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The Effect of Effective Communication and Teacher Competence on Educational Quality through Teacher Performance in State Elementary Schools in Serang Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality through teacher performance in public elementary schools in Serang Regency, Indonesia. A quantitative cross-sectional survey involved 376 public elementary school teachers selected through proportional random sampling. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The results showed that effective communication and teacher competence were positively and significantly related to teacher performance (β = 0.391 and β = 0.567, respectively; both p < 0.001). Teacher performance was also positively and significantly related to educational quality (β = 0.813, p < 0.001). However, the direct relationship between effective communication and educational quality was negative and not statistically significant (β = −0.024, p = 0.786), while the direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality was positive but not statistically significant (β = 0.125, p = 0.229). In contrast, both indirect relationships through teacher performance were positive and statistically significant: effective communication (β = 0.461, p < 0.001) and teacher competence (β = 0.318, p < 0.001). These findings highlight the relevance of teacher performance as a mediating variable in understanding the relationships between effective communication, teacher competence, and educational quality. Given the cross-sectional design, the findings represent statistical relationships rather than definitive evidence of causation.

Article Information

Kata Kunci:
Komunikasi Efektif, Kompetensi Guru, Kinerja Guru, Mutu Pendidikan, Sekolah Dasar Negeri.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan komunikasi efektif dan kompetensi guru dengan mutu pendidikan melalui kinerja guru di sekolah dasar negeri Kabupaten Serang. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain survei cross-sectional yang melibatkan 376 guru sekolah dasar negeri yang dipilih melalui teknik proportional random sampling. Data dianalisis menggunakan SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi efektif dan kompetensi guru berhubungan positif dan signifikan dengan kinerja guru (masing-masing β = 0,391 dan β = 0,567; keduanya p < 0,001). Kinerja guru juga berhubungan positif dan signifikan dengan mutu pendidikan (β = 0,813; p < 0,001). Namun, hubungan langsung komunikasi efektif dengan mutu pendidikan bernilai negatif dan tidak signifikan secara statistik (β = −0,024; p = 0,786), sedangkan hubungan langsung kompetensi guru dengan mutu pendidikan bernilai positif tetapi tidak signifikan secara statistik (β = 0,125; p = 0,229). Sebaliknya, kedua hubungan tidak langsung melalui kinerja guru bernilai positif dan signifikan, yaitu hubungan komunikasi efektif (β = 0,461; p < 0,001) dan kompetensi guru (β = 0,318; p < 0,001) dengan mutu pendidikan. Temuan ini menunjukkan relevansi kinerja guru sebagai variabel mediasi dalam memahami hubungan komunikasi efektif dan kompetensi guru dengan mutu pendidikan. Mengingat desain penelitian cross-sectional, temuan ini menunjukkan hubungan statistik dan bukan bukti definitif mengenai hubungan sebab-akibat.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Elementary education plays a strategic role in shaping the foundation of students' character, knowledge, and basic skills. To improve the quality of education at the elementary school level, various internal school factors require attention, particularly those concerning managerial aspects and interpersonal relationships within the school environment. One important factor influencing the performance of educational organizations is effective communication. Clear, open, and empathetic communication between the principal, teachers, education staff, and other relevant parties can create a conducive work environment, increase motivation, and enhance teacher performance.

Improving the quality of education at the elementary school level is greatly influenced by the quality of the learning process taking place in the classroom, which ultimately depends on the ability of teachers to carry out their professional duties. Teachers not only serve as transmitters of learning materials, but also as facilitators, motivators, guides, and agents of change, determining the success of curriculum implementation in schools. One aspect that determines the effectiveness of this task is the teacher's ability to build effective communication with students, fellow teachers, principals, and parents. Effective communication enables clear information delivery, creates a conducive learning environment, increases student participation, and strengthens collaboration to support successful learning. Furthermore, teacher competencies, including pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies, are key assets in designing, implementing, evaluating, and developing quality learning. The OECD, through its PISA report, also shows that teacher quality and the learning environment are important factors related to student learning outcomes. Similarly, the World Bank emphasizes that improving the quality of Indonesian education requires improvements in teaching quality, enhanced teacher competency, strengthened school management, and support for more effective learning practices. Thus, effective communication and teacher competence are two very important aspects to study because both are believed to contribute to improving the quality of education through optimizing the implementation of teacher duties in elementary schools.

