Principal's Strategy to Improve Teachers Professional Competence

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ABSTRACT. As a leader, the principal has a very large role and duties. The success of a school depends on the strategy implemented by the school principal. This research aims to find out how the principal's strategy is to improve teacher professional competence at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation studies, Meanwhile, data validity testing uses data credibility by conducting triangulation and member checking. The sources were the school principal, deputy head of curriculum, and teachers at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo. The results of the study reveal that a good principal's strategy can make it easier to improve teachers professional competence by holding regular meetings with the teachers, always motivating the teachers, conducting competency-based training, maximizing class supervision, and fulfilling the needs for facilities and infrastructure, especially those related to learning.

Keywords: Strategy; Principal; Teacher Professional Competence

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INTRODUCTION

In education, strategy is defined as a plan, method, or series of activities designed to achieve a particular educational goal, so a strategy is a plan that contains a series of activities designed to achieve educational goals (Nurhasanah et al., 2019). The educational process is an important part of efforts to achieve educational goals. The ongoing educational process is not just about learning and teaching, but rather a very complex series of various aspects. It comes from the school principal, teachers, students, administrative staff, infrastructure, curriculum, and so on. All of these aspects are equally important in achieving the expected educational goals.

The principal is the highest leader in the educational unit who determines the success of the school. According to Djafri (2016) that the school principal is one of the educational components who plays the most role in improving the quality of education. As a leader, the principal has a big responsibility such as starting from improving discipline, competence, achievement and producing the best graduates. Rahmi (2018) explains that the principal can be seen from several points of view. The school principal as managers, leaders, educators and administrators. The principal as a manager means that the principal must be able to plan, organize and control his organization in achieving its goals. As a leader, the principal must be able to guide, direct, and provide the insistence to optimize all abilities to achieve organizational goals (Huda dan Rokhman 2021; Nurkhasanah dkk. 2023; Zaini, Barnoto, dan Ashari 2023). As an educator, the principal must be able to instill, promote and improve knowledge, mental, moral, physical, artistic values, and so on. As an administrator, the school principal must be able to apply

administrative functions such as planning, supervision, financing, and evaluation (Setyorini dan Khuriyah 2023).

Moreover, in order to run educational process effectively and efficiently, not only school principal requires to have adequate competence. It also requires teacher to do so. Teacher competency are not something simple that will just appear, but also requires good and comprehensive efforts that are carried out seriously. One effort that can be made is through school principal strategies, as Welch in Yuliana (2021) argues that school principals as managers also have the task of developing personnel performance, especially increasing teacher professional competence.

In educational institutions, teachers are the main element in carrying out the learning process. Kamal (2019) stated that teachers have the authority and responsibility to educate and develop students both individually and in groups, at school or outside school. This aims to ensure that each teacher can focus on the student's personal development, interests, talents and other abilities so that the student is able to develop in a better direction. Kamal (2019) continued that teacher professionalism is not only knowledge of technology and management, but also about attitudes and self-development. Teachers require to have skills and behavior.

In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 14 of 2005 concerns about Teachers and Lecturers states that there are four competencies that a teacher must have such as pedagogical, personal, social and professional competencies. This shows that a teacher cannot only think about how to provide knowledge to students, but also more than that. Nurjan (2015) revealed that a professional teacher is a teacher who has competence in the form of a set of mastery of abilities that can realize appropriate and effective performance, such as educating, teaching, coaching, guiding, nurturing, and so on. Mulyadi et al. (2023) also argue that teachers are the most determining component in the education system as a whole, which must receive central, first and foremost attention. This is because teachers are always related to any component in the education system. Teachers also have an important role in educational development, especially in the learning process which will ultimately determine the success of students in the educational institution itself.

Therefore, to answer the research question of this writing Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo was chosen as the research location because based on the results of observations it was found that there were still several teachers who taught not according to their field, then some teachers still used teaching methods that mostly used the lecture method and were not student-centered. This certainly causes the boredom in the learning process and has an impact on students' success in learning.

