

Analysis of the Role of School Principals in Improving Teacher Professionalism at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono

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ABSTRACT

The world of education in schools is closely related to the impact of principal leadership. The principal is responsible for overseeing school management, utilizing his/her unique leadership style, model, and role. The principal's leadership role includes the responsibility to supervise, guide, manage, teach, inspire, and pioneer. Based on this position, the principal can set guidelines for instructors/educators to achieve professional status as teachers. This study uses a qualitative methodology, utilizing direct field observations and interviews with relevant principals. The findings of this study indicate that there are principals who are capable of fulfilling their responsibilities. The principal at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono effectively supports teachers in improving their professionalism, with the aim of serving the community and achieving educational goals. The professionalism of teachers in schools also has meaning in achieving the vision and mission that have been prepared, namely creating graduates of students who are characterful, competent, intelligent and careful. This study highlights the strategic role of the principal's leadership in shaping a productive educational environment and enhancing teacher quality in vocational schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a structured process that allows students to develop their potential by creating a conducive learning and teaching environment. This process aims to develop various aspects, including personality, moral values, skills, self-discipline, and religious spirituality. Education, as explained by various authorities, can be defined as the effort of adults to guide children in achieving maturity, as evidenced by their level of self and social accountability (Nur Kasanah, Irwan Faturrahman, 2022).

In the realm of education, there is a component called a subsystem, which specifically indicates individuals responsible for teaching and guiding students. One of the responsibilities of a school principal is to provide leadership in improving school quality by formulating a clear vision and mission. Furthermore, the institution can nurture a group of graduates with commendable qualifications. Conversely, if it has a typical school principal but lacks the ability to implement changes in the school, it can be concluded that the achievement of graduates will be average (Riski, H., Rusdinal, R., & Gistituti, 2021).

Nevertheless, there are still various schools that have not been optimal in developing teacher professionalism due to weak leadership from principals. This phenomenon indicates a gap between expectations of the principal's role and reality in the field. Abbas defines leadership as the ability or innate talent to utilize existing resources in an organization efficiently to achieve goals. Sutrisno

defines leadership as the process of guiding, directing, and influencing others to achieve certain goals (Lee, M., & Kim, 2020). Leadership is an individual quality that skillfully guides and motivates others to work together harmoniously, without being patronizing.

This principle is important in achieving goals because it depicts the characteristics of leaders who efficiently mobilize resources in educational institutions and foster a culture of outstanding results (Franky, H., & Abstrak, 2018). Besides supervising the academic functions of the school, the principal also bears the responsibility to control all areas of the school environment, which includes activities, circumstances, and conditions (Astuti, A., & Danial, 2019).

The school principal is responsible for building a good educational atmosphere, as well as managing school operations and improving teaching success while providing guidance to students. In relation to teacher professionalism, the principal is required to have an active role as a supervisor and motivator so that the quality of educational services increases comprehensively (Lazwardi, n.d.).

A number of previous studies have highlighted the importance of the principal's role in improving teacher professionalism, but most are descriptive and not many have highlighted the context of vocational schools as educational units with skill-based and work competency-based graduate characteristics. Therefore, it is important to conduct a more in-depth study with a contextual approach to see how principals truly carry out their roles strategically in improving teacher professionalism in the vocational school environment.

This research will explain the leadership role of principals in vocational schools for the professionalism of educator teachers. Leadership that encourages change in the discourse surrounding teacher professionalism can be observed from various perspectives. Thus, this research not only contributes to strengthening the literature regarding the role of principals but also becomes the basis for developing policies to improve the quality of education at the vocational school level. Therefore, I will take the title "Analysis of the Role of School Principals in Improving Teacher Professionalism at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono".

METHODS

This research is a qualitative study with a field research approach, conducted directly at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono to obtain accurate and contextual data (Sugiyono, 2022). The approach used is phenomenological research as explained by Moustakas (1994), which focuses on the meaning of subject experiences in the context of the principal's role in improving teacher professionalism (Moustakas, 1994). Primary data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews with the school principal as the main informant, using purposive sampling technique to ensure participants have direct relevance to the research focus. Secondary data sources come from previous articles and books that discuss the role of school principals and teacher professionalism.

