

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The sub-optimal leadership of the school principal is the main challenge in improving the quality of education. Although the principal's role is very crucial, observations show difficulties in carrying out managerial duties, which have an impact on the effectiveness of school activities and the overall quality of education. This study aims to analyze strategies for improving principal leadership to enhance the quality of education. The method used is a literature review by analyzing five relevant articles, and the data is analyzed qualitatively. The results show that transformative leadership has a significant influence on improving the quality of education. This leadership is manifested through initiatives such as the development of innovative programs, improving student management, and enforcing discipline. Effective leadership is characterized by the principal's ability to create a conducive school environment, build a positive culture, and encourage solid collaboration and cooperation among all school components. Thus, it can be concluded that effective principal leadership plays a central role in the continuous improvement of the quality of education.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Student Management, The Quality of Education



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INTRODUCTION

A principal's leadership is the key to a school's success. It plays a significant role in the effectiveness and improvement of a school (Qiao Zheng, 2017). The success of a principal in leading and managing a school highly depends on their ability to develop and build effective school management (Mahfud, 2021). Various principal policies greatly influence the quality of education (Rizka and Alit, 2017). Furthermore, the improvement of educational quality is highly influenced by the principal's leadership (Idatul and Achadi, 2020). Many studies have been conducted on principal leadership, stating that it has an impact on the quality of education (Sulastri, 2017).

Transformational leadership has an impact on changing teacher performance (Trinh Thi Ut, 2024). The increase in teacher performance and motivation is caused by the principal's leadership (Yunita, Siti and Kristiani, 2020). Quality principal leadership will affect the quality of education (Muftahu, 2020). The above explanations illustrate the influence of principal leadership on the quality of education. Quality principal leadership will have an impact on the quality of education. To achieve this, a principal must have good competence, attitude, and performance.

However, the current problem in the field is that the principal's leadership still needs to be developed regarding attitude and competence (Eytan Cohen, 1015). The low performance of teachers and staff is inseparable from the low contribution of principals in leading the school (Diana and Muhyadi, 2018). The performance of teachers, administrative staff, and the principal is a crucial factor that directly affects the quality of student learning outcomes. However, principal leadership today is often not yet optimal in its managerial and leadership roles. This weakness can have a significant impact on all school activities and reduce the quality of education. Therefore, the success of a principal's leadership is measured by the overall improvement in school quality.

A principal plays a role in bringing about change in a school, which includes creating an effective work correlation, shifting managerial functions, leading by example, influencing others, developing teamwork, involving subordinates in decision-making, making employee empowerment a way of life, and building commitment (Nur and Warda, 2024). The improvement of educational quality can be realized through a shared commitment between the principal and all school members. Active participation from all school elements is needed to achieve this goal. A principal's leadership has a very important role in the effort to improve the quality of education in schools. Several studies that have been conducted have found that the factors that influence teacher performance are the principal's leadership (Bashor, Muhammad and Didi, 2024) and the teachers' motivation in carrying out their duties (Nasrun, 2016). So, a teacher's success in completing tasks and showing good performance is inseparable from the principal's leadership.

Based on the description above, this research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the influence of school principal leadership on teacher performance. A comprehensive understanding of this leadership condition will provide a clear picture of the principal's competence in performing their managerial functions, including planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating staff. This information will serve as a foundation for formulating appropriate interventions to improve the principal's performance, which in turn will have a positive impact on teacher performance in the learning process. Previous studies have extensively examined the correlation between teacher performance and principal leadership, with consistent findings that principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on the overall quality of the school (Dedy, Linda and Siti, 2018). The better the principal's leadership, the higher the performance demonstrated by teachers and staff (Sulfemi, 2020). Therefore, it is very important to conduct research to analyze the influence of principal leadership on the quality of education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the literature review method. Data was collected through searches on academic databases such as Google Scholar and SINTA using the keyword “principal leadership.” The literature review process applied includes five main stages: 1) scope interpretation, by defining the boundaries and focus of the topic to be reviewed; 2) source identification, by searching for and identifying relevant literature sources; 3) literature review, by analyzing the content of each relevant article; 4) review writing, by summarizing and integrating findings from the reviewed literature; 5) literature application, by applying the results of the literature review to the context of this study. In this study, five relevant articles were used as primary data. Each of these articles has an interrelated topic, which allows for a synthesis to produce new findings. The data analysis technique used is qualitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

