



Principal Strategy Management in Efforts to Improve Teacher Professionalism in Elementary School

Iis Syamrotu Sya'adah^{1✉}, Maya Nelly Syarifah², Abdul Halim³, Oleh⁴, Asep Irpan Nugraha⁵, Iim Wasliman⁶, Wiwik Dyah Aryani⁷

Universitas Islam Nusantara

Email : ¹syamrotubaru@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Teacher professionalism is a critical factor in ensuring quality primary education. This study examines the strategic management practices of school principals in enhancing teacher professionalism at Patengan and Rancabali Elementary Schools, Bandung Regency. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, with principals and teachers serving as key informants. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, supported by source triangulation and member checking to ensure validity. The findings reveal that principals implemented an integrated strategic management process encompassing four stages: planning through teacher needs mapping using SWOT analysis and vision alignment; organizing through the establishment of professional learning communities (Kombel); implementation via in-house training, curriculum-based professional development, and clinical supervision emphasizing constructive feedback; and evaluation through periodic performance assessments and teacher portfolios. Major challenges included budget limitations and resistance to change among some senior teachers. The study concludes that effective enhancement of teacher professionalism depends on principals' capacity to function simultaneously as strategic leaders and resource managers. Clinical supervision emerged as a key strategy in bridging gaps between teacher competencies and the demands of the Independent Curriculum.

Keywords: strategic management, school principal, teacher professionalism, primary education

INTRODUCTION

Education is a continuous process that stimulates learning and develops individual potential as a foundation for improving the quality of life and social well-being. As a basic human right, education is the primary foundation for national progress. Ki Hajar Dewantara viewed education as a guide to help children adapt to their social environment and optimize their potential and personality through a child-centered approach that balances intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers affirms that teachers are professional educators tasked with educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. This role aligns with the management concept encompassing the planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising (POAC) processes as proposed by George R. Terry (2006). Teacher professionalism is a key factor in improving the quality of learning in schools. Professional teachers not only possess pedagogical competence and skills but also the ability to facilitate understanding and apply knowledge in real-world contexts, and shape students as lifelong learners.

However, improving teacher professionalism still faces various challenges, such as competency gaps, limited access to ongoing training, resistance to change, and suboptimal implementation of academic supervision. This situation demonstrates the need for a systematic, planned, and sustainable managerial approach to teacher professional development in elementary schools. The principal plays a strategic role in improving teacher professionalism through effective management practices. As a strategic leader, the principal is required to design and implement teacher quality improvement programs that are appropriate to the school's characteristics, resource availability, and institutional capacity. This study aims to evaluate the principal's management strategy in improving the professionalism of elementary school teachers at SDN Patengan and SDN Rancabali, Bandung Regency.

This mini-research focused on an in-depth evaluation of the principals' management strategies at the two schools. This included reviewing teacher professional development programs, analyzing challenges and opportunities, and formulating adaptive strategies to strengthen teachers' professional competence. These efforts are crucial for ensuring improvements in the quality of learning and education in these schools. Initial observations indicated varying levels of teacher professionalism, particularly in mastery of technology-based learning media, student-oriented lesson planning, and the ability to develop learning evaluations based on higher-order thinking skills. Furthermore, the principals had pursued professional development through academic supervision, internal training, and the formation of teacher learning communities, making both schools relevant as research locations.

