


Principal Leadership Innovation in Improving Teacher Performance in Integrated Islamic Schools

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Received: 12-09-2024 Revised: 15-11-2024 Accepted: 21-11-2024</p> <p>Keywords: Innovation; Principal Leadership; Teacher Performance.</p>	<p>This study aims to reveal the innovative leadership strategies implemented by the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, to improve teacher performance. This study uses descriptive qualitative through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary records. The research instruments are observation forms, interview questionnaires, and criteria for relevant documentation. The study's results indicate that these innovations improve teachers' motivation, competence, and job satisfaction. These leadership strategies align with Islamic teachings, create a harmonious work environment, and improve teacher performance. This study concludes that teacher-centered leadership innovations and learning are the keys to improving the quality of education in Islamic schools.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

The principal is defined as a professional official at a school who leads all stakeholders related to the field of education and aims to achieve educational goals (Susanti, 2021). In addition, the principal is also active in building partnerships with various parties, both inside and outside the school environment, to support multiple innovative programs. As a school leader, the principal plays a massive role in achieving educational goals (Harahap et al., 2023).

Educational leadership encourages, directs, and moves the actors involved in organizing and developing education and conducting training so that various activities can be carried out properly and correctly. This means that leaders must have the capacity. Establishing education and teaching work discipline is a condition created and formed by obedience, loyalty, order, and a series of actions showing order's value. He has become one with himself so that his attitude and behavior are no longer seen as a burden, not a burden at all, or vice versa, a burden if he does not behave as usual. The higher the principal's leadership, the higher the impact of work discipline in improving teacher performance;

conversely, the weaker the principal's leadership, the weaker the discipline and performance of the teacher (Astutik, 2022).

The success of achieving these goals must be achieved by the leader of an educational institution, including the principal, who can encourage stakeholders to realize the vision, mission, and goals (Mulyadi & Fauzi, 2023). The principal is a leader, and teachers generally accept them as workers in the current conditions. There are several theoretical needs for educational reform through involvement. Thus, leaders who play an influential role are not directly involved. This has a substantial impact on the school's ability to improve teacher performance, the delivery of the curriculum, and student academic achievement. In current conditions, student teaching and learning activities in schools have increased. Student acceptance is the first and last, and depending on the quality of the performance of teachers, a leader must provide intrinsic quality to improve teacher performance, which is very important in improving student learning. Thus, material delivery can be done inside or outside the classroom, for example, by doing tasks individually or in groups (Kahrudin & Hannah, 2021).

The importance of innovative leadership in improving teacher performance aims to reveal how the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, Central Java, Indonesia, plays a role in developing integrated Islamic schools through the principal's innovation. This was triggered by the empirical need for educational innovation that can improve the quality of education and prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. Innovative leadership is an approach that emphasizes the importance of creativity, the courage to take risks, and the ability to adapt to change. In education, innovative leadership can be realized through various means, such as implementing a flexible curriculum, teacher evaluation in learning, developing active and creative teaching methods, and using technology during teaching and learning.

The principal's role in teacher performance and competence is a form of primary responsibility for changing student orientation from not knowing to knowing, from not having skills to having skills, from dependence to independence through learning methods that encourage student activity so that they can absorb and adapt to new information through asking, thinking, creating, exploring, and developing various specific ways in connection with solving life problems. As an educational administrator, the principal is responsible for the smooth implementation of education and teaching in his school; therefore, to carry out his duties properly, the principal should understand, master, and be able to carry out the function of an educational administrator. As an administrator, the principal should be able to carry out activities related to his function as an educational administrator in the community (Raflis Kosasi, 2009).

Some previous research was conducted, including Saputra (2021), which shows that the school principal is expected to be a role model for the school community. The school principal is expected to be able to establish good communication with the community as service users of the educational services offered by the school. Zahro (2018) states that a person will be more receptive to innovation if they see that it will provide more significant benefits than what was obtained or achieved previously and shows the level of suitability

between the innovation and the conditions and expectations of society. Next, Kristini (2023) states that the innovation of the principal's leadership is already high, as indicated by teachers who have achieved indicators in pedagogical competence, social competence, professional competence, and personal competence. Next, Tobing (2021) states that the role of the principal's leadership is to meet teachers' learning needs, curriculum, teaching materials, facilities and infrastructure, media, and broad access. Furthermore, Hasanah (2024) states that the principal has implemented various innovations in school management, teacher professional development, and technology integration in learning, contributing to the school's achievement of A accreditation.