In this study, educational quality is conceptually understood as the extent to which educational provision meets relevant educational standards and supports students' learning and development. Although educational quality encompasses input, process, and outcome dimensions, these dimensions should be distinguished from the specific construct of teacher performance. Teacher performance refers to how teachers carry out their professional responsibilities, including planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction. Educational quality, by contrast, refers to the broader quality of educational provision and its outcomes rather than the execution of teachers' duties alone. Accordingly, teacher performance is treated as a potential explanatory factor associated with educational quality, not as an interchangeable measure of the same construct. The operational definition of educational quality in this study must therefore be aligned with the indicators actually used in the research instrument.

The quality of education in elementary schools is greatly influenced by the quality of the school's internal management, particularly with regard to communication, competence, and teacher performance as the main actors in the learning process.(Susanti and Widodo, 2021)The demand for improving the quality of education is growing stronger with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which strengthens character, as well as the need for professional and accountable school governance.(Susanti and Widodo, 2021)This shows that not all elementary schools are able to create a communication system and teacher competency, which has an impact on teacher performance and the quality of education produced.(Susanti and Widodo, 2021)In efforts to improve the quality of education at the elementary school level, organizational factors such as internal communication and the competence of school management teachers are becoming increasingly important. Effective communication between school leaders, teachers, and relevant stakeholders can improve teacher performance and the quality of educational services. For example, research shows that the quality of communication within educational organizations is positively correlated with teachers' perceptions of institutional effectiveness (Brinia et al., 2022).

Effective communication is communication that can change the attitudes of others during the process, meaning that the message conveyed must be well received and understood and elicit a response or change in attitude.(Antika and Mashar, 2025)According to Rumra (2023), effective communication is defined as the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings, or attitudes between two or more people, which results in shared understanding, trust, and good relationships.(Iano and Padang, 2024)Stating that in the context of school/educational management, effective communication is also defined as communication that can facilitate collaboration, teacher empowerment, and support managerial processes, not just information transmission, but also enabling the development of creativity, problem solving, and competency improvement.

Various national education regulations require teachers to possess adequate competencies to carry out their duties effectively and responsibly. Teacher competencies encompass a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers must possess, understand, and master in carrying out their functions and duties as professional educators. Research by Kurike et al. (2022) indicates that pedagogical competency demonstrates significant variation in the mastery of aspects of pedagogical competency among elementary school teachers. Research by Anisa (2023) demonstrates that sound learning planning and implementation are key indicators of classroom teachers' pedagogical competency.

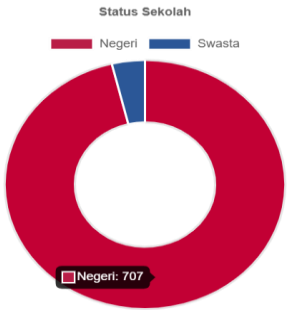
Teacher performance, in turn, has the potential to influence commitment and the quality of the learning process. For example, research in elementary schools found that interpersonal communication between principals and teachers influenced teacher performance (Khan et al., 2024).

This situation is also relevant to the situation in Serang Regency. Based on data from the local Education Office, there are more than 700 public and private elementary schools spread across the district. Although the provision of educational facilities has shown progress, disparities in school quality remain, both in terms of learning implementation, organizational culture, and student academic achievement. Preliminary observations and interviews revealed that several schools face challenges in building effective communication between leaders and teachers and in creating a conducive environment for school governance. This has resulted in low

teacher performance, which can impact the quality of the classroom learning process. Teachers, as the primary driving force of education, are strongly influenced by organizational factors such as the work environment, communication patterns, and perceptions of teacher competence within the school. Teacher performance has implications for the quality of work, involvement in the learning process, and the efficiency of task implementation.(Putri, D. and Arifudin, 2023). Thus, it is important to empirically examine the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality, with teacher performance serving as a mediating variable, in public elementary schools in Serang Regency.

In public elementary schools in Serang Regency, the relationships among school communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality warrant further empirical examination. In particular, the extent to which communication within schools supports the coordination of teachers' duties and the implementation of educational programs needs to be examined using evidence from the study setting. Similarly, the relationship between teacher competence and the quality of educational services should not be assumed solely from general descriptions of educational conditions. These issues provide the contextual basis for examining the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality, with teacher performance positioned as a mediating variable.