Several previous studies have also discussed how school principals attempt to improve teachers' professional competence through their strategies. The findings from these studies are very mixed. As research conducted by Zohriah dan Firdaos (2023), suggests that improving teacher professional competence can be done by approaching the school principal both emotionally and professionally. Dewi dan Aprison (2022) also stated from the results of their research that several things that school heads can do to improve teachers' professional competence are by holding workshops or training for teachers, as well as providing motivation and rewards. Furthermore, Kurniasari et al. (2023), in his research, found that in improving the professional competence of teachers, school principals provide guidance to teachers so that there is progress and development of teachers' competencies, and involve teachers in their respective work groups (KKG). Although there are many ways that school principals can do this, implementing this strategy also depends on the condition of the school both internally and externally. The school principal must formulate strategies well so that the expected goals can be achieved.

From the descriptions above, it is very important for a teacher to have adequate and appropriate competence. Yet, this cannot be separated from how a school principal applies the right strategy in order to create good changes, improvement and development, and can achieve educational goals. This research aims to describe: (1) the strategies used by the school principal to improve teacher's professional competence, (2) to find out what obstacles school principals face in improving teacher's professional competence, and (3) the solutions school principals use to overcome these obstacles in improving the teacher's professional competence at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School, Muara Bungo, Bungo Regency.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological research type. In this activity, researchers are a key element so that the presence of researchers is very necessary in the field where the research is carried out. This research was conducted at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo which took place from the beginning of Agustus to September 2023.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Researchers collected this primary data through observations and interviews. The informants in this research were the school principals, then representatives of the curriculum sector, and teachers. Meanwhile, for secondary data, researchers took data in the form of evidence of notes or documents about the school's vision and mission, school principal work programs, photos/videos of teacher teaching activities, teacher learning tools, documents of teacher supervision, and other activities. Researchers collect this data by requesting permission during initial observations to record, duplicate or take pictures as physical evidence of the real conditions at the school.

This data collection technique is through observation, interviews and document study. The interviews were carried out not sequentially but were interrelated. The questions asked focused on the strategies implemented by school principals in improving teachers' professional competence. The interview process lasted between thirty to forty-five minutes for each informant which was audio recorded. Data analysis is carried out by reducing data, presenting data, and verifying data or drawing conclusions. Data validity testing is carried out through data credibility by carrying out triangulation and member checking.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Principal's Strategies in Improving Teacher Professional Competence

The focus of this research is the school's principal's strategies to improve the professional competence of teachers at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo. The researcher conducted direct interviews with the school principal, then continued with the deputy principal for curriculum, and finally with two subject teachers. From the results of the interviews, several findings were obtained, firstly, that teachers at this school did not fully have professional competence, this was proven by only 6 teachers who had teaching certificates out of a total of 32 teachers. As stated by Mr. Dedi Sefriadi as head of Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo as follows: "There are currently five teachers who have been certified in schools, Theya are an English teacher, two mathematics teachers, one Indonesian history teacher, and one productive accounting teacher."

Regarding the learning process, in this school it was also found that there were teachers who taught not according to their field, as stated by Mrs. Regina as deputy head of curriculum as follows:

"There are already linear teachers in each department, although they still use other teachers who are not in their field to help. We have empowered these general teachers to help less productive teachers."

Second, in order to improve teachers' professional competence, there are several strategies implemented by school principals, from the documents resulting from event reports and documentation of activities that researchers collected, it's starting with performing a meeting with the entire teachers in order to develop a school work program and convey aspirations and participate in meetings, conveying what difficulties teachers face in the learning process, so that the school principal will know what needs to be repaired and improved. This meeting activity is held at the beginning of the semester. This is according to the results of the interview delivered by Mr. Dedi Sefriadi as the school principal as follows: "In planning the strategy, of course we have to communicate first with all existing teacher councils and stakeholders through meetings, so that we know what is needed now and in the future."