Based on several studies above, what distinguishes it from previous studies is that this study focuses on the innovation of the principal's leadership to improve teacher performance in integrated Islamic schools. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question: how does the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, implement innovation in managing integrated Islamic schools? What is the Principal's Strategy for developing professional teacher performance? This study also seeks to identify strategies and obstacles faced by the principal in developing Teacher Performance.

This study is expected to provide in-depth insights into the various innovative steps taken by the principal to improve the quality of teacher performance at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo. The principal is expected to create a dynamic and responsive learning environment that meets the needs of students and teachers by applying the latest technology and teaching methods. Effective school management and teacher professional development are two essential aspects that receive special attention in this study. In addition, this study will also explore how the innovations implemented contribute to improving teacher performance, which indicates the school's success in meeting the education quality standards set by the government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Innovation

In his leadership, the principal must understand the principles of managing teachers. Wuri (2020) explains that the principles in managing teachers are: 1) building social closeness with teachers, asking about the health conditions and basic needs of teachers and families, 2) knowing the learning activities designed and carried out by teachers according to the conditions of students and parents, 3) facilitating problem-solving for learning obstacles found by teachers until finding a joint solution, 4) give appreciation to teachers who continue to work hard to ensure that learning continues to run well, and 5) make sure teachers feel they are not alone, the principal and school staff can help prepare learning and collect teaching materials. Principal leadership is one of the components of education that plays an essential role in improving the quality of education in schools. The principal is the driving force that determines the direction of policy towards school success, so to ensure this, a school performance assessment is carried out. Djafri (2016) stated that a school performance assessment is an effort to capture the success of the principal's leadership and

simultaneously describe the objective conditions of the school profile as a whole, which is an integration of the performance of all school members.

Educational leadership that is appropriate in the era of educational autonomy is innovative. Educational governance or school management cannot be separated from the principal's leadership implementation model. Therefore, in implementing the role of a "leader," the principal should act as a figure who can influence others and lead innovatively (Chalim et al., 2012). Innovative leadership is achieved through implementing innovation and change in educational institutions. Innovative educational leadership in the era of educational autonomy is now essential because the lifestyle and function of humans change in line with increasing age, and human life changes over time. Even modern thinking emphasizes education so that it does not only adapt to changes in the world of life but also plays a role in creating and controlling these changes (Syam, 2012).

Educational leaders are given broader authority to innovate in education. Innovating in education is a complicated task because the results are uncertain. Therefore, the work is not easy to plan, its success is doubtful, and it is more challenging to manage when innovating in change. Innovation is a supporting factor for the success of a leader. Leaders must have skills related to exploring innovation. They can attract the sympathy of all parties to unite and empathize with each other to bring change in a better direction. However, innovation can be implemented if there is a will. Innovation can also be done optimally if you understand the innovation process and its management system. However, innovation can be realized if the educational leader is firmly committed to the program and is precise, skilled, and qualified. Commitment to innovation is a fundamental prerequisite because the success or failure of innovation is influenced by the strength of the educational leader's commitment (Syam, 2012).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that principal leadership is the ability of the principal to move, direct, guide, protect, foster, set an example, provide encouragement, and assist all school resources to achieve the school's vision, mission, and goals. Principal leadership is an active, creative subject that moves individuals and groups/organizations to achieve goals/dreams effectively in schools. Principal leadership has a strategic role in the management framework, and the principal is one of the most critical factors in supporting the success of schools in achieving the goals that have been set.

Teacher Performance

The success of education and students is closely related to the quality of teachers' performance, so institutions are always required to develop and improve teacher performance. Performance means the results of work that can be displayed or the work appearance of a teacher. Thus, a teacher's performance can be measured from work, assignments, or activities within a certain period. The purpose of teacher performance is to find out whether or not an education, teaching, or training program has been mastered by its participants (Sunarsi, 2020).