In our database, Serang Regency had 735 elementary schools, consisting of 707 public schools and 28 private schools. The same source reported the distribution of schools by accreditation status as follows: 146 schools with Grade A accreditation, 537 with Grade B accreditation, 47 with Grade C accreditation, and 5 schools without accreditation. These figures describe the institutional context of elementary education in Serang Regency; however, they do not directly establish the existence of problems in effective communication, teacher competence, or teacher performance. Therefore, the accreditation and school-count data are used to describe the research setting, while the rationale for examining the study variables is grounded in relevant theoretical arguments and documented preliminary evidence.



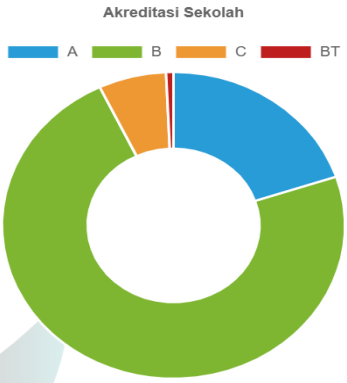


Figure 1. School status and school accreditation (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2025)

Teacher performance is a key factor directly determining the quality of education. Although teacher performance is related to educational quality, the two constructs represent different analytical levels. Teacher performance concerns teachers' execution of professional tasks, whereas educational quality concerns the broader characteristics of educational provision and its outcomes. To maintain this distinction, indicators of teacher performance should focus on teachers' professional practices, while indicators of educational quality should represent broader dimensions of educational provision rather than repeat the same descriptions of teachers' activities. This distinction is important for interpreting the proposed relationship between teacher performance and educational quality without treating the two constructs as conceptually equivalent. High-performing teachers are able to plan lessons effectively, implement the teaching and learning process creatively, conduct objective evaluations, and provide optimal guidance to students. However, in reality, some teachers still lack optimal learning administration, use of instructional media, work discipline, and teaching innovation. This situation indicates that improving teacher performance remains an urgent need.

The theoretical relationships among effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality can be understood through the way organizational processes and teachers' professional capabilities are translated into educational practices. Effective communication within schools facilitates the exchange of information, clarification of responsibilities, coordination of school programs, and feedback between principals and teachers. These processes can support teachers in understanding institutional expectations and carrying out their professional duties more effectively (Brinia et al., 2022). Meanwhile, teacher competence provides the professional foundation for planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction. Previous studies have highlighted the relevance of pedagogical competence to teachers' classroom practices and instructional planning (Kurike et al., 2022; Anisa, 2023). However, communication and competence do not necessarily translate directly into educational quality; their relevance also depends on how they are reflected in teachers' actual performance. Teacher performance connects organizational

communication and professional competence with the implementation of teaching, classroom management, and evaluation activities. These activities represent processes through which the quality of educational services can be realized (Mubarok et al., 2024). Accordingly, teacher performance is positioned as a mediating variable because it provides a plausible link between effective communication and teacher competence, on the one hand, and educational quality, on the other. This conceptual relationship provides the basis for examining both the direct relationships among the study variables and the indirect relationships through teacher performance.

The results of initial observations and brief interviews with teachers and supervisors at several elementary schools in Serang Regency found in the field indicate that fluctuations in the quality of education and teacher performance at public elementary schools in Serang Regency.The Serang Regency area is closely related to suboptimal managerial aspects, particularly in the dimensions of internal communication and transparency of school governance. Based on the results of pre-research and preliminary interviews conducted by researchers randomly with several public elementary school teachers in Serang Regency, indications of two-way communication barriers between the leadership (principals) and teaching staff were found. Several teachers complained that the delivery of work instructions, the allocation of additional tasks, and the socialization of official policies were often done suddenly and unclearly. This miscommunication and lack of space for dialogue ultimately led to a decrease in teacher work motivation, hampered program coordination, and had direct implications for the suboptimal preparation of equipment and the learning service process in the classroom.

Besides communication issues, the quality of classroom learning is largely determined by the competence of teachers as the primary implementers of the teaching and learning process. Teachers are not only required to master the subject matter but also to be able to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively and with character. However, various findings in the field indicate that teacher competence is not yet fully adequate, resulting in learning objectives often not being optimally achieved and students' potential not being fully developed.Thus, it is important to examine how effective communication and teacher competence in elementary schools in Serang Regency influence educational quality through teacher performance. This research is expected to provide an empirical overview of these dynamics so that school management policies can be appropriately directed.

