



## Increasing Teacher Professionalism through Principal Instructional Leadership (Study at Private Vocational School 2 Taman Siswa Pematang Siantar)

Susilawaty<sup>1),\*</sup>, Mhd. Isman<sup>1)</sup>, Salim Aktar<sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (UMSU), Indonesia

\*Correspondence: [susilawaty2104@gmail.com](mailto:susilawaty2104@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how the principle of SMK 2 Taman Siswa Pematang Siantar has increased teacher professionalism through instructional leadership. This kind of research employs a qualitative methodology that includes the case study technique, observation, interviews, and documentation studies as methods of data collecting. The research's findings indicate that, when given the right guidelines and procedures, school principals can adopt leadership practices that enhance teachers' professionalism. This is evident in three ways: first, teachers participate in different training programs, workshops, and seminars to enhance their pedagogical skills. The second step involves carrying out teacher professional development via supervision (visits to classes) and performance evaluation (keeping an eye on how learning activities are being developed). In an effort to enhance the school, the principal fosters a cooperative, transparent, and amicable environment with the instructors. The implication of this research is that instructional leadership is important for school principals to practice because it contains elements of direction, involvement, development, supervision and improving the quality of teacher performance as professional educators.

**Keywords:** Principal; Instructional Leadership; Teacher Professionalism

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### INTRODUCTION

Educating the nation's life in terms of values (character), intellectual knowledge, and skills is the responsibility of the teaching profession. It is essential that teacher professionalism evolves with the times, with the requirements of society, and with changes (Al Fasya, *et.al.*, 2022; Nuraisyah & Nurjannah, 2023). This is due to the fact that the caliber of education provided by educators has a significant impact on the advancement of the country, and graduates of educational institutions serve as a proxy for the caliber of Indonesia's human resources going forward. Every teacher has a lifelong duty to educate the future leaders of this country (Fanani, 2023; Mawaddah, *et.al.*, 2022).

The minimal educational stratum level (S-1) requirement for becoming a teacher is not the only condition that the teaching profession must meet. In addition, teachers routinely take part in a variety of training sessions, conferences, debates, and teacher workshops in an attempt to improve their own personal competence, which includes their capacity to teach, their grasp of scientific subjects, their social skills, and their understanding of the value of integrity in the teaching profession (Harahap, *et.al.*, 2022; Miftahul & Ahmad, 2023). As a result, the teaching profession's absolute service to modern society is becoming more and more apparent.

The ability of parents to raise and educate their children is not directly correlated with the sophistication of technology or the speed at which society is developing today. Most parents from a young age routinely give their kids to children's play groups (KB) or other informal institutions. Despite citing data from child development specialists, the primary motivation for this care is to allow kids to study and play as early as possible. This is because children in their prime need to be supported by well-rounded instruction in the home and community (Lubis, *et.al.*, 2022).

Due to these circumstances, teachers' roles are becoming more and more important in the development

of young people. In light of this, educators shouldn't be able to consistently provide youngsters with a subpar education. Given the speed at which information, technology, and communication are developing, educators need to become more proficient themselves. Being a role model for kids is something that the teaching profession should not lack (Hasanah, *et.al.*, 2022). If the teacher's goal is not to raise the caliber of instruction, how can they possibly give an example in every lesson? In order to boost teacher professional competence, the leader's (the school principal's) role is crucial as a figurehead who can give guidance (Moh, *et.al.*, 2022).

In the context of a school, the principal's leadership towards educators, learners, and other staff members is fundamentally based on communication (Werdiningsih, *et.al.*, 2022). In order to build kinship and collaboration among fellow "school members" and the possibility of achieving the school's goals (vision, mission, and objectives), leaders must cultivate a subtlety of successful and peaceful communication. School principals can prevent themselves from acting unilaterally by communicating effectively, and all policies are decided upon with consideration for the school's growth and quality improvement in mind (Hardiyati, *et.al.*, 2022; Alfiansyah, *et.al.*, 2020).