Teacher performance, according to Asterina (2019), is the ability of a teacher to perform actions according to the objectives that have been set, which include aspects of

planning teaching and learning programs, implementing the teaching and learning process, creating and maintaining optimal classes, controlling optimal learning conditions, and assessing learning outcomes. Performance is essential in determining the quality of a person's work, including a teacher. Gunawan (2018) stated that teachers with excellent and professional performance in curriculum implementation have the following characteristics: designing learning programs, implementing learning, and assessing student learning outcomes. Based on these thoughts, teachers have several assessment activities on student achievement and activities to develop the school curriculum, which includes planning, implementing, and evaluating all of its devices.

Syarwani (2018) explains teacher performance is related to teaching or learning tasks. The teacher's teaching performance is the result achieved by the teacher in providing various helpful knowledge and technology for students according to their thinking development. Teacher performance is related to teaching or learning tasks. The teacher's teaching performance is the result achieved by the teacher in providing various helpful knowledge and technology for students according to their thinking development. Teacher performance becomes optimal when integrated with the components of each school, whether it is the principal, teachers, employees, or students. Without improving teacher performance, all efforts to improve education can fail because the high and low performance of the teacher can be used as a benchmark for the school's success in carrying out its duties and functions (Romimpandey, 2020). Devitha (2021) stated that teachers with good average performance obtain optimal learning quality and quality in students. Ideally, teachers must have optimal and quality performance to make a positive and significant contribution to improving the quality of learning and student learning achievement.

Based on several opinions above, it can be concluded that teacher performance is the result of work that teachers in schools can achieve by the authority and responsibility given by the school to achieve the vision, mission, and goals of the school concerned legally, without violating the law and by morals and ethics. Teacher performance is evident from their responsibility in carrying out their mandate, the profession they hold, and the morals they possess. In short, teacher performance is the result of teacher work manifested in the form of teachers' knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in carrying out their duties and functions, which are shown in their appearance, actions, and work achievements.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the principal's innovative leadership role in developing teacher performance at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo. This research design is appropriate to answer the questions posed because it focuses on the experiences and perspectives of the principal and teaching staff and direct observation of school practices.

Data collection techniques include direct observation of school practices, in-depth interviews with principals and teachers, and documentation from various sources relevant to educational innovation. The development of data instruments includes observation forms, interview questionnaires, and criteria for appropriate documentation.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques to identify critical patterns and themes related to leadership innovation. The data collected were analyzed to identify emerging patterns and themes, which provide an understanding of how innovation is implemented and affects school performance. Overall, the methods used in this study were designed to collect rich and in-depth data on educational innovation carried out by the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo. This allows for answering the research questions and understanding its implications for school performance.

RESULTS

Principal Leadership Innovation in Improving Teacher Performance

SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo's principal showed that many schools are left behind due to a lack of innovation. Therefore, SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo conducted a SWOT analysis. The strength of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo is its location in the middle of the city. This junior high school was newly established, so there were problems. SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo also has daily school classes, which are very helpful for busy parents because they make parents comfortable while their children stay at school. The main advantage of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo is its strategic location in the middle of the city, which makes it easy for students and parents to get in. Students can more easily reach the school by various types of transportation, which makes this strategic location very beneficial. SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo also offers a full-day school program, which is very helpful for busy parents. Parents who use this program can rest assured that their children are in an organized and safe environment throughout the day. As the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo explained:

"As a principal, I focus on empowering teachers through several initiatives. The first is ongoing professional development and training. We conduct regular training inside and outside the school to improve pedagogical skills and technological mastery. In addition, I also form collaborative teams where teachers can share ideas and best practices. We facilitate regular discussion sessions and workshops to improve their competencies. In addition, I encourage the use of technology in learning so that teachers do not only teach conventionally but can also utilize digital media to improve the quality of learning."

The principal has a strategic role in encouraging and supervising the implementation of innovation in schools. One of the principal's main tasks is to evaluate teacher performance, especially in implementing innovative ideas in the learning process. This evaluation is not only to assess the extent to which teachers can apply new methods and technologies but also to ensure that the innovations provide benefits to students, improve the quality of learning, and support the professional development of the teachers themselves.