Previous research has examined the relationships between communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality from different perspectives. For example, Brinia et al. (2022) examined communication in relation to organizational effectiveness, while Khan et al. (2024) investigated interpersonal communication in relation to teacher performance. Research on teacher competence has also highlighted its relevance to classroom practice, including pedagogical competence and the planning and implementation of instruction (Kurike et al., 2022; Anisa, 2023). However, these studies address different aspects of educational organizations and do not, on the basis of the evidence currently discussed in this manuscript, establish whether teacher performance mediates the relationships of both effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality in public elementary schools in Serang Regency. This distinction identifies the specific relationship that the present study seeks to examine rather than assuming that the findings of studies conducted in different contexts can be directly generalized to this setting.

The present study contributes by examining effective communication and teacher competence within an integrated model in which teacher performance is positioned as a mediating variable linking these two factors to educational quality. This model allows the analysis to consider both the direct relationships between the independent variables and educational quality and their indirect relationships through teacher performance. Its theoretical contribution lies in examining teacher performance as a potential explanatory mechanism connecting organizational communication and teacher competence with educational quality. Its contextual contribution concerns the application of this model to public elementary schools in Serang Regency. Nevertheless, the claim that research in this specific setting remains limited should be supported by a documented literature search and a comparison with studies that have examined similar variables and mediation models.

This study aims to examine the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality in public elementary schools in Serang Regency, with particular attention to the mediating role of teacher performance. Specifically, the study examines the direct relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with teacher performance and educational quality, the relationship between teacher performance and educational quality, and the indirect relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality through teacher performance.

Academically, this research is expected to enrich the study of educational management, particularly regarding the relationship between effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality in one integrated conceptual model. The results of this research are also expected to serve as a reference for future researchers in developing a more comprehensive research model by considering other factors that have not been studied. From a practical perspective, this research is expected to provide input for the Serang Regency Education Office, school principals, school supervisors, and teachers in formulating policies and strategies for improving educational quality through strengthening organizational communication and developing teacher competence on an ongoing basis. The findings of this research are also expected to be the basis for developing training programs, academic supervision, teacher professional development, and more effective performance evaluations so as to improve the quality of education delivery in public elementary schools. Ultimately, this research is expected to provide a real contribution to efforts to improve the quality of basic education in Indonesia, particularly in Serang Regency, through research entitled "The Influence of Effective Communication and Teacher Competence on Educational Quality through Teacher Performance in Public Elementary Schools in Serang Regency."

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative survey design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the statistical relationships among effective communication, teacher

competence, teacher performance, and educational quality. Data were collected at a single point in time through a closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to public elementary school teachers in Serang Regency. The analysis examined the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables using the proposed research model. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4, with bootstrapping applied to assess the statistical significance of the estimated path coefficients and indirect relationships. Given the cross-sectional design, the findings are interpreted as statistical associations consistent with the hypothesized model rather than definitive evidence of causal relationships. The survey approach enabled data to be collected from teachers across several sub-districts in the research area.

Ethical considerations are important in survey research involving teachers as respondents. The research procedures should ensure that participation is voluntary, respondents receive adequate information about the purpose of the study, and the confidentiality of the information they provide is protected. The data should be used solely for the stated research purposes and reported in a manner that prevents the identification of individual respondents. Information regarding research permission, informed consent, and ethical approval should also be reported transparently in accordance with the applicable institutional and journal requirements. The ethical procedures implemented in this study should be described on the basis of the actual permissions, consent procedures, and data-protection measures documented during data collection.

