The Role Of The School Principal As A Learning Leader In Strengthening The Professionalism Of Batik Surakarta Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of the school principal as a learning leader in strengthening teacher professionalism at SMP Batik Surakarta. Teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education in schools. Therefore, the school principal has a significant responsibility to motivate, inspire, and lead teachers in developing their professionalism. This study employed a qualitative research method, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. The respondents consisted of the school principal and 10 teachers from SMP Batik Surakarta. The research findings demonstrate that the school principal plays a central role as a learning leader in enhancing teacher professionalism. As a leader, the school principal provides clear directions and a strong vision to the teachers. They also offer relevant professional training and development, facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices, and provide constructive feedback to assist teachers in improving their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the school principal creates a collaborative and appreciative culture within the school, where teachers can support and work together to achieve common goals. The school principal also ensures the availability of adequate resources and a conducive learning environment for teachers to carry out their duties with professionalism. This research concludes that the role of the school principal as a learning leader is crucial in strengthening teacher professionalism at SMP Batik Surakarta. By taking this role seriously, the school principal can motivate and guide teachers to become more professional in their teaching, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on the quality of education in the school.

Keywords: School Principal, Learning Leader, Teacher Professionalism, SMP Batik Surakarta

Introduction

Education should be a top priority on a country's development agenda. With quality education, people can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to improve their quality of life. Education can also form character and positive values in a person, so that it can help build a better and more civilized society. Therefore, investment in education is a very important long-term investment for the progress of a nation (Zulaikah, 2020).

In education, there must be leaders so that the goals of education can be realized. Leadership in learning is an important role played by educational leaders, such as school
principals, program coordinators, or teachers, who have the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide students and education staff in achieving set learning goals. Leadership, according to Colquitt, LePine, and Wesson, is defined as using authority to carry out employee activity to achieve goals. Another understanding, according to Fred Luthans, is that leadership cannot exist without resources, ideas, and employee cooperation. Leadership, according to Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge, is defined as the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of a vision or goal. In the opinion of Robert P. Vecchio, in his book Organizational Behavior: Core Concepts, he states that leadership can be described as the process of a leader convincing organizational members to want to carry out the intended activities. In the opinion of James L. Gibson, John M. Ivancevich, James H. Donnelly, JR, and Robert Konopaske, "leadership" is defined as using authority or power to encourage individuals to achieve some goals (Muslimah, 2021).

The principal is an educator, supervisor, and motivator who must carry out coaching for teachers in the school he leads. The human factor is a central factor that determines the entire movement of an organization's activities. No matter how sophisticated the technology used, it is still the human factor that determines it. Through their role as educators, school principals must be committed to continuing to prioritize the professional and academic development of teachers. Supporting and developing their teaching skills and knowledge is a crucial step in improving the quality of education in schools. As supervisors, school principals need to regularly monitor and evaluate the performance of teachers. Providing constructive feedback and providing guidance in efforts to improve the quality of teaching is an important part of their development. An effective supervision process can help identify potentials and challenges faced by teachers and provide appropriate solutions. As a motivator, the principal must be able to inspire and encourage the enthusiasm of the teachers. Recognizing and appreciating their efforts and achievements will increase their confidence and motivation to keep growing. In addition, ensuring a conducive and supportive work environment is also part of the motivator's role. (W.N.A. Saputra, Jairi., 2019).

Learning leadership plays an important role in shaping teacher professionalism. The role of the principal in the formation of teacher professionalism is very important. The term leadership has been put forward by many experts, both narrowly and broadly. Leadership is a very important factor in influencing the work performance of other people in the organization, through which organizational goals can be achieved. Leadership is the core of management, while management is the core of administration. In general, leadership is defined as the process of influencing the activities of individuals and groups to achieve goals in certain situations. In the process of influencing others, a leader must have basic skills and be skilled at mobilizing his subordinates to work optimally. The principal is at the forefront of coordinating various efforts to produce quality teacher performance. Leadership ability is an important skill that must be possessed by teachers to improve their performance and make them professional teachers. This can be achieved if teachers are able to create working conditions that support them so that they can change their attitudes and behaviors in accordance with educational goals (Irawati, 2021).
As a school leader, the teacher has an important role as a role model for other teachers. By demonstrating commitment, a high work ethic, and good leadership qualities, teachers can influence others to adopt good professional practices and improve the quality of their teaching. The principal, as a school leader, has a very difficult task in order to improve the quality of the school. Teachers, as one of the most important components in education, especially in terms of overcoming various problems related to improving the quality of education, are required to be able to become professional teachers. The position of teachers as professionals has a vision of realizing the implementation of learning in accordance with the principals of professionalism to fulfill the equal rights of every citizen in obtaining quality education. The position of the teacher as a learning agent is related to the teacher's role in learning, including as a facilitator, motivator, promoter, learning engineer, and inspirational learner for students. This role requires teachers to be able to improve their performance and professionalism in line with the changes and demands that arise in the world of education (W.N.A. Saputra., Jairi., 2019).