The importance of teacher performance evaluation in the innovation process cannot be underestimated. As a leader in an educational institution, the principal must be able to objectively and comprehensively assess various aspects, from teacher creativity in designing and implementing learning to their ability to adapt to change. This evaluation process must

be carried out constructively to provide constructive feedback and the support needed for teachers to continue to develop and innovate. As the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo explained:

"I implement an objective and performance-based assessment system. We do not only assess students' test results but also the teaching process carried out by teachers. This assessment is periodic, with constructive feedback so that teachers can identify areas for improvement. In addition, I often conduct informal evaluations through one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss the challenges they face in class."

Innovation in education is essential in overcoming challenges and meeting growing learning needs. In this context, the principal plays a central role in directing and encouraging the implementation of innovations that can improve the quality of learning. However, teachers' views and responses as the field's main implementers are critical for the innovation to be successful and have a positive impact. Teachers are not only recipients of policies but also actors who are directly involved in implementing these changes. As explained by the Teacher of the SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, he explained that:

"I strongly support the principal's initiative. The training we received was beneficial in updating our knowledge and skills, especially regarding educational technology. Previously, we were limited to the same teaching methods. Still, with the training on learning applications, my teaching methods have become more interesting and effective. In addition, the space for collaboration with fellow teachers allows me to share new ideas and teaching strategies."

Changes and innovations in the world of education are inevitable, along with the development of technology, teaching methods, and the demands of increasingly diverse student needs. As part of the education system, teachers are the main actors in dealing with these changes. Innovations implemented in schools, whether in the form of new learning methods, the use of technology, or changes in learning management, certainly significantly impact teacher performance in the classroom. As explained by The teacher of the SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, explained:

"Of course. I feel more confident in teaching, especially in using technology in learning. In addition, I am more motivated because I feel appreciated and supported in developing my teaching skills. There has also been a change in the way I view performance evaluation. With constructive feedback from the principal, I can focus on areas I need to improve."

This study found exciting things about how the principal uses innovative leadership strategies to improve teacher performance. Data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation have been analyzed to see emerging patterns and themes. One important finding is that the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, has succeeded in creating a school environment that encourages creativity and innovation. The principal actively participates in developing new programs aimed at improving the quality of education, such as using technology in learning and creating a curriculum that is more responsive to student needs. In addition, the principal provides full support to teachers through training and workshops to improve their teaching skills and implement new learning approaches.

Other findings show that an inclusive and collaborative leadership approach effectively addresses the challenges schools face. The principal acts as a leader and facilitator, encouraging everyone in the school community, including teachers, students, and parents, to participate actively. By working together, challenges can be identified and addressed. This creates a strong sense of belonging and a solid commitment to the school's vision and mission. SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo utilizes innovation in school management by implementing fun learning but still focusing on student intelligence. The concept of intelligence here includes moral and academic intelligence. This school is committed to producing students who are not only intelligent but also moral.

Innovations in developing learners' professionalism include training in official institutions or other activities. Training includes workshops, which often occur outside of school and are attended mainly by assigned teachers. There are also groups of teachers for one subject. In addition to training activities outside of school, each school also has activities within the school. At SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, it is like a group of teachers teaching one subject. In this group, teachers learn strategies, subject matter, and how to solve problems to overcome their abilities. This daily discussion helps teachers together to create a supportive and broad learning environment so that they can make learning innovations. In addition, teachers are also asked to guide students when exams are taking place, which gives teachers a little experience regarding the administrative and managerial aspects of the school. The school implements a rotation system to ensure that all teachers get equal opportunities in various tasks and responsibilities. By rotating, teachers gain broader and more diverse experiences, which not only improve their skills but also help in personal and professional development.

Principal Leadership Strategies and Barriers to Improving Teacher Performance

The principal's ability in the managerial field is essential in determining the improvement of teacher welfare and professionalism to realize the main goals of education. As explained by the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo:

"Teacher welfare needs to be improved as well as possible because if their welfare has been fulfilled, then the implementation of their duties will automatically be more optimal. So, this research leads to innovation in principal leadership that is more functional in improving teacher performance, emphasizing Islamic values, the context of religious-based schools, and a holistic approach that includes aspects of professional competence and teacher self-development, unlike previous studies that focused more on technical aspects, formal competence, and interpersonal communication in the context of school management in general. Thus, your research provides a deeper contribution to understanding leadership innovation that is specific, holistic, and oriented toward religious values in Integrated Islamic Schools. Thus, the correlation between duties and welfare as teachers and education personnel is directly proportional."

