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The Role Of Principal Leadership In Improving Teacher Performance In State Elementary School 176 Palembang

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at Public Elementary School 176 Palembang, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and identify efforts to overcome these obstacles. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The principal plays an active role in improving teacher performance through the EMASLIM (Educator, Manager, Administrator, Supervisor, Leader, Innovator, and Motivator) function. Supporting factors include teacher experience, civil servant status, teacher certification, and support for school facilities and infrastructure. Inhibiting factors include low discipline among some teachers and limited ability to utilize learning technology. To overcome these obstacles, the principal provides ongoing coaching, supervision, training, motivation, and oversight. Principal leadership plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance. Effective leadership can enhance professionalism, discipline, and the quality of learning implementation, thus supporting the achievement of educational goals in schools.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Teacher Performance, EMASLIM, Elementary School.

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INTRODUCTION

Basic education is the foundation of human resource development in Indonesia. The quality of education is highly dependent on teacher performance.(Suharto, 2021)The principal plays a crucial role in leading the school. Effective leadership can increase teacher motivation and productivity.(Bush, 2023)However, many elementary schools face the challenge of weak leadership. This has an impact on overall low teacher performance.(Hallinger & Wang, 2020),.

Leadership is a group of applied sciences or applied sciences from social sciences because its principles and formulations are useful for improving human welfare.(Suwatno, 2019). According to(Rohiat, 2018)Leadership is the ability to change group behavior in a way that is most effective for others. It is the process of influencing group activities to establish and achieve goals.(Budiarti, Wahab & Soedarso, 2018)provides an explanation that the ability to influence individuals towards the level of organizational success is known as leadership. Leadership is a reciprocal process that occurs between individuals, it is always changing and involves the use of power (decision making). The ability of professionals to influence the direction of their field by passing on important knowledge to the next generation.(Oztel, 2025).

The world of education is undergoing significant changes to meet the demands and needs of society. Education also faces challenges in addressing numerous issues. Changes are occurring rapidly, both locally and internationally. Simultaneously, Indonesia faces a dramatic phenomenon: low competitiveness, indicating that education is unable to produce quality human resources. Nevertheless, the goals and functions of national education as stipulated in the Law must be implemented as follows:

"National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of the nation, which aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble morals, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens" (Law No. 20 of 2013 on the National Education System, Article 3).

Given the challenges and changes in the Indonesian education system, leadership to encourage and develop teacher competencies and success in improving teacher performance is becoming increasingly important. Effective leadership from the principal can be a key factor in achieving this goal. The principal has a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment and facilitating teacher professional development. How the principal uses various strategies The principal is appointed to a position responsible for coordinating joint efforts to achieve educational goals at the school level they lead. They are the people at the forefront who

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coordinate efforts to improve learning at the operational level. It is clear that no single person is responsible for a school other than the principal. Teachers, students, and the environment are also important factors.

Teacher performance or performance achievement is the result achieved by a teacher in carrying out the tasks assigned to him based on accidents, experience and sincerity, as well as the use of time. Teacher professionalism greatly influences teacher performance which concerns all activities carried out in carrying out his mandate and responsibility in educating, teaching and guiding, directing, and guiding students in achieving their level of maturity and maturity.(Saepudin Karta Sasmita, et.al, 2023, p. 12).

(Fatah in Rachmawati, 2013, p. 17) explains that "Performance is not an individual behavior such as talent or ability, but rather the manifestation of that ability in the form of real work, performance based on ability, attitude, knowledge, and motivation will result in an achievement/success". It is also emphasized that "performance is the result of work achieved by a person in order to achieve the desired goal" (Priansa, 2018, p. 79).

Based on the above opinion, it can be understood that teacher performance is the teacher's ability to achieve learning objectives, to educate and provide encouragement to students to be more professional in carrying out their duties and responsibilities to meet their needs. From the several definitions above, researchers try to draw conclusions about teacher performance, namely the results of work in terms of quantity and quality achieved by a teacher in carrying out the assigned tasks, or their work during a certain period according to the criteria and competency standards that have been set.