Research objectives and benefits The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of school principals as learning leaders in strengthening teacher professionalism and to understand strategies that can be used to strengthen teacher professionalism through learning leadership. By exploring the concept of learning leadership and its impact on teacher professionalism, it is hoped that it will provide a better understanding of the importance of the role of a leader in creating a culture of sustainable learning in the educational environment.

The benefit of this research is to provide an in-depth understanding of how learning leadership can influence teacher professionalism. This can serve as a reference for educational leaders, school principals, and education policymakers in designing effective leadership development and teacher development programs. In addition, this research can also contribute new thoughts and insights in the context of education in Indonesia.

Research Methods

The research method used in this article is qualitative research with a case study approach at SMP Batik Surakarta. The population of this study included all school principals dan 10 teachers. To select the sample, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select informants who were considered to have relevant knowledge and experience related to the principal's role as a learning leader and professionalism in schools. Data was collected through interviews with school principals, teachers, staff, students, and parents, as well as through direct observation in the school environment. In addition, data was also obtained from related documents and files, such as school policies, teacher professional development programs, evaluation reports, and other records. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively with the steps of interview transcription, identification of main themes, and searching for patterns in the data. Researchers will maintain research ethics by obtaining approval from school authorities, maintaining the confidentiality of information and the identity of respondents, and respecting the rights and privacy of research participants. The results of this study will be interpreted in depth to draw conclusions about the role of the
principal as a learning leader in the context of strengthening professionalism at Surakarta Batik Middle School. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to school development and increase professionalism in the educational environment. (Sugiyono, 2017).

Findings

Based on the questionnaire and interviews conducted with the school principal and 10 teachers holding different positions, several flagship programs have been identified that the school principal implements to optimize teacher professionalism. Some of the things that can be done by the head of Surakarta Batik Middle School to shape teacher professionalism include the following:

Teacher Professionalism

Professional teacher competence is the ability, expertise, and basic skills of teaching staff that must be mastered in carrying out their duties as teachers. He will be called a professional if he is able to master the skills, theories, and practice of the learning process and apply them in a real-world setting. Someone who is said to be a professional is a person who has competence in the field he is engaged in and is the choice of work in his life. Choice of work that is equipped with standard competencies that must be owned by the profession (Sari, 2022)

Professional competence is one of the basic abilities that a teacher must have. There are several views among experts regarding professional competence. According to Cooper, there are four components of professional competence, namely: 1. Having knowledge about learning and human behavior; 2. having knowledge and mastering the field of study he is fostering; 3. having the right attitude about yourself, school, colleagues, and the field of study they are fostering; 4. having skills in teaching techniques. Meanwhile, according to Johnson (1980), this includes: 1. mastery of subject matter consisting of mastery of the material to be taught and basic scientific concepts taught from the material being taught; 2. mastery and appreciation of the foundations and insights of education and teacher training; and 3. mastery of educational processes and teacher learning of students (Sugiharti, 2017).