Therefore, the following are the principal strategies for realizing this matter. First, Identifying conflicts in the principal's strategy is essential in understanding and addressing

issues that may interfere with achieving school goals. The quality of teacher performance is greatly influenced by various factors, one of which is the support and effective communication from the principal. As explained by the principal:

In socialization activities, we often encounter differences of opinion between individuals that cause slight friction. As the principal, I try to be a listener and mediator to reduce conflict. The steps I take in identifying the conflict are to open and transparent communication with the various parties involved. One of the obstacles I often encounter in this strategy is that ineffective communication causes misperceptions that can worsen the conflict, so the parties are not open."

The obstacles found are problems of differences of opinion between individuals, differences of views, or dissatisfaction. Unresolved conflicts can damage relationships between school residents, which in turn affects the school's overall performance.

Second, the collaborative approach is one way to resolve conflicts or problems in organizations, including in the school environment, by involving various parties in decision-making and problem-solving. The cooperative model emphasizes the importance of open communication and cooperation between the parties involved. As explained by the principal:

"In the collaborative approach, cooperation is involved for all parties involved. Sometimes, reaching an agreement can take longer when there are differences of opinion or views. Each party may have a different perspective, hindering the decision-making process. However, I always try to ensure that each party feels valued and heard, even though the final decision may take longer."

Obstacles found in collaborative approach. Several parties involved in effective collaboration include teachers, students, parents, and staff to address issues and achieve common goals. Principals who implement this approach prioritize the involvement of all parties in decision-making and problem-solving. Collaboration strengthens interpersonal relationships, increases mutual understanding, and supports achieving better educational goals. However, collaboration also requires practical communication skills and empathy. Everyone should feel valued and able to contribute to finding solutions. The disadvantage of this method is that it can sometimes take a long time to reach an agreement if different views are held by the parties involved.

Furthermore, a neutral and objective attitude makes all parties feel valued and heard without any impression of bias that could worsen the situation. By remaining objective, the principal can avoid the injustice that could damage relationships between school residents. As stated by the principal that:

"As a principal, I have to consider a variety of factors before making a decision, including the available data, the views of each party, and the long-term impact of the decision. Sometimes, it is important to maintain balance and be impartial in an emotional situation. That requires a high level of wisdom."

Obstacles found maintaining a neutral and objective attitude is very important for a principal in leading. When there are differences of opinion or conflict between teachers, the principal must maintain a fair and neutral attitude. Before deciding, the principal must

consider various factors and existing data. If not wise, the decision can worsen the situation or cause injustice.

Focusing on solutions is critical to solving problems, especially in the school environment. By focusing on solutions, each party involved in the conflict can more easily find a mutually beneficial way out rather than getting caught up in unproductive arguments. This approach encourages collaboration, creativity, and positive thinking in finding solutions while reducing the negative impact of the problem. As stated by the principal that:

"We always think about the best solution for all parties involved. We always propose several alternative solutions that are acceptable to all parties. Therefore, I prefer to focus all parties' attention on finding a concrete solution. By not focusing too much on the problem itself, we can find a good way out faster. However, of course, there are times when the proposed solution cannot satisfy everyone. This is where mediation skills and the ability to reach an agreement are needed."

The obstacles focus on finding solutions rather than dwelling on the problem. The principal encourages all parties to seek constructive and mutually acceptable solutions. When faced with a problem, the principal leads the conversation toward a solution rather than escalating the situation by blaming a particular individual. This approach is crucial because it reduces tension and helps create a more productive school atmosphere. When focusing on finding solutions, the solutions presented will likely not always satisfy everyone. Mediation skills and the ability to reach an agreement are essential for the principal to produce effective and fair solutions.

DISCUSSION

Principal Leadership Innovation in Improving Teacher Performance

Improving teacher performance at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo can be achieved through innovation in principal leadership. The results of interviews with teachers and principals indicate that educational innovation depends not only on existing policies but also on the principal's ability to motivate and support teachers through various programs and initiatives to improve teaching quality. Critical and strategic efforts are scheduled to optimize teacher quality and school quality, all of which depend on the willingness and determination of the principal to innovate, make himself a successful leader with maximum performance, and protect his subordinates (Kristini et al., 2023).