Data collection was carried out through observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation of unofficial school documents. To maintain data validity, researchers used source and method triangulation techniques, which matched interview results with observations and documentation. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data reduction was done by sorting important information from interviews and observations, then presenting it in a systematic and easily understood narrative form (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 2020). Subsequently, the researcher interpreted the meaning of findings in the context of the principal's role in fostering and improving teacher professionalism, up to the stage of drawing conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Leadership Role of the School Principal

Leadership is an attitude where you feel that you have an ability and readiness in yourself to lead by understanding the functions and objectives of leadership, both by guiding, directing, encouraging, moving others to accept what is taught to achieve certain goals accordingly, effectively, and efficiently in leading (Kartika Sari, 2019).

Leadership is how someone provides organisation or handles situations at a certain time. Leadership means the ability to structure and organise a performance in achieving the desired decision.

From what Harbani explains, leadership is the skill of communicating and influencing someone either directly or indirectly with the aim of encouraging people to move gracefully, consciously and understandingly following the direction of the leader (Pasolong, 2021).

According to Overton, the focus of leadership ability is on influencing others. So that leadership means the ability to get a job done together. Meanwhile, according to Harsey and Blanchard, leadership is the process of achieving goals by influencing the activities of a person or group.

According to Syafaruddin and Asrul, leadership roles can be divided into four. First, the direction determinant, a leader is able to develop a vision that will then be realised together with others. Second, change agents, leaders must always have an understanding of the problems of the outside world, so that they can plan a better change. Third, spokesperson, leaders should have a wide network of friends or communication, and have the ability to speak. Fourth, coach, leaders can mobilise their members in carrying out the vision, besides that leaders are also role models for their members (Nasution, 2015)

A school principal is someone who is responsible for strategising, organising, coordinating and supervising the achievement of educational goals (Fatonah, 2013). The principal as a leader plays an important role in the process of educational growth. Principals must have the ability to mobilise all the resources available in the school to optimise the effectiveness of the implementation of the educational process so as to produce transformative results for students (Sholeh, 2016).

The principal is the main figure in efforts to improve school quality. In this effort, the principal also collaborates with school members, especially teachers. A leader must have many skills in making changes, finding strategies and motivating members to enthusiastically improve school quality (Johnson, E., Lee, H., & Kim, 2021). According to Hadari Nawawi and Martini Hadari, leadership means the ability to encourage a group of people to work together to carry out activities that are directed according to goals (Fillah, 2023).

The leadership duties of school principals have been regulated in the Decree of the Minister of National Education (Mendiknas) No. 162 of 2003, principals have duties called EMASLEC, namely educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, entrepreneur, and climate creator. As educators, principals design appropriate strategies to improve teacher professionalism. As a manager, the principal can implement effective and efficient management. As an administrative actor, he/she can manage the curriculum and other administration. As a supervisor, able to provide supervision of the work of teaching staff. The principal as a leader provides instructions and oversees communication between teachers and the principal himself. Principals also have duties as entrepreneurs, namely having skills that will be taught to people who are led. In addition, the principal is also a climate creator, building a conducive climate or work atmosphere (Priansa, D. J., & Somad, 2014)

As the owner of the leadership position at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono, he has carried out his role as a supervisor, educator, manager, administrator, leader, supervisor and motivator well. The role of the principal at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono can be implemented wisely in order to improve teacher professionalism. Teachers who are professional do not necessarily become professional immediately, they also need support and direction from a principal as a leader (Zukhruf, W. M., & Azani, 2023).

