and the assessment dimension (mean = 5.92; SD = 0.63). These findings clearly indicate that teachers in Sarawak are highly committed to implementing LF, planning LF, and subsequently conducting LF assessments at the end of the learning session.

Table 5
Mean Score and Sd for the Level of Teacher Quality In Lf

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Teacher quality in LF	6.08	0.55	Very high
Planning	6.09	0.59	Very high
Implementation	6.14	0.56	Very high
Assessment	5.92	0.63	High

Relationship between headmasters' leadership competency and teacher quality in LF
The results of Pearson's correlation test in this study, shown in Tables 6 and 7, were used to analyze two study variables, namely, to find out the relationship between headmasters' leadership competency and teacher quality in LF of schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. The relationship between these two variables can be proven as follows. Tables 6 and 7 show the findings to test the correlation between variables, namely the relationship of headmasters' leadership competency to teacher quality in LF through the Pearson correlation test. In this section, the results of the correlation analysis of the two variables were reported.

Tables 6 and 7 show that the relationship between headmasters' leadership competency and teacher quality in LF in schools in Sarawak is statistically significant and positive, with a correlation coefficient value of 0.503 at a significant level of 0.01. This means that the relationship shown is at a medium level. The variance value, with $r^2 = 0.253$, shows that 25.3% of the overall change in teacher quality is due to the leadership competency factor.

While another 74.7% of changes in PLC may be caused by other factors, this finding shows that there is a significant relationship between headmasters' leadership competency and teacher quality in LF in schools.

Table 6
Correlation Coefficient between Variables

Dimensions		Leadership Competency	Teacher quality in LF
Leadership competency	Pearson Correlation	1	.503
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.001
	N	113	113
Teacher quality in LF	Pearson Correlation	.503	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.001	
	N	113	113

Table 7
Correlation and Variance Value Between Leadership Competency And Teacher Quality

Dimensions	Leadership Competency		Teacher quality in LF		Sig**
	r	r2	r	r2	
Leadership competency	-	-	.503	.253	.001
Teacher quality in LF	.503	.253	-	-	.001

** The correlation is significant at p<0.01

Discussion
Discussion of the study's findings, which were based on 113 teachers, follows the research questions. Teachers' perceptions of: i) the headmaster's leadership competency and ii) teacher quality in LF are among the topics under discussion. The overall assessment of leadership competency of headmasters and teacher quality in LF in schools was very highly in line with the findings of (Dexter et al., 2021; Juliana, 2021; Kasri et al., 2022). This finding clarifies that the leadership competency of headmasters who are strong were the dimensions of transformative skills, instructional leadership, and visionary leadership, indicating that headmasters in this region are not only adept at running their schools on every day but also succeed at creating a clear vision for the future and leading important changes. Findings related teacher quality in LF implemented schools were in line with Siagian & Artha, (2023); Syafril et al. (2021), who stated that the practice of teaching quality in schools not only improves student achievement but can change the effective school environment. According to them, realising more quality teacher in LF involves the support and participation of school leaders in encouraging them to always improve their pedagogical knowledge.

The findings of this study showed the existence of a significant relationship between headmaster's leadership competency and teacher quality in LF in schools. These findings confirmed the leadership competency framework developed by RSOG (2017) and KOMPAS 2.0 (2020), which presented four seven dimensions: ethics and spirituality, personal and social skills, management skills, leadership skills, transformative skills, instructional leadership, and, and visionary leadership. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that the framework was the actions practiced by the headmasters in this study. In addition, this study

also confirmed the three dimensions proposed in the teacher quality in LF, which are planning, implementation and assessment that were introduced by SKPM (2017) in parallel with actions practiced by teachers.

The headmaster's leadership competency in schools had a positive and significant relationship with the teacher quality in the studied schools. Leadership competency shown by headmasters in this study were considered important in schools to guide teachers in improving teacher quality in LF and towards becoming an effective school in line with previous studies (König & Pflanzl, 2016; Olivos & Yuan, 2023; Satata et al., 2022). This study acquires the ability to theoretically contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between leadership competency and teacher quality in the Malaysian educational system.

The study's conclusions could be extremely beneficial to the field of education since they are consistent with the goals and objectives of the country's leadership. Simultaneously, this finding can benefit the field of leadership in the framework of the national educational system. The results of this study concluded that the implementation of teaching quality in participating schools was positively impacted by leadership competency. To guarantee that the leaders assigned to their schools are among the most effective in terms of effectiveness and quality, it has been made clear in MEB 2013–2025. The study's elements of teaching quality and leadership competency offer educators and ministries suggestions for enhancing school success.

Conclusion

According to the study, headmasters of Sarawak's primary schools demonstrate high levels of leadership competency, particularly in the areas of instructional leadership, visionary leadership, and transformative skills—all of which are critical for efficient school administration and the development of a forward-thinking learning environment. Teachers that exhibit great planning, implementation, and evaluation techniques are known for their high level of Learning Facilitation (LF), which is closely correlated with this strong leadership skill. The results are consistent with earlier studies, demonstrating the value of leadership in fostering an environment in schools that is conducive to learning and improves student performance in general.

The strong correlation found in LF between headmasters' leadership competency and the quality of teachers underlines the vital role that capable leadership plays in promoting academic performance. The study highlights the practicality of the teacher quality dimensions from SKPM (2017) and the leadership competence frameworks of RSOG (2017) and KOMPAS 2.0 (2020) in the Malaysian educational system. These findings highlight how crucial it is for school administrators to keep growing to guarantee that they are prepared to assist excellent teaching practices and, eventually, help the country reach its educational objectives as stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013–2025.

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