The Strategy of Driving School Principals as Transformational Leaders in Improving Teacher Professionalism and the Quality of Education in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the results of a literature review regarding the strategies of driving school principals as transformational leaders to improve teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools (SD). This research uses a *Narrative Literature Review (NLR) approach* with stages: identification of data sources, data selection and analysis process, synthesis and interpretation of findings. The NLR results show that there are three main strategies for driving school principals as transformational leaders in an effort to improve teacher professionalism and the quality of education. The three strategies are, namely, developing programs to increase teacher professionalism in a targeted manner, encouraging a collaborative culture and continuous learning, and providing ongoing encouragement and guidance. These strategies have specificities in terms of programs, which include the approach taken, practical activities, and monitoring and evaluation activities. These strategies encourage increased teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. This increase will have an impact on improving the quality of learning and the quality of primary school education outcomes.

Keywords:
driving school principal, transformational, professionalism, quality of education

A. INTRODUCTION

The strategic role of the school principal as a transformational leader is very important in the context of increasing teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. School principals who carry out this role not only serve as administrative managers but also as agents of change who can inspire, motivate, and guide staff and students toward a better educational vision (Habibi & Maya Hapsari, 2023).

With an approach that focuses on transformation, school principals can create a conducive and innovative learning environment, promote collaboration between teachers, and encourage the implementation of best practices in the learning process. This not only impacts increasing teacher professionalism but also improving the overall quality of education because strong leadership qualities are able to respond to complex dynamics in the world of education in an adaptive and progressive way.

Currently, education at the elementary school level faces various complex challenges that require appropriate and planned responses (Paulina, 2023). These challenges include changes in the curriculum that often require adjustments on the part of schools and teachers to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of learning. In addition, the need for technology integration in the learning process is increasingly urgent, requiring schools to adapt to rapid technological developments in order to

meet the demands of the times (Latip, 2021).

Apart from that, social and economic challenges such as unequal access to education, diverse social conditions of students, and limited resources in some areas are also factors that influence the teaching and learning process in elementary schools. In facing these challenges, relevant parties in the education sector need to work together and develop holistic and inclusive strategies to ensure that education at the primary level remains relevant and competitive and provides equal opportunities for all students.

The role of the principal in an educational institution cannot be equated solely with administrative duties, but more than that, the principal is a leader who plays an important role in determining the direction of the school's educational vision. As a leader, the principal is responsible for inspiring, guiding, and motivating all staff and school members, including teachers and other educational personnel, to work towards achieving common goals (Irawati, 2021; Laliana & Hermawan, 2020) .

The principal's role is not limited to managing daily activities but also includes developing an inclusive, collaborative, and progressive school culture. With his ability to formulate and communicate a clear educational vision and motivate staff to actively participate in making it happen, the school principal is the main driver in creating an inspiring and effective learning environment for all school members (Sari et al., 2021).

Transformational leaders gain recognition for their ability to inspire, motivate, and guide individuals or groups toward positive and significant change (Azrial Rizky Al Ubaid's, 2022). In the educational context, this approach is relevant because it can change school paradigms, practices, and culture to become more dynamic and adaptive to changing times.

Transformational leaders' ability to create an attractive vision, encourage collaboration, and provide ongoing support and guidance to all school members makes them a strong driving force in improving the quality of education holistically (Habibi & Maya Hapsari, 2023). By adopting this approach, schools can better face new challenges and respond to changes in the world of education with a progressive and innovative attitude.

School principals who carry out the role of transformational leaders have great potential to have a significant impact on increasing teacher professionalism in schools (Efendi et al., 2023; Habibi & Maya Hapsari, 2023). Through a transformation-oriented approach, school principals can provide strong support through continuous coaching and create a work environment that motivates and supports teachers' professional development. By providing clear direction, providing opportunities for personal development, and facilitating collaboration among teachers, principals can stimulate continued professional growth and encourage innovation in instructional practices. In addition, by creating an open and inclusive work culture, school principals can inspire teachers to be actively involved in the learning process and contribute to improving the overall quality of education.

In this article, a literature review was carried out with the aim of reviewing various strategies that can be implemented by school principals as transformational leaders in improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. In this context, the focus of the discussion will be on strategies that are specifically relevant and can be implemented effectively at the basic education level.

Through an in-depth analysis of various approaches and best practices, this article aims to provide valuable insights for education practitioners in developing effective and impactful leadership to improve the quality of education at the primary level. This article can become a practical guide for school principals and other related parties in joint efforts to achieve the goal of increasing teacher professionalism and better quality of

education in elementary schools.

B. METHOD

This research uses a narrative literature review approach to explore various strategies used by school principals as transformational leaders in improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively explore and synthesize various findings and views contained in related literature (Baumeister & Leary, 1997).

Identify Data Sources

Data sources for this research were obtained from various sources, including scientific journals, books, research reports, and other relevant sources in the field of educational leadership and teacher professional development. The selection of data sources is based on predetermined inclusion criteria, such as relevance to the research topic, diversity of perspectives, and accuracy of information.

