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The role of the principal as a leader, innovator and motivator in vocational high schools

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ABSTRACT

As a leader, a school principal has several roles that are needed in improving the quality of education in the school. This study aims to analyze the role of school principals in leading teachers. This research method is quantitative research. The population in this study was 865 teachers at Vocational High school. The sampling technique is Cluster Random Sampling. Data analyzed used descriptive quantitative data. Instrument that used were Principal as Leader Scale. The results of the study stated that the role of the principal has been good. The role is good as a leader, innovator and motivator. To improve the quality of education, it is still necessary to increase the role of the principal in leading, providing innovation, and as a motivator.



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Introduction

The principal role of the principal as an educational leader is create teaching and learning situations so that teachers can teach and students can learn well. In carrying out this role, the principal has a dual responsibility, namely carrying out school administration to create a good teaching and learning situation, and carrying out supervision so that teachers increase in carrying out teaching tasks and in guiding the growth of students. Principals who can carry out their functions as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators and motivators can be said to have good leadership abilities (Gill & Arnold, 2015; Lazwardi, 2016).

The principal's duty encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including leadership, teacher evaluation, and student discipline. Being an effective principal takes a lot of effort and time. A excellent principal maintains a sense of balance in all of her tasks and strives to do what she believes is best for all of her clients. Every principal's time is a big constraint. Prioritizing, scheduling, and organization are all skills that a principal must master (Meador, 2019; Sterret, Parker, & Mitzner, 2018). The principal has a very important role in the school. (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016) states that the principal's leadership has a strategic role in determining the progress or failure of a school. Principal leadership has a simultaneous effect on teacher competence, principals as executors of educational leadership in schools must have the abilities and skills that describe the duties and roles of principals in their application as outlined in leadership competencies (Louis & Murphy, 2017; Player, Youngs, Perrone, & Grogan, 2017; Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017; Stein, Macaluso, & Stanulis, 2016). In addition, (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Anderson, 2001; Kurniawan & Syakur, 2017) stated that the principal's leadership style contributes to the quality of education.

However, (Steyn, 2015) revealed that the main problem faced by schools is the incompetence of the principal in leading the school. Expectations for the role of the principal, as described above, are in fact not fully realized to the fullest. The function of the principal as a leader or as a manager is still not fully expected. There are still many teachers who are the main actors as facilitators of the implementation of the student learning process. Therefore, his presence and professionalism are very influential in realizing the national education program. Teachers must have sufficient quality, because teachers are one of the micro components of the education system that are very strategic and take many roles in the school education process (Brookhart & Chen, 2015). Furthermore, (Haryono, Amrullah, & Surah, 2020; Komalasari, Arafat, & Mulyadi, 2020) stated that the work motivation and competence of the principal affect the effectiveness of teacher performance in schools.

The quality of education is strongly influenced by the leadership role of the principal (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). Therefore, to achieve quality education, it is necessary for school principals who have the competence to carry out their roles in schools. In Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007 concerning Standards for Principals, it is explained that the competence of principals is important and is the main factor to achieve the glory of school organizations in improving the quality of education. Therefore, all activities in the school are the responsibility of the principal. In addition, the principal as a leader has the main task of providing guidance and motivation to teachers and staff in carrying out teaching and learning in schools, as well as giving freedom to teachers to use school facilities (Andriani, Kesumawati, & Kristiawan, 2018; Apriana, Kristiawan, & Wardiah, 2019).

Method

We conducted this research at 10 State Vocational High school (SMK) in Padang City. The selection of State Vocational Schools in Padang City as the research location is because the competence of State Vocational School teachers in Padang City is still low. According to the Padang City Education Office, total teacher population in Padang City is 865 people spread over 10 State Vocational High school in Padang City. The research instrument or data collection tool used in this study is the Principal as Leader Scale. And the data analysis technique uses the average formula. The results of the research were analyzed using references descriptive.

Results and Discussions

This study looks at the role of the principal on the teacher as a leader, innovator, and motivator. Based on the results of the study, it is known that the role of the principal towards the teacher can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. The Role of the Principal

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--------------|------|----------------|
| As Leader | 3.37 | Good |
| As Inovator | 3.55 | Good |
| As Motivator | 3.53 | Good |
| Mean | 3,48 | Good |

Based on the table 1, it is known that the role of the principal as a leader has been good, with an average score of 3.37. Then the principal, as an innovator, is also good, with an average score of 3.55. And the principal, as a motivator, has also been good, with an average score of 3.53.

The principal serves as a leader in his school and is in charge of and leads the educational process in his school, which includes enhancing the quality of human resources, boosting the professionalism of teachers and employees, and overseeing all aspects of the school (Cheng & Szeto, 2016; Quin, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson, 2015). As an innovator in terms of generating novel learning models, the principle is supposed to provide flexibility for teachers so that they can grow the learning process in the classroom and acquire and grasp new learning models that can improve school learning activities (Nellitawati, 2018; Ungar & Marcus, 2016). The principal's function as a motivator is to help create conditions that encourage instructors to work more. To develop teacher motivation in carrying out their tasks, it is critical to create a healthy working environment between school residents and school partners (Krasnoff, Leong, & Siebersma, 2015).

The role of the principal is very important in schools. For that, the principal must be an ideal leader. According to Siagian, the characteristics of an ideal leader include: 1) having broad general knowledge, 2) the ability to grow and develop, 3) having an inquisitive nature, curiosity, 4) having analytic abilities, 5) having a strong memory, 6) integrative capacity, 7) have effective communication skills, 8) educating skills, 9) can think and act, 10) objectivity, 11) pragmatism, 12) ability to determine priority rankings, 13) ability to distinguish urgent 14) have a punctual instinct, 15) have a high sense of cohesion, 16) have a high sense of relevance, 17) exemplary, 18) be a good listener, 19) adaptability, 20) flexibility, 21) assertiveness, 22) courage, 23) future orientation, 24) anticipatory and proactive attitude.

Daryanto (2011) states that “leaders have a responsibility both physically and spiritually for the success of the work activities of those who are led”. Nalda (2020) said in a study, the leadership of the principal is influential in transforming the digital school that is needed today. Because development requires school principals to be creative. Ponsumbut (2014) states that motivational factors influence creative leadership. For this reason, we require school principals to be more creative. Besides being creative, we must also require school principals to have innovations or become innovators (Rahman, 2016).

Conclusions

The principle serves as a leader in his school and is responsible for overseeing all parts of the educational process, including enhancing human resource quality, increasing teacher and employee professionalism, and monitoring all aspects of the school. Principals should give flexibility for teachers to grow the learning process in the classroom and acquire and grasp new learning models that can increase learning activities in schools as an innovator in producing new learning models. As a motivator, the principal's job is to assist in the creation of conditions that inspire teachers to work more.

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