Teachers always feel overwhelmed by the complexity of learning administration during this period, and as a result, they prioritize administrative issues over academics (i.e., the caliber of instruction in the classroom). In addition, even though teaching is a job that requires balancing time between family and career, teachers often work longer hours than expected—seven to eight hours at school and more than fourteen hours at home. The principal of the school should decide how best to handle the precarious situation that teachers find themselves in (Sari, *et.al.*, 2022). Consequently, in order to advance education, school principals must not only be able to implement innovative and forward-thinking internal policies, but also exhibit wise leadership (Nurul, *et.al.*, 2022).

Professional teachers need to have intrinsic motivation in addition to external factors like the school principal in order to develop themselves (educator competence), deepen their scientific field, update and upgrade renewable information, read scientific literature diligently, not feel lost when purchasing books, not feel busy learning, and recognize the value of the teaching profession in efforts to educate the future generation. The responsibilities that come with being a teacher extend beyond the confines of the classroom and are a type of bond that instructors have (Lubis, *et.al.*, 2023).

The social fact is that there are still a lot of teachers working in the field with subpar performance. This is demonstrated by the low learning achievement of pupils, the absence of discipline, the poor learning capacities of teachers, the fact that teachers consistently overlook current developments in the field of education, and the ineffectiveness of learning tactics. There is a definite correlation between the events at Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar school and this worldwide occurrence. The findings of the author's initial observations and interviews with school principals show that there is still a lack of professional competence among teachers, as evidenced by the fact that many of them are not punctual in their administration of instruction, that time management is inadequate, and that few of them perform effectively and efficiently in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, which is still lacking in learning evaluation.

This issue suggests that teachers' performance as educators is still not at its best. Based on preliminary observations at Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar, the principal has actually implemented instructional leadership, which is evidenced by accomplishments like intellectual and self-development successes. It is currently hard to refute the empirical reality that it is rare to find educators who are sincerely committed to their work and who give their full focus to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. In actuality, a teacher's skill is reflected in their capacity to instruct.

Actually, pertinent studies on teacher professionalism and instructional leadership have been conducted independently from a variety of scientific perspectives. This includes talking about issues with the way the curriculum is implemented (Ahmad, 2014), the connection between learning communities and instructional leadership (Ahmad & Wahab, 2021; Hamzah, *et.al.*, 2018), The principal's function in fostering teacher professionalism (Yenni, *et.al.*, 2020; Herry, *et.al.*, 2020), teacher commitment and performance (Sukmawati & Hermawan, 2016), The influence of principal supervision on the advancement of teacher professionalism (Koyongian, *et.al.*, 2021), degree of efficacy of instruction in schools (Dwiyono, *et.al.*, 2022), and how self-efficacy relates to teacher performance and how instructional leadership is affected by it (Afrina, 2019).

One of the private schools chosen for SMK PK (Center of Excellence Vocational High School) is Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar. One of the government's main initiatives, SMK PK, will introduce an autonomous learning curriculum. It is emphasized that the goal of the PK Vocational School program is not to establish a "ivory tower" or a preferred school over others; rather, it is to establish a school that will serve as a model for implementing independent curricula and a hub for quality improvement for nearby vocational schools. Therefore, in order to ascertain the extent to which the principal's instructional leadership and tactics contribute to the development of teachers' professional competence at SMK Private 2 Tamansiswa Pematang Siantar, researchers are interested in conducting study at the school.

## METHOD

This kind of research employs a case study methodology, observation, interviews, and documentation studies as well as a qualitative approach. Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar served as the research site. In addition to heads of administrative departments (TU) and other supporting informants, research informants included school principals, deputy principals for curriculum, and teachers at vocational schools (primary data). As previously mentioned, the data analysis cycle describes how data is gathered, presented, reduced, concluded, and/or confirmed (Assingkily, 2021). After being examined for veracity, dependability, credibility, auditability, and confirmability, the data was deemed legitimate.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Principals' Instructional Leadership In Improving Teacher Professionality In Schools

#### Establishing Learning Objectives

School principals need to be capable of identifying and establishing learning goals for their institution (Wahyudi, *et.al.* 2020). Similarly, in accordance with the government-established curriculum, the principal of Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar consistently involves teachers in the creation and execution of learning goals and objectives. According to the findings of principals' interviews, in relation to determining learning objectives he always involves the school community, be it the deputy principal for curriculum, deputy principal for student affairs, deputy principal for facilities and infrastructure, head of administrative staff, and the teachers especially. All those involved are given the opportunity to express opinions regarding the learning objectives.