Data Selection and Analysis Process

Data from various sources will be filtered and analyzed systematically. The selection process will involve identifying articles and documents appropriate to the research topic, in-depth reading of relevant content, and determining suitability for the research objectives. After that, the data will be synthesized and analyzed comprehensively to identify patterns, main findings, and practical implications of the strategies used by school principals.

Synthesis and Interpretation of Findings

The analysis's results will be synthesized into a coherent and structured narrative. The findings will be interpreted critically to identify the most effective strategies for improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. Emphasis will be placed on the implications of these findings in practical contexts and for further

educational research and policy.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature review obtained three transformative school principal strategies for improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. The following describes these three strategies.

1) Development of a Directed Teacher Professional Development Program

School principals play a very important role in initiating and implementing professional development programs for teachers in elementary schools. One strategy that can be used is to design a structured program with various components, such as training, workshops, mentoring, and collaboration between teachers (Amzat et al., 2022; Fessehatsion, 2017). This program can be designed to cover various aspects relevant to the needs and learning objectives at school. For example, training may focus on the use of technology in learning, implementing new curricula, or innovative teaching strategies.

In addition, workshops can be scheduled periodically to facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas between teachers regarding challenges and solutions in their teaching practices. Mentoring can also be an important part of the program, where more experienced teachers can provide guidance and support to their colleagues who may need additional help in developing their skills and knowledge.

Collaboration between teachers is also a key element in this professional development program. Through collaboration, teachers can support each other, motivate each other, and learn from each other. They can share experiences, effective teaching strategies, and useful learning resources (Jeong & Hmelo-Silver, 2016). Collaboration can also create an inclusive and supportive work environment where teachers feel valued and supported in their efforts to improve the professionalism and quality of teachers' teaching (Wang et al., 2021).

By combining these various

components in a structured professional development program, principals can create a dynamic and sustainable learning environment in elementary schools. This can help improve teachers' skills, knowledge, and motivation and have a positive impact on the overall quality of education.

Structured professional development programs have several significant advantages. First, they can directly improve teachers' skills and knowledge. Through training, workshops, and other activities, teachers can gain new insights, the latest teaching techniques, and a deep understanding of best practices in education (Ancho & Arrieta, 2021). This can help them become more competent and confident in conveying lesson material effectively.

Apart from that, this professional development program can also increase teacher motivation (Chang et al., 2014). By actively participating in professional development activities, teachers can feel valued and supported in their efforts to improve their performance. A sense of engagement in professional development can also help maintain passion and enthusiasm for their work, which in turn can have a positive impact on the quality of classroom learning.

Furthermore, one of the main advantages of this program is its ability to improve the quality of classroom learning. As teachers' skills and motivation increase, they can deliver course material more effectively, facilitate deeper discussions, and create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. This can result in a more meaningful and satisfying learning experience for students and help them achieve better learning outcomes. Thus, structured professional development programs can be an effective means of improving the overall quality of education.

Although professional development programs have many advantages, several disadvantages need to be considered. One major drawback is that not all teachers may have the time or opportunity to participate actively in the program. Teachers often have busy schedules filled with teaching assignments, lesson preparation, and other school responsibilities. These time constraints can make it difficult for some teachers to participate fully in professional development programs, even if they recognize their value and benefits.

Additionally, implementing professional development programs can also require significant budgets and resources. Effective implementation often involves the expense of hiring expert speakers, hosting workshops, providing training materials, and facilitating other activities. This can be a barrier for schools that may have limited budgets or other limited resources. As a result, some schools may need help to implement comprehensive, high-quality professional development programs.

Both of these shortcomings can be a barrier to the success of a professional development program and can affect participation and its overall quality. Therefore, school principals and other stakeholders need to consider effective strategies to overcome these challenges, such as providing time flexibility for busy teachers or seeking additional resources to support program implementation. In this way, professional development programs can become more inclusive and accessible to all teachers, regardless of time or resource constraints.

2) Encourage a Collaborative Culture and Continuous Learning

One form of effective strategy is the principal's efforts to create a work environment that promotes collaboration between teachers, sharing best practices, and continuous learning (Balyer et al., 2015). In this context, the principal acts as the main catalyst in facilitating productive interactions between teachers in the school.

First, school principals can create opportunities and space for collaboration between teachers by holding regular meetings, workshops, or discussion forums. Through this platform, teachers can share experiences, knowledge, and effective

teaching strategies. By collaborating, teachers can support and enrich each other, broaden their horizons about different learning approaches, and identify the best solutions to the challenges they face.

Second, principals can facilitate the sharing of best practices among teachers. This can be done through professional development sessions, collaborative assignments, or online platforms that allow teachers to share successful learning ideas, materials, and resources. By sharing best practices, teachers can learn from each other's experiences, adopt strategies proven to work and improve the overall quality of their teaching.

Finally, principals can support ongoing learning by providing access to resources and professional development opportunities. This may include support for training courses, certification programs, or other professional development activities that can help teachers deepen their knowledge and improve their skills in teaching. By providing easy access and ongoing support for ongoing learning, principals can help ensure that teachers continue to develop and improve their practice throughout their careers.