Asserting that as school managers are responsible for overseeing the actions of teachers, staff and students to investigate any problems that may occur in the school environment. For school managers to effectively achieve their goals, it is important that they have access to high-quality resources (Ariyani, 2017)

The principal has the responsibility of organising the administration and managing the smooth running of all activities. Principals must also be sensitive to changes in the community and education policy (Fitrah, 2017)

The head of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono as a manager, according to Mulyasa, can design the curriculum, manage the administration of students regarding the completeness of data, the preparation of data administration of teachers/teaching staff he has, the management of facilities and infrastructure he has, then management of relations with the local community. As a manager, the principal should also value teachers more for their professional abilities, so that the principal can easily provide encouragement to teachers in increasing their work potential (Asmui, A., Sudirman, S., & Sridana, 2019).

The principal's role as a manager is to organise the administration in the school as his responsibility. As the head of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono, Suprihono, S.Pd, M.M has divided tasks to teachers according to their abilities as a form of cooperation in organising administration. Although the tasks are shared with other teachers, the responsibility for organisation and preparation is still carried out by the principal properly.

Meanwhile, Rahman et al define a school principal as a teacher who has exceptional skills in guiding and supervising the effective utilisation of resources available in the school in order to successfully achieve the intended goals.

Davis G A and Thomas MA describe the characteristics of school principals according to those found in his book Wahyudi, including having a calling as a leader and being able to manage or lead schools, having the ability to find solutions to problems, being able to socialise well, and being responsible and professional when working (Wahyudi, S., & Rahayu, 2019).

Principals must understand their role in education, as for the role of the principal (Zukhruf, W. M., & Azani, 2023). Educators, to keep up with the development of science and technology, principals have the task of guiding other school members and showing exemplary attitudes as examples of their students. In creating an active learning atmosphere, the principal can provide opportunities for teachers to always think critically and excel (Mulyasa, 2022). As an educator, the head of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono develops the curriculum by improving the quality of education. In addition, in this development effort, the principal also encourages teachers to further develop their teaching methods, choosing the right learning media so that it is easier for students to receive learning. Principals must always encourage teachers to develop to become more professional (Yenni, Y., Lian, B., & Sari, 2020).

Managers, organising their activities in a systematic and planned manner. Principals also have the responsibility to manage their resources. The principal of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono as a manager is in accordance with what is described by Helmawati, namely that he has been able to manage and classify the resources owned properly, especially teachers in their efforts to improve their professionalism.

Supervisors, principals as observers and identify in achieving coaching goals. In addition, the principal is also tasked with developing abilities and improving the way teachers work (Darim, 2020). The level of work potential possessed by teachers in the form of competencies must always be supervised by the principal as a supervisor. This activity is used to evaluate and find solutions to problems that exist in teachers. So that teachers can always experience good optimal development in their work, and get comfortable and safe conditions.

The principal as a leader has the responsibility to realise the vision, mission and goals of the school programme, so that in realising it the principal will invite others to work together. In accordance with the vision and mission of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono, which is to produce students with character, competent in their fields, intelligent and independent. The principal provides direction and supervision of the performance of his teachers so that they can be better at carrying out their duties, so that professional teachers can produce students who are in accordance with the vision and mission that have been prepared by the school. Principals as leaders must be able to encourage teachers' enthusiasm in expressing their opinions, creative thinking that will improve the quality of education (Lisna, A., & Munastiwi, 2020).

As described about the principal by Wahjosumidjo (Wahjosumidjo, 1999) as a leader, the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono is also someone who has a high desire for the school community, understands the duties of his subordinates and can determine the atmosphere for their school.

Innovator, a principal who can think innovatively, has various appropriate strategies to establish relationships with the environment, provides several ideas in the implementation of activities and can develop interesting learning models (Gaol, 2017).

Teachers are always required to have a soul that tries to find creative thoughts, so that they can always create or find new strategies that are suitable for learning. In this effort, the principal as a reformer must be one step ahead to find opportunities, renewal and excellence that exist to improve the competence of his teachers.

The principal must be able to motivate teachers/educators with the right strategy in carrying out their duties and functions. The principal of SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono in carrying out his role is more inclined to the role of motivator. E. Mulyasa explained that principals must be able to empower their human resources, namely teachers. The principal encourages teachers to participate in teacher internship activities, which are activities to hone the competencies possessed by teachers in each SMK according to their majors. Then there is competency development training for teachers in their efforts to become more professional teachers.