The same thing was also conveyed by a teacher at SMK (Khairunnisa Sinaga), that so far the principal in determining learning objectives has always involved the school community, especially teachers who are directly involved in the learning process through deliberation and inseparable from the curriculum set by the government. . Through teacher assessment of learning outcomes, the principal assesses the students' progress toward meeting learning objectives as well. Where, in evaluating the achievement of learning objectives, the principal always involves teachers to assess learning outcomes which will later be used as a basis for making decisions, formulating policies and further program development.

Based on the description above, it can be inferred that the principal of SMK Private 2 Tamansiswa Pematang Siantar consistently involves the "school community" in the creation and execution of learning objectives, first coordinating them with the managerial team through deputy principals' deliberation meetings and the assessment of learning outcomes as evaluation material to enhance student learning processes. The evaluation of student learning outcomes serves as the foundation for choices, policy creation, and program development in the role of school administrator.

#### Turn into an Instructor Resource

The principal needs to listen well and be receptive to the different issues that his staff members may encounter in order to take on the role of instructional leader for them (Fauzi, 2018). Reliability and humane treatment of subordinates can be fostered by superiors who listen well. Subordinates require guidance from superiors on how to address these issues and assistance in resolving them (Munawar, 2019).

The principal's direction and guidance, coupled with her unwavering presence when problems arise, will instill in subordinates a sense of teamwork and perseverance, as they realize that problems are not personal and

must be overcome together (Iskandar, 2013). Subordinates need to be able to turn to leaders as resources. This will have the effect of making subordinates feel in awe of the principal. Based on the author's discussions with the principal of the school, the following information was obtained:

*"I'm always ready to hear concerns or issues that educators are having with the teaching process, and we can work together to find methods to make the curriculum better so that issues, no matter how complicated, may be handled cooperatively. If required, a more serious meeting will be called in order to promptly address issues and establish a learning development program that is founded on the findings of research and effective teaching approaches"* (Interview with Mr Sudaryanto).

The results of the aforementioned interview confirm that the principal of SMK Private 2 Tamansiswa Pematang Siantar has developed into a valuable resource for subordinates by designing a learning development program based on research findings and best practices from educators in the field. The program gives students the chance to engage in enrichment and remediation activities and uses effective formative procedures to evaluate learning outcomes.

#### Developing an Environment and Culture in Schools That Promote Learning

Ensuring that learning activities are linked to students' requirements to attain high levels of accomplishment and creating a school climate that is favorable to learning are crucial roles played by leaders in any given setting (Wahyudin, 2018). In this case, paying closer attention is necessary to become a school administrator since it can support the teaching and learning process, which in turn can improve the quality of education. As stated by the principal:

*"I recommend that teachers be open to providing extracurricular activities that help expand students' interests and talents in order to foster a learning-friendly school culture and climate. I constantly encourage teachers to act appropriately in the classroom during meetings in order to foster a healthy and organized learning environment. The key is that instructors need to be able to maintain order in the classroom so that learning may occur"* (Interview with Mr Sudaryanto).

While the learning process is still crucial for the child's future, their interests and talents also help them succeed in school (Zuriatin, et.al., 2021). According to what the deputy principal said:

*"I feel that the children are happier with the extracurricular programs at this school. This is also the starting point for children and their parents who will enjoy going to school if they can implement their talents and interests at school, where school is basically to improve education and make the nation smarter. These children will be enthusiastic about going to school where their goal is to learn and develop their talents and interests"* (Interview with Mr Wardi).

I believe that this school's extracurricular activities are making the kids happier. This is also the beginning for kids and their parents, who will find school enjoyable if they can use their skills and passions in the classroom, where the main goal of education is to increase national intelligence. These kids will be excited to attend school because they want to learn and explore their hobbies and talents.

#### School Principals' Approaches To Enhancing Teacher Professionalism Competencies

##### Engaging Teachers in Activities for Educator Potential Development

As a leader, the principal makes an effort to be aware of the career paths of the teachers. In the event that a teacher desires to engage in activities that advance their careers, the principal will always encourage them and send representatives to participate in such activities (Kurniawati, 2019). It is intended that by sending representatives to participate in these training activities, teacher competency would be enhanced and other teachers who did not participate in the training will be able to learn from the results (Syarifullah, 2017).