The population in this study consisted of 6,255 public elementary school teachers in Serang Regency, with a sample of 376 teachers. The study employed proportional random sampling to represent teachers from different sub-districts in the regency. This sampling technique involves allocating sample units proportionally across population groups and selecting respondents randomly within the respective groups. The use of this technique was intended to account for the distribution of teachers across the study area. However, the specific sample allocation for each sub-district, the sampling frame, and the detailed random-selection procedure were not reported in the available research documentation.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire designed to measure four research constructs: effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for obtaining respondents' assessments of the variables examined in the research model. Each construct was intended to represent a distinct aspect of the study: communication practices within the school, teachers' professional competence, teachers' performance in carrying out their duties, and the broader quality of educational provision. The measurement of these constructs should be based on clearly defined indicators that correspond to their respective conceptual definitions. The questionnaire was reported to have undergone validity and reliability testing before the data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4. However, the available manuscript does not provide sufficient details regarding the number of items, the specific indicators assigned to each construct, the original sources of the items, the response-scale range, or the procedures used for content validation and instrument adaptation. These details are necessary to establish measurement transparency and facilitate replication of the study.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are presented to provide an overview of the respondents and the distribution of the research variables before the structural model results are examined. Respondent characteristics are reported based on the demographic and professional information actually collected during the survey. Descriptive statistics for effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality are used to summarize the central tendency and variability of the observed scores. These statistics complement the subsequent measurement and structural model evaluations by providing a clearer description of the data used in the analysis.

3.3.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

Before examining the structural relationships among the study constructs, the measurement model should be evaluated to establish the reliability and validity of the measures. The evaluation should include indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability can be assessed through outer loadings, while internal consistency reliability can be examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Convergent validity can be assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity can be evaluated using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). These assessments provide evidence regarding whether the indicators adequately represent their respective constructs and whether the constructs are empirically distinguishable. The results of the measurement model evaluation should be presented before the structural model results are interpreted.

3.3.3 Structural Model Evaluation

Following the evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model should be assessed to examine its explanatory and predictive performance. The evaluation includes the coefficient of determination (R^2) for endogenous constructs, the effect size (f^2) to assess the contribution of individual predictor constructs, and predictive relevance (Q^2) or an appropriate out-of-sample predictive assessment, depending on the analytical procedure applied. In addition, bootstrapping is used to assess the statistical significance of the estimated path coefficients and indirect effects. Reporting these assessment results provides a more comprehensive basis for evaluating the structural model beyond statistical significance alone.

3.3.4 Results of Direct Effect Testing (direct effect) with *Bootstrapping.*

Direct effect testing was conducted to determine whether there was a direct influence between latent variables in the research model. This analysis used the bootstrapping procedure in the SmartPLS 4 application to obtain the path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value of each hypothesized relationship between variables. The decision on the hypothesis was based on a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). A hypothesis was accepted if the p-value was less than 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). In addition, based on a two-tailed test, the hypothesis was also declared significant if the t-statistic was greater than 1.96 (t-

statistic > 1.96). Conversely, if the p-value was greater than 0.05 or the t-statistic was less than or equal to 1.96, then the relationship between the variables was declared insignificant and the hypothesis was rejected. Test results*direct effect*presented asfollowing**.**

Table 1. Results of Direct Effect Testing (direct effect)

Path Coefficient	**Original sample (O)**	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**Tstatistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**	**Significant Level**
Teacher Performance -> Education Quality	0.813	0.804	0.100	8,094	0.000	Significant
Teacher Competence -> Teacher Performance	0.567	0.568	0.072	7,913	0.000	Significant
Teacher Competence -> Education Quality	0.125	0.127	0.104	1,203	0.229	Not Significant
Effective Communication -> Teacher Performance	0.391	0.392	0.073	5,373	0.000	Significant
Effective Communication -> Quality of Education	-0.024	-0.015	0.087	0.271	0.786	Not Significant

Source: Primary data processed by researchers using SmartPLS 4, 2026.\

Based on the test results in Table 1, based on the results of the path coefficient test using the bootstrapping method, it is known that the relationship between Teacher Performance and Education Quality has a path coefficient of 0.813 with a t-statistic value of 8.094 and a p-value of 0.000. This value indicates that teacher performance has a positive and significant effect on the quality of education, so that the better the teacher performance, the higher the quality of education.

3.3.5 Indirect Effect Test Results (indirect effect) withBootstrapping.

The indirect effect test was conducted to determine whether Teacher Performance (Z) was able to mediate the relationship between Effective Communication (X_1) and Teacher Competence (X_2) on Educational Quality (Y). The test was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS by looking at the Original Sample (O) value, t-statistic, and p-value. A mediation effect is declared significant if it has a t-statistic value > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05 at a significance level of 5% (Hair et al., 2022). The following table shows the results of the indirect effect test. The results of the Effect Size (f^2) test are presented as follows.