Furthermore, the principal always motivates teachers, encourages them, and provides the widest possible opportunities for teachers to develop themselves by holding training in school or outside school. As stated by Mrs. Erna as a productive teacher of office management automation as follows: "The principals often motivate teachers, encourage them to take part in teacher competency *improvement programs or motivate teachers to take part in self-development both online and offline training program.*"

Apart from that, the school principal also sends teachers to take part in competency-based training in accordance with the existing skills program at the school. The principal of Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo always provides announcements about the implementation of training activities both verbally and via social media (whatsapp group). If there are certain requirements regarding the teacher's qualifications, the principal will call directly and instruct the teacher concerned to take part in the activity. Next, the school principal carries out a maximum class supervision program. Supervision is carried out once a year but at maximum, the principal and deputy head of curriculum act as supervisors, and the supervision schedule is determined by the deputy head of curriculum. And finally, the school principal tries to meet the needs for facilities and infrastructure, especially those related to learning. As stated by the school principal, Mr. Dedi Sefriadi, as follows:

"To increase teacher competency, we carry out training, both carried out by schools and by the education office. We always provide information and directly instruct teachers if there are teacher criteria requested. Apart from that, we also maximize class supervision activities carried out by teachers, the schedule is once a year but must be maximized, and we also try to fulfill school facilities and infrastructure, especially for teachers' teaching needs, such as laptops, projectors, speakers, practical equipment, and so on".

Obstacles Faced by School Principals in Improving Teacher Professional Competence

The process of increasing teacher professional competence certainly did not go smoothly, from the results of the interviews several findings emerged that the obstacle for school principals was that the facilities and infrastructure needed by teachers for learning were not fully met. Teachers' needs, especially learning tools and media, continue to increase from year to year and change to the latest versions, so that this school is left behind by other schools which are supported by assistance with learning tools and media from local agencies. According to the interview results of Mr. Dedi Sefriadi as the school principal, he said:

"Currently, the study rooms and practice rooms are sufficient, but some of our learning tools and media are still incomplete, the tools are there but they are not the latest. Because currently state schools receive more priority assistance than private schools. We can only rely on existing operational funds."

Besides that, the competency enhancement training that private teachers can take part in is very limited and some of the training even requires additional costs. So some teachers lack the funds to take part in competency-based training held by the ministry of education or local government. This finding is in accordance with the results of interviews conducted with Mr Dedi as the school principal, who explained that:

> "Currently, training is very limited, the provincial government prioritizes teachers from state schools over private school teachers. training activities also do not know when the registration time will be, so that when the registration or training schedule is opened the teachers are not financially prepared, and only teachers who can take part in the training are financially capable, because even though there are costs borne by the implementer, however we have to bring personal costs."

Furthermore, what is still an obstacle is the lack of teacher motivation to try to improve their competence so that the teacher is happier or more comfortable with the current situation. The daily teaching routine with several additional tasks increases the teacher's responsibilities. The findings in the field were that the teacher's activities were only teaching on time and returning home when finished. Only a few teachers are able to use their free time to discuss, look for training information, or learn new knowledge available on the internet. Mr Dedi Sefriadi said:

"Our teachers here are very diverse, there are also those who lack motivation whose routine is just teaching and after that they go home, there are also those who can use their free time and like to look for online self-development training on the internet, but there are only a few teachers".

The findings above show that this school still has obstacles that must be overcome in the right way so that increasing teacher professional competence can run well.