A school principal is the leader who drives all activities within the school environment. The principal is the key figure in improving the quality of education at the school, with the help of all school community members. Making changes, demonstrating commitment, and having a strong strategy and motivation are essential for a principal to improve the quality of education. A principal's leadership can be a reflection of the school itself. Research shows that for a principal to improve the quality of education, they must have specific competencies. These required competencies include personal, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social skills (Sari, Muhammad and Ernawati, 2021). A leader who possesses these competencies will find it easier to improve the quality of education at the school (Raberi, Happy and Yessi, 2020). The principal is the driving force behind all school activities [3]. The success or failure of a school depends on the quality of its principal (Syaputra, Makhdalena and Sumarno, 2020). Therefore, the principal must be able to drive change to improve the quality of education at the school.

Changes in a principal's leadership can improve the quality of education. A principal with a clear vision and mission can improve student management by tightening student discipline. They introduce innovations to make the school better, creating innovative educational programs aimed at shaping student character. These programs are also expected to improve student character and the quality of learning. The principal's leadership encourages the school community to change and create new innovations that enhance the quality of education. The success of these changes depends on the principal's role as the person in charge, the driving force, the philosophical guide, and a working partner (Suyitno, 2021). The principal also fosters a positive school culture and instills discipline by enforcing stricter school rules. They direct teachers to create more innovative learning scenarios. The principal's leadership strategy for shaping a teacher's character involves being a role model, maintaining discipline, providing instructional leadership, and focusing on the teacher's quality (Russamsi, Hanhan and Acep, 2020). Ultimately, a principal empowers the entire school community.

DISCUSSION

Achieving high-quality education is the result of several interacting factors, one of which is the principal's leadership in guiding and motivating teachers and staff. Principals are expected to optimize their strategic role in managing the school organization. Effective principal leadership is a blend of technical skills and personal qualities, including authority. This authority is used to persuade subordinates to carry out their assigned tasks willingly, with enthusiasm, and without coercion. Other crucial qualities for a leader are adaptability, which is the ability to adjust to various situations; social responsiveness, or the readiness to interact with the social environment; achievement orientation, which is the focus on reaching goals and

success; decisiveness; collaboration; and self-confidence. Leadership skills also include the ability to build teamwork, provide motivation, and foster a strong sense of family among the staff. To influence their subordinates to work at their best, principals must set an example and provide continuous guidance and motivation to their teachers (Laela, Syadeli and Sudadio, 2023).

A school principal's leadership is like a locomotive, capable of moving the school toward high quality (Alonderiene and Modesta, 2016). A good principal can foster a positive school culture, instill discipline, and act as a collaborative partner. By creating cooperation among all members of the school community, they can build a friendly and purposeful school environment. In this way, a principal's leadership can improve the quality of education through their guidance. This finding is reinforced by previous research, which also states that principal leadership can influence the quality of education (Kurniawati, Yasir and Yenni, 2020). High-quality school principal leadership directly influences student achievement. A principal's leadership can boost teachers' motivation and confidence (Liu, Philip and Daming, 2016).

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that a principal's leadership has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance, teacher motivation, and student learning achievement. Optimal performance, motivation, and learning outcomes from teachers and students directly correlate with an improvement in the quality of education at the school. Therefore, effective principal leadership is crucial for fostering excellent performance among the school community, which ultimately has a positive effect on the overall quality of education. This research also emphasizes that supervisory programs are essential tools for improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of principals in carrying out their duties.

CONCLUSION

The leadership of a principal who is transformative, visionary, adaptive, progressive, strong, and change-oriented has a very crucial role in improving the quality of education. This leadership role is manifested through various strategic initiatives, including: 1) improving student management, by optimizing systems and processes that focus on student welfare and development; 2) enforcing discipline, by creating a conducive learning environment by implementing firm and consistent rules; 3) developing innovative programs, by designing and implementing new, relevant programs to improve the quality of learning. All of these efforts are an integral part of effective leadership, which aims to create a dynamic and proactive school culture in achieving higher educational standards. The leadership of a principal who is transformative, visionary, adaptive, progressive, strong, and change-oriented has a very important role in improving the quality of education in schools. This is realized through various efforts such as improving student management, enforcing discipline, and developing innovative programs.

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