Table 2. Results of the Indirect Effect Test).

Path Coefficient	**Original sample (O)**	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**	**Significant Level**
Teacher Competence -> Teacher Performance -> Education Quality	0.461	0.456	0.079	5,843	0.000	Significant
Effective Communication -> Teacher Performan	0.318	0.315	0.072	4,449	0.000	

ce -> Quality of Education						Significant

Based on the results presented in Table 2, both indirect relationships through teacher performance were statistically significant. The indirect relationship between effective communication and educational quality through teacher performance had a coefficient of 0.461, a t-statistic of 5.843, and a p-value below 0.001. Similarly, the indirect relationship between teacher competence and educational quality through teacher performance had a coefficient of 0.318, a t-statistic of 4.449, and a p-value below 0.001. These results indicate that teacher performance serves as a statistically significant mediating variable in the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality. However, given the cross-sectional survey design, these findings should be interpreted as evidence of statistically significant indirect relationships rather than definitive proof of causation.

3.3.6. Discussion Of Research Results

a. What is the direct influence of effective communication on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Serang Regency?

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that effective communication has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The path coefficient value of 0.391, the t-statistic value of 5.373, and the p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) prove that the better the communication within the school environment, the higher the teacher's performance in carrying out their professional duties.

The results of the study indicate that effective communication has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance. This finding indicates that the better the communication within the school environment, the higher the teacher's performance in carrying out their professional duties. The results of this study support the opinion of Robbins and Judge (2024) who stated that effective communication is the process of conveying information accurately, clearly, and contextually, thereby reducing information distortion and increasing organizational effectiveness. In the school environment, good communication will make it easier for teachers to understand the tasks, policies, and goals of the organization, thus implementing their work more effectively. This finding is also in line with the opinion of Sofia et al. (2023) who explained that effective communication is built through clarity of information, two-way communication, timeliness, and feedback. These four dimensions can improve coordination between the principal and teachers, thereby impacting teacher performance.

b. What is the direct influence of teacher competence on teacher performance at Public Elementary Schools in Serang Regency?

The test results show that teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a path coefficient of 0.567, a t-statistic of 7.913, and a p-value of 0.000. This value has the greatest influence on teacher performance variables compared to effective communication. Based on the results, teacher performance was positively and significantly associated with educational quality. Effective communication and teacher competence were also positively and significantly associated with teacher performance. However, neither effective communication nor teacher competence showed a statistically significant direct relationship with educational quality in the reported structural model. The indirect-effect results suggest that teacher performance may serve as a mediating mechanism in the relationships between these variables and educational quality. Accordingly, the findings support distinguishing the direct relationships from the indirect relationships through teacher performance. Because the study used a cross-sectional survey design, these statistical relationships should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of causation.

c. General Discussion and Empirical Comparison

The findings of this study reveal different patterns in the relationships among effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality. Effective communication and teacher competence were both positively and significantly associated with teacher performance, with path coefficients of 0.391 and 0.567, respectively ($p < 0.001$). This pattern is consistent with the conceptual discussion presented by Robbins and Judge (2024) and Sofia et al. (2023), which emphasizes the role of clear information, feedback, and coordination in supporting organizational activities. However, these conceptual explanations should be distinguished from direct empirical comparisons with previous studies.

In contrast, the direct relationship between effective communication and educational quality was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.024$, $p = 0.786$), and the direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality was also not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.229$). These results differ from an interpretation in which communication and competence are assumed to have an independently significant direct relationship with educational quality. One possible explanation is that the contribution of these factors may be more apparent in teachers' professional performance than in educational quality directly. This interpretation is supported by the significant indirect relationships through teacher performance reported in this study: 0.461 for effective communication and 0.318 for teacher competence (both $p < 0.001$). Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted as statistical relationships within the proposed model rather than definitive evidence of a causal mechanism, given the cross-sectional research design.

A more complete comparison with previous empirical studies is needed to determine whether these findings support or differ from earlier results. Such a comparison should consider differences in the educational setting, the operational definitions and indicators of the constructs, the research design, and the specification of the analytical model. These distinctions are particularly important when previous studies have examined teacher performance or learning outcomes rather than educational quality as a broader outcome. Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies in examining the direct and indirect relationships within one model in the context of public elementary schools in Serang Regency, while recognizing that further comparison with relevant empirical findings is necessary to establish the extent of its agreement with previous research.