Solutions by School Principals to Improve Teacher Professional Competence

Several solutions need to be implemented so that all processes can run well. From the results of interviews with school principals and also deputy principals in the field of curriculum, there are several solutions taken by school principals such as increasing the number of facilities and infrastructure, especially those related to the learning process, for example practice tools, projectors, sufficient internet access, and complete the class rooms. The school principal tries to use school operational funds to supplement the lacking infrastructure. Based on an interview by Mr Dedi Sefriadi as the school principal as follows: "We always try to ensure that teachers' teaching needs such as practical equipment, projectors, textbooks, etc. increase from year to year, although not all of them are available, but every year we add them using existing operational costs"

Apart from that, school principals are also gradually applying for financial assistance to the foundation to be able to assist with educational processes that require additional costs, which in this case can also be used to facilitate teachers' needs for participating in competency training. Several training activities were carried out at schools by inviting resource persons from within and outside the region. The researchers obtained this through documentation of training activities and also the school principal's work program which was stated in the short-term program. The results of the interview with Mr Dedi Sefriadi also conveyed the following:

"In certain circumstances we also try to apply for financial assistance to the foundation, we use this assistance apart from infrastructure, we also use it to hold training like In House Training (IHT) to increase teacher competency, so that we ourselves create the training program and it can be followed by all teachers"

Furthermore, the researchers found was that the principal did not get tired of motivating and encouraging teachers to improve their competence. In terms of this motivation, the principal always provides advice to the teacher by building emotional and professional closeness, informing teachers about the existence of training that is available online and offline, even though it is limited. After that, the principal gave directions so that they would be willing and able to spend time developing their competence as teachers.

Principal strategies	Action
Regular meetings with	The principal holds a meeting with the entire teacher council to
teachers	find and find out what needs to be repaired and improved.
Motivations	The principal always motivates teachers, directs and provides
	opportunities for teachers to develop themselves by holding
	training within school or outside school.
Conduct training	Sending teachers to take a part in competency-based training in
	accordance with existing skills programs at the school and
	holding training within the school like Inhouse Training (IHT)
	by inviting resource persons from within and outside the region.
Class supervision	Carry out the class supervision program to the maximum.
	Supervision is carried out once a year but at maximum, the
	principal and deputy for curriculum act as supervisors.
Complete facilities and	Meeting the needs for facilities and infrastructure, especially
infrastructure	those related to learning, by using school operational funds
	optimally

Table 1. School principal strategies in improving teacher professional competence.

Discussion

The results of this research present in previously show that as a leader, the principal, must be able to take the school in a better direction. School principals must have the right strategy or way to lead their school. The right strategy will have an impact in improving the quality of the school. According to Muspawi (2020) stated that a school principal is a teacher who is appointed and formally assigned to be the leader of a school to empower and lead school resources in order to improve school quality. Regarding school principals' strategies in improving teachers' professional competence, Haidir dan Salim (2014) revealed that strategies are synonymous with methods or techniques, ways of conveying messages that are intended to achieve predetermined goals. Yulmawati (2016) added that strategy is a means to achieve the final goal, strategy is not just an ordinary plan, but a plan that unites.

Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo is one of private school in Bungo Regency as part of the Setih Setio Foundation. Currently, this school has 382 students and 32 teachers. This school has four expertise programs such as multimedia, accounting and institutional finance, office management automation, and hospitality. As one of the schools that wants to progress and develop, the principal of Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo continues to strive for improvements in school management, of course in collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders, especially in increasing teacher professional competence.

The strategy of the head of Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo to improve teacher's professional competence is carried out with optimism and high enthusiasm. There are many strategies implemented by the head of Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School, including; first, holding regular meetings with the entire teacher to find various things that need to be corrected and improved. A work meeting is an activity carried out deliberately to gather several people for the purpose of discussing and resolving a problem that is being faced together, this problem is generally of mutual interest (Miada, 2021) (Anwar dkk. 2023; Yamin, Basri, dan Suhartini 2023). This activity is also supported by previous research conducted by Akhyar (2018) regarding the efforts of principal to improve teachers' professional competence, such as holding regular meetings that discuss all planning, implementing several activities, evaluation, and improvements as a follow-up.