Improving teacher performance is greatly influenced by the principal's leadership. If the principal can optimize the roles of all principals as educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator, teacher performance will almost certainly improve, which will ultimately lead to improved quality of education in the school.

Based on a review of several previous studies above, there are fundamental differences that constitute the originality (novelty) in this study. While previous studies have focused mostly on junior high and senior high school levels or only on general management aspects, this study focuses on the leadership role of the principal through the EMASLIM approach (Educator, Manager, Administrator, Supervisor, Leader, Innovator, and Motivator) comprehensively at SD Negeri 176 Palembang. The uniqueness of this study lies in its efforts to solve a specific problem discovered through the researcher's observations, namely the phenomenon where the majority of teachers already have civil servant status and are certified educators (experienced), but still

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face obstacles such as low time discipline and obstacles in mastering learning technology. This study is here to fill this gap by analyzing how the principal's leadership strategy optimizes the potential of teachers who are already 'established' administratively to remain innovative and high-performing in the digital era.

Given the challenges and changes in the dynamic education system, principal leadership is a determining factor in driving teacher competence and performance. However, although various leadership theories have been widely discussed, there is a gap between theory and reality on the ground, particularly regarding discipline and technology adaptation. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed that not only examines the role of the principal in general, but also specifically examines how these functions are carried out in the context of real-world challenges at the elementary school level, which is characterized by experienced educators but still faces technical challenges. To achieve the above goals, Public Elementary School 176 Palembang must have a leader capable of transforming teacher performance. A school progresses when teacher performance changes from poor to better and more accountable. Poor teacher performance indicates a lack of competence.

The school should be able to quickly address its shortcomings because its principal and teachers are experienced. Many of the teachers at the school are civil servants and hold teaching certificates. Therefore, evaluation and improvement are necessary to ensure everything runs smoothly and optimally. The principal must enhance the abilities and skills of educational implementers. A head of an educational institution must possess extensive knowledge and leadership skills. This is necessary to control, influence, and motivate subordinates to carry out their duties honestly, responsibly, effectively, and efficiently.

The principal can provide behavioral guidance by convincing teachers and students that achieving school goals effectively and efficiently is the best way to achieve personal goals. The principal can instill in teachers and students the awareness that harmony, alignment, and balance between individual and organizational goals can be achieved through persuasive means without coercion. Therefore, the principal must provide instructions to teachers so that school administration and learning can be carried out effectively and optimally for the advancement of the school.

Based on the background of the problem described above, it can be concluded that this study aims to determine the leadership of school principals in improving teacher competency with limited time allocation. Therefore, the researcher is interested in taking the title: "The Role of Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance in Elementary Schools."

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive research is a type of research that aims to study a situation, condition, or other stated matter, and the results are presented in a research report. Data is collected and compiled, then analyzed and interpreted. Essentially, descriptive qualitative research is a method for investigating the status of a group of people or objects with the aim of creating a systematic, factual, and accurate description, picture, or depiction of the facts or phenomena being investigated.

This method considers reality as multidimensional, fixed, and changing. Therefore, research evolves throughout the process, allowing concepts to change according to current circumstances and conditions. Thus, this research will provide explanations of observed phenomena without using numbers. However, in qualitative descriptive research, "qualitative data" refers to data represented by the words "state" or "trait."

The author directly conducted observations and collected data from the principal and teachers of Palembang State Elementary School 176. Without knowledge of data collection techniques, the researcher would not have obtained data that met the established data standards using observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques used in this study included data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results based on three problem formulations, namely: (1) principal leadership in improving teacher performance, (2) supporting and inhibiting factors for principals in improving teacher performance, and (3) principal efforts in overcoming obstacles to improving teacher competence at SD Negeri 176 Palembang. The analysis was carried out by interpreting field findings obtained through interviews with the principal, vice principal, class teachers, subject teachers, and supported by in-depth observation and documentation.