A professional teacher must fulfill the four competencies set out in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, namely: 1. Pedagogic competence, namely the ability to manage student learning, which includes student understanding, designing and implementing learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students to actualize their various potentials. 2. Personal competence, namely personality abilities that are steady, stable, mature, wise and prudent, authoritative, have a noble character, set an example for students and the community, evaluate one's own performance, and develop in a sustainable manner. 3. Professional competence, namely the ability to master material broadly and in depth, which allows guiding students to meet national education standards. 4. Social competence, which is the ability of students as part of society to communicate orally and in writing; use communication and information technology functionally; socialize effectively with students, fellow educators, educational staff, parents, or guardians of students; and socialize politely in society.
The Role of the Principal

The principal has the following roles and duties: educator, manager, administrator, innovator, motivator, supervisor, and leader (Mulyasa, 2004). In detail, it can be explained as follows:

Principal as Educator
Principals as educators must have the right strategy to increase the professionalism of teaching staff in their schools, create a conducive school climate, provide advice to school members, provide encouragement to all teaching staff, and implement interesting learning models. The principal must try to instill, promote, and improve at least four kinds of values, namely mental, moral, physical, and artistic development. Mental coaching is fostering educators' attitudes and character. Moral development is coaching about good and bad deeds, attitudes, and obligations in accordance with their respective duties. Physical development is the development of the body, health, and appearance, while artistic development is the development of sensitivity to art and beauty (Wening & Santosa, 2020).

In order to improve performance as an educator, the principal of SMP Batik implements the following school programs: 1. Motivating and facilitating teachers to participate in professional development through PPG, teacher mobilization, and further education 2. Design and develop effective and efficient learning models and evaluation systems with teachers. 3. Use study time effectively at school by emphasizing high discipline.

Principal as Manager
The task of the manager is to plan, organize, manage, coordinate, and control in order to achieve the goals that have been set (Wahyudin, 2018).

The role of the Surakarta Batik Middle School principal as a manager in shaping teacher professionalism includes: 1. Formulation of policies: Principals are responsible for developing policies and strategies related to improving teacher professionalism. This includes preparing training and development programs, setting working hours, distributing tasks, and implementing educational policies. 2. Management of resources: Principals have an important role in managing resources that support the professional development of teachers. This includes budget allocations for training, qualified human resources to provide training, and the necessary facilities to support learning and professional development. 3. Monitoring and evaluation: The principal is responsible for monitoring and evaluating teacher performance. This is done through class observation, analysis of student learning outcomes, and other evaluations. By conducting periodic monitoring and evaluation, the principal identifies development needs and provides constructive feedback to teachers. 4. Guidance and development: The principal has a role as a coach and in teacher professional development. The principal provides direction, guidance, and support to teachers in developing competencies and skills. This process is done through mentoring sessions, follow-up training, or collaboration in the development of curriculum and teaching methods. 5. Building a professional culture: Principals have an important role in creating a professional culture in schools. The principal facilitates teacher-to-teacher collaboration, the use of best practices, and the exchange of knowledge and experience. By encouraging a strong professional culture, principals can increase teacher motivation and enthusiasm to continue learning and developing.
Principal as Administrator The principal, as an administrator, has a very close relationship with various administrative management activities, which include recording, compiling, and documenting all school programs. Specifically, the principal must have the ability to manage curriculum, student administration, personnel administration, facility and infrastructure administration, filing administration, and financial administration. These activities need to be carried out effectively and efficiently in order to support school productivity. For this reason, the principal must be able to describe the abilities above in operational tasks.

The role of the Surakarta Batik Middle School principal as an administrator in shaping teacher professionalism includes: 1. Planning and organization: The principal is responsible for planning and organizing the professional development program for teachers. Principals identify development needs, arrange training schedules, and coordinate activities that support teacher professional development. 2. Administrative management: Principals have an important role in managing administration related to teacher professional development. This includes administering training-related documents, attendance records, and teacher performance evaluations. Principals are responsible for ensuring that there are clear procedures for managing and tracking teacher professional development. 3. Budget management: Principals are responsible for managing the school budget and allocating appropriate funds to support teacher professional development. The principal must first consider training needs, procure teaching materials, and provide other resources needed to improve teacher professionalism. 4. Procurement of resources: Principals need to identify and manage the necessary resources to support the professional development of teachers. This includes finding qualified human resources to provide training, establishing partnerships with educational or professional institutions outside of schools, and managing access to relevant learning materials. 5. Monitoring and evaluation: Principals carry out monitoring and evaluation through supervision and monitoring.

The principal as an innovator As an innovator, the principal must have the right strategy for establishing harmonious relationships with the environment, seeking new ideas, integrating every activity, setting an example for all education staff in schools, and developing innovative learning models. The principal's role as an innovator will be reflected in the way he does his work: constructively, creatively, rationally and objectively, pragmatically, exemplary, disciplined, adaptable, and flexible.