Other effort to improve the professional competence is motivating teachers, encouraging and providing the widest possible opportunities for teachers to develop themselves by holding training in schools. (Joen, Purnamawati, dan Amiruddin 2022) believes that teacher work motivation in carrying out their duties is a very important factor in improving teacher performance which has a big influence on the results and quality of education. Motivation is an impulse that arises in a person that moves him to do something. Teachers who are given high motivation will try to work hard and seriously overcome all types of problems faced in the hope of achieving better results (Ardiana, 2017). Regarding IHT activities, this is also in line with research conducted by Tasmini (2022) regarding increasing teacher competence through the In House Training program. The results of the research show that IHT activities can increase teacher competence. IHT itself is a training program organized by an organization or company using its own place, own equipment, determining its own participants and trainers according to the topics required (Tatik, 2023).

Third, sending teachers to take competency-based training. (Putra dkk. 2020) revealed that competency-based training is a training approach that emphasizes developing skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet a competency standard. This principal's strategy is in line with research conducted by Rusdin (2017) regarding education and training as a means of increasing teacher competency. The research results reveal that there are several alternatives offered, including from the Department of National Education, in order to increase teacher competency, one of which is through a competency-based training program.

Fourth, carrying out the class supervision program optimally. Supervision can be interpreted as providing assistance and developing abilities to teachers so that they can increase professionalism in the learning process (Mardhiah dan Usman, 2014). This supervision activity is closely related to the role of a school principal as a supervisor. So, the school principal must know clearly what and who must be supervised and what the techniques are, in this way it will be clear what needs to be corrected and improved. Previous research conducted by Wibowo dan Santosa (2022) regarding school principals' strategies for increasing teacher professionalism, the results of the research showed that several strategies used by school principals included implementing classroom supervision. Other research such as that conducted by Yasykur (2019) regarding academic supervision as an effort to increase teacher professionalism, the results revealed that there was an increase in teacher abilities in the learning process after supervision was carried out.

Fifth, fulfilling the needs for learning facilities and infrastructure. Facilities and infrastructure in the education sector are one of the important resources in supporting the learning process in schools. The success of educational programs in schools is greatly influenced by the condition of the facilities and infrastructure owned by the school, so sufficient and

adequate facilities and infrastructure can support and facilitate the school towards the school plan that has been determined (Ananda dan Banurea, 2017). Previous research was conducted by Jujuniarti et al. (2021) regarding the management of increasing teacher professionalism. The research results reveal that the completeness of school facilities and infrastructure is one of the factors that supports to increase teacher's professionalism in schools. This is in line with research conducted by Dilla et al. (2019) (Arista dkk. 2023; Susanti dkk. 2023) regarding the influence of teacher professionalism, learning process and learning infrastructure on student learning achievement. The results of this research also reveal that there is a positive and significant influence between teacher professionalism, the learning process and learning infrastructure together on student achievement. In conclusion, the school principal fulfills the needs for facilities and infrastructure very well impact on increasing the professional competence of the teachers.

CONCLUSION

The principal's strategy in improving the professional competence of teachers at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo is carried out in several ways, such as : (1) holding meetings with the entire teacher council in order to prepare the school work program and convey aspirations and participate in meetings. (2) always motivating teachers, encouraging and providing the widest possible opportunities for teachers to develop themselves by holding training in schools or In House Training (IHT) according to teacher needs. (3) sending teachers to take part in competency-based training in accordance with the existing skills program at the school. (4) carrying out the class supervision program optimally. (5) fulfilling the needs for facilities and infrastructure, specially those related to learning. The obstacles faced by school principals in improving the professional competence of teachers at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo are: (1) the facilities and infrastructure needed by teachers for learning have not been fully met. (2) some teachers still lack the funds to take competency-based training. (3) lack of teacher awareness to try to improve their competence.

The solutions taken by the school principal to overcome those obstacles in improving the professional competence of teachers at Setih Setio 2 Vocational High School Muara Bungo are: (1) increasing the number of facilities and infrastructure, especially those related to the learning process. (2) applying for financial assistance to the foundation to help with the education process which requires additional costs. (3) always motivating and encouraging teachers so that teachers want to improve their competence.

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