Through this discussion, the researcher attempts to illustrate how the principal carries out his or her role as an educational leader, encompassing coaching, motivation, supervision, evaluation, and systematic and continuous teacher competency development. Furthermore, this discussion also explains various factors that support and hinder the process of improving teacher performance, as well as the various efforts the principal has made to overcome these obstacles based on the actual conditions at SD Negeri 176 Palembang.

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Based on interviews with the principal, vice principal, and class and subject teachers at Public Elementary School 176 Palembang, it was discovered that the principal's leadership plays a strategic role in improving teacher performance. The principal acts not only as an administrator but also as an educational leader responsible for fostering, directing, motivating, and supervising and evaluating teacher performance.

Research findings indicate that principals actively provide guidance to teachers through guidance, mentoring, and motivation during the learning process. This role demonstrates that principals' leadership aligns with transformational leadership, which is the ability of leaders to inspire, motivate, and positively impact the work behavior of their subordinates. This aligns with Mulyasa's (2013) opinion that principals act as instructional leaders tasked with improving the quality of learning through ongoing professional development of teachers.

In addition, school principals also implement various teacher competency improvement programs, such as training, workshops, educational seminars, Teacher Working Group (KKG) activities, learning supervision, routine coaching, discussions with teachers, and periodic evaluation meetings. These programs demonstrate a systematic effort to develop human resources in schools. In this regard, Wahjosumidjo (2011) emphasized that school principals play a crucial role in mobilizing all school resources to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently through planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring.

From a motivational perspective, the principal provides role models, rewards, and encourages teachers to be more disciplined and responsible in carrying out their duties. This motivation is a crucial factor in improving teacher performance because it is related to work attitudes and commitment to the learning process. This aligns with work motivation theory, which explains that motivation can increase work enthusiasm and individual productivity within educational organizations.

In terms of supervision and evaluation, the principal conducts classroom supervision, direct observation of the learning process, teacher administrative audits, discipline monitoring, and regular evaluation meetings. Supervision is not only for control purposes but also for coaching (clinical supervision), providing feedback to improve teacher performance. This aligns with the concept of educational supervision, which emphasizes that supervision aims to help teachers improve the quality of learning, not simply identify errors.

Overall, the research results indicate that the principal's leadership at Public Elementary

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School 176 Palembang has been effective in improving teacher performance. This is evident in the principal's ability to balance leadership and managerial functions, encompassing coaching, motivation, supervision, evaluation, and ongoing teacher competency development. Thus, the principal's leadership has significantly contributed to improving teacher professionalism and performance at the school.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at Public Elementary School 176 Palembang

Based on interviews with the principal, vice principal, class teachers, subject teachers, and physical education teachers at SD Negeri 176 Palembang, it was discovered that various factors support and hinder the principal's efforts to improve teacher performance. These factors arise from both internal and external school conditions that influence the implementation of teacher competency improvement programs.

The research results show that the main supporting factors in improving teacher performance are good cooperation between the principal and teachers, harmonious communication, and high teacher motivation and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. Furthermore, support from the school environment, parents, and the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure are also important factors that facilitate the process of improving teacher performance. These findings indicate that a positive school organizational climate significantly influences the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in developing teacher professionalism.

Theoretically, this aligns with Mulyasa's (2013) opinion, which states that a principal's success in improving educational quality is greatly influenced by human resource support, collaboration among school members, and the availability of learning facilities. Thus, these supporting factors are crucial for creating an effective and high-quality learning process.

In addition to supporting factors, this study also identified several inhibiting factors faced by school principals. These obstacles include the persistence of teacher indiscipline, differences in teacher ability and motivation in developing competencies, limited time for in-depth coaching, and limited opportunities for teachers to participate in training or engage in regular self-development. Furthermore, the relatively high workload of teachers is also a factor contributing to the suboptimal coaching process.

This situation indicates that teacher competency development has not been carried out evenly. From the perspective of educational human resource management, differences in

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individual abilities and motivations are common challenges within school organizations, necessitating adaptive and sustainable leadership strategies.