By implementing these strategies, principals can create a work environment that facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning among the teaching staff. This can not only increase the professionalism of individual teachers but can also have a positive impact on the overall quality of education in elementary schools (Aryani & Haryadi, 2023).

A collaborative culture has significant advantages in increasing creativity, innovation, and learning for teachers. Through open and proactive collaboration, teachers can inspire and encourage each other to think outside the box, create new solutions, and explore innovative approaches to the learning process. Additionally, a collaborative culture also facilitates the exchange of valuable ideas and experiences among educational professionals. When teachers share their knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies, this creates an environment where shared learning occurs naturally.

In a collaborative atmosphere, teachers can learn from each other's practical experiences, gain new insights into how best to overcome learning challenges, and enrich their repertoire with a variety of proven effective approaches. In this way, a collaborative culture not only enriches individuals personally but also enriches the entire educational community with ideas and best practices.

Even though it has many advantages, building a collaborative culture also has several disadvantages that need to be considered. One of the main challenges is that this process requires a lot of time and commitment from all parties involved. Sometimes, to create an effective collaborative culture sustained and consistent efforts from the entire school community, including the principal, teaching staff, and administrative personnel, are required. This can be a challenge, especially in an environment where resources and time are limited.

In addition, the process of building a collaborative culture can also be hampered by cultural or political barriers at school. Some schools may have a culture that tends to be individualistic, where working independently takes precedence over collaboration. Changing the mindset and values that are ingrained in school culture can be a difficult process and requires careful and targeted strategies.

Furthermore, political obstacles can also arise in efforts to build a collaborative culture. For example, the existence of internal competition between teachers or school policies that do not support collaboration can become obstacles to efforts to strengthen teamwork and exchange ideas.

However, while there are challenges to overcome, it is important to remember that the long-term benefits of a collaborative culture can be invaluable. With commitment and persistence, many of these obstacles can be overcome, and the results can result in a richer and more

supportive learning environment for all members of the school community.

3) Provide Ongoing Support and Coaching

Providing ongoing support and coaching to teachers is not just a strategy but is also an important investment that underlies building professionalism and improving the quality of education (Smylie, 2014). Through a structured and systematic approach, these coaching programs should be designed to provide relevant resources, training, and guidance so that teachers can continue to develop their pedagogical skills and subject knowledge.

In addition, with consistent emotional and professional support, teachers can feel more appreciated and motivated to implement innovative and effective teaching methods (Brick et al., 2021). This will ultimately contribute to improving student learning outcomes and creating a more conducive and inspiring learning environment.

Providing ongoing support and coaching to teachers plays a crucial role in improving the quality of classroom teaching (Kho et al., 2019) . With ongoing coaching programs, teachers are given the opportunity to update and deepen their pedagogical knowledge and skills. This not only allows them to implement more effective and innovative teaching methods but also helps them adapt to new technological and methodological developments that are constantly emerging in the field of education.

Additionally, ongoing coaching also offers emotional and professional support that helps increase teacher confidence and motivation. This is very important because motivated teachers tend to create a positive learning environment, which can directly influence student learning outcomes. Thus, continuous development not only increases teacher competency but also strengthens the foundation of education by creating a more knowledgeable and skilled future generation.

Providing ongoing support and coaching to teachers does present a number of challenges that must be overcome to ensure the program's effectiveness. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring the consistency and quality of the coaching provided. In many cases, resources such as time, funds, and experts are limited, which can hinder the implementation of a comprehensive and structured coaching program.

Apart from that, differences in the needs and educational backgrounds of teachers also create challenges in adapting coaching programs so that they are relevant to each individual's needs. An experienced teacher may need coaching that focuses on developing specific skills, while a teacher just starting may need more extensive guidance regarding classroom management and basic teaching techniques.

Another difficulty is measuring the impact of coaching on teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Often, the effects of a coaching program are only sometimes visible, and it takes time and further research to measure the long-term benefits accurately. This may make some stakeholders skeptical about the value of investing in these programs.

Finally, maintaining teacher motivation and engagement throughout the coaching program can be challenging. The already high workload, coupled with the demands of coaching, can sometimes lead to fatigue or lack of interest. Therefore, it is very important to design coaching programs that are not only effective but also consider the well-being and sustainability of teachers' careers.

D. CONCLUSION

Driving school principals have an important role in the educational process in elementary schools. The results of the narrative literature review obtained an overview of three strategies for driving school principals as transformational leaders in improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education in elementary schools. These strategies include 1) developing programs to increase teacher professionalism in a

targeted manner through workshops, in-house training, and internal activities in other schools. 2) encouraging a collaborative culture and continuous learning, this strategy is carried out in stages with a personal and classical approach so that this culture is well developed among teachers and the academic community at the school, and 3) providing continuous encouragement and guidance, this strategy is carried out by provide regular feedback to all teachers and the school academic community so that there is ongoing development.

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