The results indicate that teacher performance was the only variable among the three predictors examined that had a statistically significant direct relationship with educational quality. The direct relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality were not statistically significant. However, both variables showed statistically significant indirect relationships with educational quality through teacher performance.

d. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional survey design involved collecting data at a single point in time. Therefore, the results identify statistical relationships among effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality but do not establish temporal order or definitive causal relationships. Second, the use of a questionnaire may introduce response bias, including the possibility that respondents' assessments do not fully reflect actual practices and conditions in schools. Third, the respondents were limited to teachers in public elementary schools in Serang Regency, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to private schools, other educational levels, or other geographical settings. Fourth, if all research constructs are assessed through the same questionnaire and respondent source, common method bias may affect the estimated relationships. However, the presence and extent of such bias cannot be determined without an appropriate assessment.

Future research could address these limitations in several ways. Longitudinal studies could examine how the relationships among communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality develop over time. Future studies could also measure educational quality using additional sources, such as school records, classroom observations, or assessments from relevant stakeholders, where appropriate and available. Using different data sources may help reduce dependence on a single respondent source and provide a broader assessment of educational quality. In addition, researchers could test the proposed model in private elementary schools, other districts, and different educational levels to examine whether the observed relationships are consistent across contexts. These approaches would help clarify the robustness and broader applicability of the relationships identified in the present study.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among effective communication, teacher competence, teacher performance, and educational quality in public elementary schools in Serang Regency. The results showed that effective communication and teacher competence had positive and statistically significant direct relationships with teacher performance. Teacher performance also had a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with educational quality. In contrast, the direct relationship between effective communication and educational quality was negative and not statistically significant, while the direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality was positive but not statistically significant.

The mediation analysis showed that both effective communication and teacher competence had positive and statistically significant indirect relationships with educational quality through teacher performance. These findings highlight the relevance of examining teacher performance as a mediating variable when analyzing the relationships between school communication, teacher competence, and educational quality.

The main contribution of this study is its examination of the direct and indirect relationships among these four variables within an integrated model in the context of public elementary schools in Serang Regency. The findings should be interpreted as statistical relationships rather than definitive evidence of causation because the study employed a cross-sectional survey design.

1. Effective communication had a positive and statistically significant relationship with teacher performance in public elementary schools in Serang Regency ((\beta = 0.391), (t = 5.373), (p < 0.001)).
2. Teacher competence had a positive and statistically significant relationship with teacher performance ((\beta = 0.567), (t = 7.913), (p < 0.001)).
3. The direct relationship between effective communication and educational quality was negative and not statistically significant ((\beta = -0.024), (t = 0.271), (p = 0.786)).
4. The direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality was positive but not statistically significant ((\beta = 0.125), (t = 1.203), (p = 0.229)).
5. Teacher performance had a positive and statistically significant relationship with educational quality ((\beta = 0.813), (t = 8.094), (p < 0.001)).
6. The indirect relationship between effective communication and educational quality through teacher performance was positive and statistically significant ((\beta = 0.461), (t = 5.843), (p < 0.001)).
7. The indirect relationship between teacher competence and educational quality through teacher performance was positive and statistically significant ((\beta = 0.318), (t = 4.449), (p < 0.001)).
8. The findings indicate statistically significant indirect relationships between effective communication and educational quality, and between teacher competence and educational quality, through teacher performance. These results are consistent with the proposed mediating model, although the cross-sectional design does not establish a definitive causal sequence among the variables.

Overall, the findings indicate that the relationships of effective communication and teacher competence with educational quality should be interpreted by distinguishing direct and indirect relationships. The direct relationship between effective communication and educational quality was negative and not statistically significant, while the direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality was positive but not statistically significant. However, both variables showed positive and statistically significant indirect relationships with educational quality through teacher performance. Therefore, the non-significant direct relationship between teacher competence and educational quality should not be interpreted as indicating that teacher competence is irrelevant to educational quality. Instead, the findings highlight the relevance of examining its indirect relationship through teacher performance. The total effects of effective

communication and teacher competence should be interpreted separately if reported in the original SmartPLS 4 output. Given the cross-sectional design, these findings represent statistical relationships and do not establish definitive causal effects.

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