The role of the Surakarta Batik Middle School principal as an innovator in shaping teacher professionalism includes: 1. Encouraging innovation in teaching: Principals encourage teachers to adopt new and innovative teaching methods. Principals can provide encouragement and support to teachers to develop creative teaching strategies, use educational technology, or apply student-centered learning approaches. The principal also provides a space for teachers to share innovative ideas and best practices in MGMPs, workshops, or other professional forums. 2. Promote collaboration and knowledge exchange: The principal creates opportunities for collaboration between teachers in the school. The principal organizes activities such as MGMP group discussions, regular meetings, or collaborative projects between teachers. This opens up space for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and innovative ideas in order to improve teacher professionalism.
Implementing educational technology: The principal is a driving force in the use of educational technology in schools. They can introduce and encourage the use of technology tools, such as learning software, e-learning platforms, or learning support applications. Principals can also provide training or bring in technologists to assist teachers in integrating technology into their teaching.

4. Build a culture of innovation: Principals can help build a culture of innovation in schools by providing support and space for experimentation and the development of new ideas. They can inspire and encourage teachers to think creatively, try new approaches, and meet challenges with innovative solutions. Principals can also give awards and recognition to teachers who successfully implement innovative ideas in their teaching.

5. Provide professional development opportunities: Principals can create professional development opportunities for teachers to learn new skills and keep up with the latest trends in education. This can be done through the provision of training funds, adequate facilities for training, or bringing expert speakers to schools. Principals can also encourage teacher participation in relevant conferences, seminars, or workshops.

Principal as Motivator

The principal’s role as a motivator means that he has the ability to regulate the school environment so as to create a conducive atmosphere for the implementation of the learning process. How does he have the ability to regulate harmony between fellow teachers, employees, and the school and its environment. How is the ability to apply the principal of reward with punishment

The role of the Surakarta Batik Middle School principal as a motivator in shaping teacher professionalism includes:

1. Provide clear direction and vision: An effective principal becomes a motivator by providing clear direction to teachers. This includes communicating the school's goals, educational vision, and expectations for teacher professionalism. By providing clear guidelines, principals can help inspire teachers to develop and improve the quality of their teaching.

2. Provide training and professional development: The principal acts as a motivator by providing training and professional development opportunities for teachers. Training organized by Surakarta Batik Middle School to improve teacher professionalism includes routine studies once a week every Wednesday to improve personal, social, and religious competence; healthy gymnastics once a week for physical strengthening; English class to improve English competence towards global competition; early year workshops; and digital application development workshops.

3. Provide constructive feedback: As motivators, principals need to provide constructive feedback to teachers. This feedback can be in the form of praise and recognition of teacher achievements, as well as providing suggestions for improvement that can help teachers develop themselves further. By providing constructive feedback, school principals can increase teacher motivation and direct them towards higher professionalism. Feedback is done through supervision.

4. Building a culture of collaboration and appreciation through MGMPs and teaching competitions between MGMPs

5. Provide adequate learning resources and an environment. Resources developed following technological advances include providing LCDs for each class, WIFI for each class, and room corners, as well as collaboration with digital applications such as Microsoft.

Principal as Supervisor

Supervision is an activity to determine the essential conditions that will guarantee the achievement of an educational goal. In this regard, the principal as a
supervisor means that the principal should be good at researching, finding, and determining which conditions are needed for the progress of his school so that the educational goals of the school are achieved to the fullest (Suryosubro, 2017). In the field of supervision, the principal has the duty and responsibility to advance teaching through the continuous improvement of teacher professionalism.

Therefore, the principal as a supervisor plays an important role in: 1. guiding the teacher so that he can understand more clearly the problem or problems and needs of students; and 2. assisting the teacher in overcoming a problem. 2. Assist teachers in overcoming difficulties in teaching. 3. Give wise guidance to new teachers during orientation. 4. Assist teachers in acquiring better teaching skills by using various teaching methods according to the nature of the material. 5. Helping teachers enrich the learning experience so that the teaching atmosphere can make students happy. 6. Help teachers understand the meaning of ministry tools. 7. Fostering group morale and cultivating high morale in carrying out school assignments for all staff. 8. Providing services to teachers so that they can use all their abilities in carrying out tasks. 9. Provide effective and democratic leadership.