This study found that teacher performance evaluation is very important for principals. Rather than just student test scores, a performance-based evaluation process allows teachers to provide more in-depth and meaningful feedback. Through regular evaluations and one-on-one discussions, teachers can identify strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching practices. This aligns with the perspective of principals who emphasize the importance of an objective, evidence-based approach to performance assessment, which focuses not only on student test scores but also on the teacher's learning process.

The principal's success in creating an educational environment that supports innovation also depends on the empowerment of teachers through training and continuous professional development. Both inside and outside the school, regular training programs have helped teachers gain new knowledge, especially about the use of technology in learning. With this training, teachers have the opportunity to try new teaching approaches and improve the effectiveness of their teaching. This statement is supported by Sukmaswati (2019) that the principal has a role as a leader in his school and is responsible for leading the educational process in his school, which is related to improving the quality of human resources, improving the professionalism of teachers, employees and all those related to the school under the auspices of the principal. A teacher said that training in digital learning applications made their teaching methods more exciting and compelling and increased their confidence.

One important strategy to encourage innovation is to form collaborative teams where teachers can exchange ideas and best practices. Being allowed to share experiences and solve classroom problems increases teacher motivation and appreciation. This collaboration not only helps teachers improve their professional skills but also brings people closer together and more committed to the goals and objectives of the school.

The principal of SMP IT, Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, has shown that his inclusive and collaborative leadership methods have helped the school overcome its problems. The principal acts as a direct leader and an advocate who encourages all school community members to work together to solve problems. This fosters a strong sense of belonging among teachers, students, and parents in the school. Good leadership increases teacher motivation and performance and makes innovations easier to accept and implement.

The teacher rotation strategy aims to give them a more diverse experience in carrying out various school tasks and responsibilities as an innovative effort is implemented. With the rotation system, teachers can develop school management and administration skills in addition to teaching experience. This system supports teachers in developing leadership skills and increasing their understanding of aspects of work in schools. That way, teachers can experience various school roles to improve their ability to face multiple challenges.

Innovative leadership from the principal can result in positive improvements in the quality of teaching and teacher performance. However, the implementation of this innovation is not without challenges. Another important thing is the sustainability of programs such as training and professional development that have been implemented. A principal needs to ensure that innovation is not just short-term but can be integrated sustainably into the school culture. In addition, although collaboration between teachers has proven successful, the initiative's success also depends on the principal's ability to manage relationships between individuals and ensure harmonious cooperation. In this context, the principal must demonstrate strong managerial skills in dealing with differences of opinion and ensuring that all teachers feel supported and valued.

Providing constructive feedback is essential for principals' objective and constructive performance evaluation. This procedure must be carried out carefully to not create negative

impressions or frustration in teachers and to ensure that the assessment truly helps their professional development.

This study contributes significantly to principal strategy, especially in Principal Leadership Innovation in Improving the Performance of Teachers at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo. By identifying and analyzing the challenges and needs required in this principal innovation, this study offers in-depth insights to improve the managerial quality of principals. Focusing on improving the performance of education personnel and teachers in schools, this research helps educational institutions design better strategies and supports strengthening teacher competencies and enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning process.

Strategies and Obstacles Faced by the Principal in Developing Teacher Performance

Etymologically, "strategy" is defined as careful planning related to an activity in achieving a goal. Furthermore, "strategy" is relevant to the word approach or procedure in English. According to McLeod, strategy is defined as the art of implementing a plan in the form of a strategy. Strategy is taken from the Greek word for action planning, which covers steps related to problem-solving or realizing goals (Syah, 2011). This means that if a goal is something that someone wants to achieve in an activity, then strategy becomes a form of planning to realize a goal (Swastha, 2008).