According to one of the vocational school's instructors:

*"The principal consistently furnishes avenues and reinforcements for educators to partake in professional development training; the crucial aspect is that the activity contributes to the enhancement of instructors' professionalism"* (Interview with Mrs. Sartika).

In support of this, the following is stated in an interview with Private Vocational School 2 Tamansiswa Pematang Siantar's deputy principal for curriculum:

*“The principal encourages teachers to become even more professional by giving them the chance to take on or complete extra work in accordance with their own talents or abilities. Additionally, he constantly exhorts his subordinates to collaborate and work at their best at meetings in order to maintain professionalism among all present, specifically the school administrators”* (Interview with Mrs. Ratna).

As of right now, Tamansiswa Pematang Siantar Private Vocational School 2 has offered a great deal of instruction and training, including instruction in developing teaching modules, implementing independent curricula, and creating instructional media like learning videos, slides, and pointers. In addition, webinar training, workshops, and seminars can help you become more professional. The school always sends members to participate in any training that is conducted. Teachers' professional paths may be improved by this circumstance.

#### Executing Monitoring and Providing Encouragement

The excellent mentoring provided by the school principal, which the organization much needs, is one of the factors contributing to the success and sustainability of an organization (Waluyati, 2017). In order to accomplish the jointly established school vision, the principal, in his or her capacity as a leader, must be able to implement the proper supervision. He or she must also be able to oversee and control a planned development that will support teachers in advancing learning by developing their own pedagogical expertise and motivating them to take on greater authority in improved teaching and learning environments (Ruslan, 2019).

The principal of Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar also completed this. As the principal of the school carried out the phases of the supervision program, he stated:

*“As the principal, I have overseen a variety of tasks, including class visits, extracurricular activity monitoring, KBM administration inspections, and discussions with the teachers at Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar. Following this, I verified that the RPP (teaching module) was complete. “I carry out class visits by notifying them in advance and sometimes without prior notification to the teacher concerned in accordance with the needs and purpose of the class visit and I involve the deputy principal as supervisor”* (Interview with Mr Sudaryanto).

According to the principal's explanation, the implementation of supervision is done in three stages: the first involves making sure that all teaching materials are complete; the second involves having discussions; and the third involves visiting classes. Every semester, in accordance with the academic calendar, or at the beginning of each new school year, the principal of the school is required to supervise.

It is also important to realize that the principal serves as a motivator for subordinates to become more proactive in enhancing their competence so they can utilize their free time to perform better. Think of the principal as the engine and steering wheel of a car, acting as both a driver and a director (Merdekawati, 2021). The principal of Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar also completed this. Based on the principal of the school's interview, he stated:

*“My goal is to inspire the deputy principle to put himself forward for principalship provided he completes cadre training and satisfies the necessary requirements”* (Interview with Mr Sudaryanto).

The assistant principal for student affairs reaffirmed this, saying:

*“The principal encourages teachers to become even more professional by giving them the chance to take on or oversee extra responsibilities that fit their individual qualifications. In addition, the principal is constantly approachable to his staff, which means that each teacher has the freedom to voice ideas and thoughts about how the school should be developed. If there are issues, they are resolved collaboratively, and teachers are included in a variety of school-related activities”* (Interview with Mr Misnan).

According to the interview results, which serve as motivation for raising the level of professionalism among teachers at Tamansiswa Private Vocational School 2 Pematang Siantar, the principal of the school works in a harmonious manner, is open to mutual cooperation, and is always working toward the best interests of the school. This allows the teachers to work together in a way that reflects their personalities and professionalism.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that when given the right guidelines and procedures, school principals can adopt leadership practices that enhance teachers' professionalism. This is evident in three ways: *first*, teachers participate in different training programs, workshops, and seminars to enhance their pedagogical skills. The *second* step involves carrying out teacher professional development via supervision (visits to classes) and performance evaluation (keeping an eye on how learning activities are being developed). *Third*, In an effort to enhance the school, the principal fosters a cooperative, transparent, and amicable environment with the instructors.

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