Principal as Leader The principal, as a leader, has the responsibility of mobilizing all available resources in the school so as to create a work ethic and high productivity in achieving goals. The success of the principal’s leadership in its implementation is greatly influenced by the following: (1) Strong personality: principals must develop personalities to be confident, brave, passionate, generous, and have social sensitivity. (2) Understand the purpose of education well; a good understanding is the main provision for the principal in order to be able to explain it to teachers, staff, and other parties and find the right strategy to achieve it. (3) Extensive knowledge: principals must have extensive experience and knowledge of their field of work and other related fields. (4) Professional skills related to their duties as school principals, namely: (a) technical skills, for example: technically preparing class schedules, leading meetings; (b) human relations skills, for example: working with others, motivating teachers and staff; and (c) conceptual skills, for example: developing school development concepts, predicting problems that will arise, and finding solutions. The principal of SMP Batik Surakarta, scientifically and in character, has the four skills needed as a leader.

Learning Leadership Concept

Learning leadership is an approach that focuses on the role of the leader in directing and facilitating the learning process in an educational environment. This concept emphasizes the importance of the role of the leader as the prime mover in creating a sustainable learning culture and improving the quality of learning (Prastowo, 2019).

Learning leadership includes the range of actions taken by educational leaders to influence teachers, students, and the education system as a whole to achieve higher learning goals. Learning leadership does not only focus on administrative management aspects but also involves leaders in guiding teachers, providing constructive feedback, encouraging collaboration, and creating a positive learning culture in schools (Musthofa, I., & Lestari, 2022).
The Leader’s Role in Learning Leadership

Leaders in learning leadership have a strategic role in directing, moving, and influencing all components in the school to achieve better learning goals. Leaders must be able to create a conducive learning culture, facilitate collaboration, and provide adequate support to teachers (Hadiyanto, 2017).

The headmaster of SMP Batik Surakarta has carried out his role well as a learning leader. The principal makes a strategic plan to improve the professionalism of teachers and educators. Through increasing the professionalism of human resources, it is hoped that it will be able to realize superior quality education. Facilities and infrastructure are also equipped in accordance with technological and cultural advances.

The Relationship Between Learning Leadership and Teacher Professionalism

Learning leadership has an important role in shaping teacher professionalism. The principal, as a learning leader, functions as a supporter and guide for teachers in developing the quality of their professionalism (Wibowo, 2019).

Some of the things that can be done by the head of Surakarta Batik Middle School to shape teacher professionalism include the following: 1. Providing exemplary words, attitudes, actions, and behaviors for the school community to achieve the school’s vision and mission as well as the advancement of highly competitive education. 2. Encouraging teachers to improve their academic qualifications according to their field of study through PPG and further Masters studies. 3. Strengthening the role of the MGMP through education and training programs, comparative studies, research, workshops, and increasing the culture of writing among teachers. 4. Carry out periodic reviews of learning tools in the form of teaching modules and teaching journals. 5. Carry out supervision, especially in the learning process. 6. Carry out teacher performance assessments and corrective actions to achieve the specified goals. 7. Increase the availability and feasibility of learning facilities and infrastructure. 8. Monitor the learning process in class and plan corrective actions. 9. Helping teachers who have difficulty implementing effective learning. 10. Optimizing the function of the school library to create a habit of reading in the school environment for both teachers and students.

Conclusion

Learning leadership and teacher professionalism have a close relationship. Effective leaders in learning leadership can encourage and facilitate the professional development of teachers. Conversely, professional teachers can support and strengthen learning leadership by implementing good learning practices in their classrooms. The synergy between learning leadership and teacher professionalism can create a dynamic educational environment, improve the quality of learning, and improve student learning outcomes.

It is important for educational institutions and the government to provide adequate support and resources for the development of learning leadership and teacher professionalism. Training programs, collaboration between teachers, and recognition of teacher achievements are some of the efforts that can be made to improve learning leadership and strengthen teacher professionalism.

With strong learning leadership and high teacher professionalism, it is hoped that education will experience a significant increase. The quality of learning will improve,
students will achieve better learning outcomes, and the school will become an inspiring place for developing students' potential. In order to achieve this goal, collaboration and cooperation between all parties involved, including school leaders, teachers, educational institutions, and the government, are very important. With commitment and joint efforts, we can create a superior, innovative, and quality education system.

References