Based on its etymology, the principal represents the school principal with the task of implementing the principalship or head of the school. Another term is an educational leader who has tasks related to the school to realize the school's vision and mission and improve student achievement in academic and non-academic terms. Wahjosumidjo (1999) defined the principal as a functional teacher who leads a madrasah in which there are learning activities and a location for interaction between teachers as teachers and students as recipients of lessons. According to Mursyid, the principal is the driving force that drives human resources in schools (Ma'mur, 2012). According to the expert's opinion, the conclusion is that the principal's strategy is a step related to activities aimed at developing school productivity to realize the school's vision and mission to the maximum.

Optimal teacher performance in a school environment depends on the principal's expertise in managing various managerial aspects and interpersonal relationships in educational institutions. As a leader, the principal is crucial in creating an environment that supports teacher professionalism. Based on the results of interviews conducted at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, several leadership strategies implemented by the principal contributed significantly to improving teacher welfare, professionalism, and performance. Several key strategies that have been identified are conflict recognition, collaborative approaches, open communication, and neutral and objective attitudes.

First, recognizing the sources of conflict in the school environment is an essential initial step. Conflict in schools is natural and can occur due to various factors, such as differences of opinion, communication problems, or dissatisfaction. Principals who can identify the sources of conflict early on will be more effective in finding the right solution. A study by Thomas (1978) shows that proactive conflict management can reduce its negative

impact on interpersonal relationships within the environment. Thus, this strategy increases the integration between teachers and students and creates a more conducive learning atmosphere.

Second, the collaborative approach in principal management has a significant positive impact. Collaboration involving teachers, students, parents, and staff helps solve common problems and strengthens interpersonal relationships among all parties involved. Research by Vescio (2008) noted that collaboration between teachers can improve their teaching practices and subsequently positively impact student achievement. Although the collaborative process often requires time and good communication skills, the results are usually worth the effort.

Furthermore, open and transparent communication is the foundation for a healthy and productive work environment. The SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo principal emphasized the importance of transparency in every decision-making. In this case, research by Rahawarin (2015) shows that effective communication can increase trust among school community members, increasing teacher motivation and performance. Principals should strive to create a safe environment for teachers and staff to express their opinions without fear of repercussion, thus creating a harmonious working atmosphere.

Finally, being neutral and objective is very important for principals when dealing with conflicts or differences of opinion among teachers. Maintaining a fair attitude will ensure that everyone feels heard and minimize tensions that can disrupt professional relationships between colleagues. According to Daniel (2021), leaders who can balance emotions and take an objective approach tend to be more successful in creating a work environment that is mutually respectful and supportive. However, this neutral attitude requires the principal to have wisdom in making decisions by considering various perspectives and existing data.

Referring to the review above, it is clear that the leadership strategies implemented by the principal have a significant impact on teacher achievement and performance. By introducing effective sources of conflict, collaborative approaches, open communication, and neutral and objective attitudes, the principal can create an environment that supports teacher professionalism and improves the overall quality of education. Therefore, all stakeholders in the world of education need to pay more attention to the role of school leadership in fostering a positive and productive work culture.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the implementation of innovation by the principal of SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo, to develop professional teacher performance. To find out the principal's strategy to establish professional teacher performance and identify strategies and obstacles the principal faces in developing teacher performance. The conclusion obtained from this study is that the principal actively participates in creating new programs to improve the quality of education, such as using technology in learning and developing a curriculum that is more responsive to student needs. Although this program is generally

running well, the main challenges faced are time constraints and the need for innovation in teaching methods to maintain the program's relevance to the times and student needs. The principal provides full support to teachers through training and workshops to improve their teaching skills and implement new learning approaches. Although this training and workshop are generally running well, the main challenge faced is that some teachers still have difficulty implementing interactive and innovative teaching methods needed to attract student interest. Several leadership strategies implemented by the principal have contributed significantly to improving the welfare, professionalism, and performance of teachers who have implemented them, namely conflict recognition, collaborative approaches, open communication, and neutral and objective attitudes. This study contributes significantly to principal strategy, especially in Principal Leadership Innovation in improving the performance of teachers at SMP IT Mutiara Insan Sukoharjo. By identifying and analyzing the challenges and needs required in this principal innovation, this study offers in-depth insights to improve the managerial quality of principals. Focusing on improving the performance of education personnel and teachers in schools, this research helps educational institutions design better strategies. It supports strengthening teacher competencies and enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning process.

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