Furthermore, regarding school facilities and infrastructure, research results show that adequate facilities significantly impact teacher performance. Good facilities and infrastructure help teachers implement more effective, varied, and engaging learning. This ultimately improves the quality of classroom learning. These findings reinforce the importance of the availability of educational facilities as a crucial factor in supporting teacher professionalism.

Thus, it can be concluded that the principal's supporting factors in improving teacher performance at SD Negeri 176 Palembang include good cooperation, teacher motivation, school environmental support, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include a lack of discipline among some teachers, differences in ability and motivation, limited time and training, and a relatively high teacher workload. Therefore, the success of improving teacher performance depends heavily on the principal's ability to manage supporting factors and overcome inhibiting factors effectively and sustainably.

The Principal's Efforts to Overcome Obstacles in Improving Teacher Competence at Public Elementary School 176 Palembang

Interviews with the principal, vice principal, class teachers, subject teachers, and physical education teachers at SD Negeri 176 Palembang revealed that the principal has implemented various strategic efforts to address barriers to improving teacher competency. Obstacles such as a lack of discipline among some teachers, limited training, differences in teacher abilities, and high workloads are addressed through a continuous and collaborative coaching approach.

The research results show that the principal's primary effort is to provide regular guidance and motivation to teachers. This guidance is delivered through direct instruction, mentoring during the learning process, and strengthening work morale to foster greater discipline and responsibility. This approach demonstrates that the principal acts not only as a supervisor but also as a mentor, assisting teachers in resolving learning challenges.

In addition, the principal also conducts regular supervision as a form of oversight and professional development. Supervision is conducted through classroom observations, reviewing learning administration, and providing feedback to teachers. In this context, supervision serves not only as a control measure but also as a means of continuously improving teacher performance. This aligns with the concept of educational supervision, which emphasizes improving the quality of learning through professional assistance to teachers.

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Another effort undertaken is to organize and encourage teacher participation in training activities, workshops, educational seminars, and Teacher Working Groups (KKG). These activities aim to improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies. The principal also provides opportunities for teachers to participate in various self-development activities as an investment in the school's human resources.

Furthermore, the principal builds good communication and collaboration with teachers through discussions, evaluation meetings, and personal approaches. This effective communication allows any problems teachers face to be discussed together and solutions sought collectively. This approach demonstrates a participatory leadership style that involves teachers in the decision-making and problem-solving process.

Theoretically, these efforts align with Mulyasa's (2013) opinion, which states that principals, as educational leaders, must be able to provide ongoing guidance, supervision, and empowerment of teachers to improve educational quality. Furthermore, Wahjosumidjo (2011) also emphasized that principals act as the driving force behind school organizations and must be able to overcome various obstacles through effective managerial and leadership approaches.

Thus, it can be concluded that the principal's efforts to overcome obstacles to improving teacher competency at SD Negeri 176 Palembang were carried out through coaching, motivation, supervision, training, and strengthening communication and collaboration. These efforts demonstrate that the principal implemented a comprehensive, sustainable leadership strategy oriented toward optimally improving teacher professionalism.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at SD Negeri 176 Palembang, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at Public Elementary School 176 Palembang has been effective. The principal acts as a leader, coach, motivator, supervisor, and evaluator, actively coaching, supervising, and developing teacher competencies through various programs such as training, workshops, the Working Group (KKG), and evaluation meetings. The leadership implemented also demonstrates a leadership style that supports the continuous improvement of teacher professionalism.
2. Supporting factors for improving teacher performance include good cooperation between the principal and teachers, harmonious communication, high teacher motivation, support

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from the school environment and parents, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. Inhibiting factors include the persistence of teacher indiscipline, differences in teacher ability and motivation, limited time and training opportunities, and a relatively high teacher workload.

3. Principals' efforts to address barriers to improving teacher competency include regular coaching and motivation, classroom supervision, training and workshops, Teacher Working Group (KKG) activities, and strengthening communication and collaboration with teachers. These efforts are ongoing to minimize existing barriers and continuously improve teacher performance.

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