1. Teacher Professionalism

As stated by Komarudin, professionalism comes from the Latin term 'profesia' which includes the concepts of position, competence, position, and professorship. According to Sudjanan, the term 'professional' can be used as an adjective to describe someone's work, and as a noun to refer to someone who has expertise in a particular field, such as a teacher or doctor.

Teacher professionalism is an increase in power and effort made to provide services to the community. The increased professionalism of a teacher can affect the quality of education. How a teacher sets an example and maintains daily behaviour is also seen by the community. The teaching profession in education aims to provide the best service for the community and produce students who have good quality education (Lazwardi, n.d.).

The professionalism of a teacher has several characteristics that can be seen as benchmarks, including (Munawir, M., Erindha, A. N., & Sari, 2023), namely, obeying the rules of the Government Law. Teachers must know what policies have been prepared by the government to regulate its apparatus, especially for education.

Teacher professionalism has been regulated in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards. Educators must be academically qualified, physically and mentally healthy, and able to realise national goals. Academic ability means that teachers have competencies including pedagogical, professional, social and personality. Meanwhile, the national goals are to promote welfare, educate the nation's life and participate in creating world order (Ali, M., 2018)

Joining a professional organisation. Teachers should help each other in improving the quality of education, here teachers can hold associations that aim as a means of struggle and dedication. SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono teachers have participated in several activities that can improve their abilities in accordance with the principal's direction, such as teacher internships. The programme is proposed for teachers who teach at Vocational High Schools (SMK), in an effort to improve teacher competence.

In addition, teachers have also participated in competency development training programmes, namely improving human resources regarding productive, skilled, creative, disciplined and professional work ethics. In an effort to achieve the educational goals that have been set, teachers must always develop their abilities. Improvements in the form of changes in the attitude and spirit of devotion to the community, increased competence and improved quality of task implementation (Heryani, R. D., & Kumala, 2020).

Thomas Gordon describes professional teachers in accordance with teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono, namely (J., & Muhson, 2004) including, having a good relationship with

their friends. Teachers must be able to create a good atmosphere and work environment and create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and kinship with their colleagues in accordance with the teacher code of ethics.

Guiding students. Teachers should have the ability to direct, guide and interest learners to grow and develop according to the ability of their interests and talents. Before producing high-potential student graduates, teachers must first understand the skills in the business world and the industrial world. Then the teacher can teach with methods and strategies that are suitable for students. So that students can also take an overview of the world of business and industry outside when working.

Comply with leaders' rules. Teachers must obey the policies that have been formulated by the leaders, and listen to the direction that has been given. Having professionalism in service and devotion based on their abilities seriously. Teachers or educators at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono have done their best in their professionalism. After the principal performs his role well, the teachers there can always develop their professional abilities.

CONCLUSION

The leadership role of the principal at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono has fulfilled various important aspects that must be possessed by an educational leader. The principal fulfils his role as supervisor, leader, educator, manager, reformer, and motivator well to improve the quality of teachers' professionalism. In this context, the principal's role in accordance with transformational leadership theory has a positive impact on teachers, such as increasing teachers' responsibility, creativity and knowledge, as well as their ability to create effective teaching strategies. Improved teacher professionalism contributes greatly to the national education goals of educating the nation's life and advancing the country's welfare. With effective leadership, teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono can continue to develop their potential to produce graduates who are ready to face life outside school. This finding is in line with existing leadership theories, which emphasise the importance of the principal's role in encouraging the development of teacher professionalism to achieve broader educational goals.

This research makes a real contribution to the development of educational leadership practices in vocational schools by highlighting the strategic role of principals in improving teacher professionalism. Using a contextualised phenomenological approach, this study succeeds in describing in detail how principals perform their roles as managers, supervisors, motivators, and innovators in creating a conducive learning environment and encouraging the development of teacher competencies. The findings show that active and transformative leadership roles directly contribute to improving teacher quality in terms of performance, professional responsibility, and mastery of pedagogic, social, and personality skills.

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