Based on these conditions, this research is crucial for comprehensively

analyzing the planning and implementation of principals strategic management strategies for improving teacher professionalism. This research is expected to provide empirical contributions, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and offer theoretical and practical implications for the development of elementary school education management. It also serves as an academic contribution to enriching the study of strategies for improving teacher professional competence so that they can be effectively implemented in learning practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to understand social phenomena in depth. Qualitative methods produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior (Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong, 2011: 4). This approach is exploratory and emphasizes understanding social processes in a natural context (Creswell, 2015: 15). Therefore, the researcher is directly involved in field activities to obtain a factual picture. This study uses a case study method, an approach to examine an object in depth as a case with certain characteristics. Yin (2014: 1) emphasizes that case studies focus on questions of how and why, making this method relevant to examining the principal's strategy in improving teacher professionalism. The research subjects were the principal and teachers who were selected as informants because they were considered to understand and be directly involved in implementing teacher professional development strategies (Bungin, 2010: 108). The object of the research was the principal's strategic management in improving teacher professional competence through learning programs, academic supervision, and school activities involving teachers. The research was conducted at SDN Patengan and SDN Rancabali which are located in Rancabali District, Bandung Regency, West Java.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were used to observe the principal's strategies, the implementation of academic supervision, and teacher involvement in school programs. Interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers to obtain in-depth information regarding policies and the implementation of teacher professional development programs. Documentation studies were used to review documents, archives, and reports to strengthen and verify the research findings. The research stages included pre-research and implementation. In the pre-research stage, the researcher developed a research design, determined the object and location, obtained permits, gathered initial information, prepared instruments, and complied with research ethics. The implementation stage included observation and interviews, conducted flexibly according to field conditions and the availability of informants.

Data analysis was conducted systematically and continuously through data organization, categorization, and interpretation. The data analysis model, based on Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2008), encompasses data reduction, data

presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis process was interactive from data collection until the research was completed. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and confirmability. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation (Moleong, 2011: 178). Member checks were conducted by confirming interview results with informants, while confirmability was conducted through an audit trail with the supervisor to ensure the objectivity and traceability of the research process

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the principals of both schools have implemented programs to improve teacher professionalism. However, these programs have not been implemented sustainably, making them interesting to study further in the context of principal strategic management. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation studies, several key findings were obtained regarding principal strategic management in efforts to improve teacher professionalism, as follows:

Principal Management Strategy in Improving Teacher Professionalism

The research results indicate that principals at both schools implemented four stages of strategic management: environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation and control. The internal analysis identified strengths in the form of teacher commitment and supporting facilities, as well as weaknesses in mastery of learning technology and HOTS test preparation. The external analysis identified training opportunities from the PKG and the Education Office, as well as threats such as policy changes and limited financial support. The results of the SWOT analysis served as the basis for strategic decision-making.

Strategy Formulation

The strategy was formulated by aligning the school's vision and mission to target teacher competency improvement through three main pillars: strengthening academic supervision, establishing a professional learning community, and providing needs-based training such as immersive learning and coding.

Strategy Implementation

Implementation was carried out through cycle-based academic supervision, establishing study groups (Kombel) as a forum for teacher collaboration, and holding regular in-house training and workshops to improve pedagogical and professional competencies. The strategy implementation demonstrated strategic leadership, with the principal acting as a coach and

mentor in academic supervision and fostering a collaborative culture among teachers to improve the quality of learning. Supporting factors included the principal's commitment, teacher support, and a conducive work climate. Inhibiting factors included time constraints, varying teacher technological capabilities, and supporting resources. These obstacles were addressed through a persuasive approach and flexible program management.

The initial observation phase involved interviews with principals and teachers. The results indicated that teacher professionalism fell into two clusters: adaptive teachers who actively implemented collaborative and digital learning in accordance with the Independent Curriculum, and consistent teachers who still maintained conventional methods. This situation required principals to implement differentiated management strategies through collective development (learning communities/Kombel) and individual mentoring (clinical supervision). Interviews with teachers also revealed limited conceptual understanding in integrating pedagogical and professional competencies, resulting in the management strategies implemented not fully addressing individual teacher needs. Overall, the initial observations indicated that principals' strategic management was not yet optimally implemented. These findings provided the basis for researchers to delve deeper into the planning, implementation, and control processes of principals' strategies based on the Wheelen and Hunger framework.

The interviews were used as the primary qualitative data collection technique to gain a contextual understanding of the implementation of principals' managerial strategies. Informants were selected through purposive sampling and divided into two perspective clusters. Principals were interviewed to obtain a macro perspective on strategic policies, decision-making processes, environmental analysis (SWOT) results, and resource allocation for teacher professional development. Teachers were interviewed to gain a micro-perspective on strategy implementation in the field, including experiences participating in development programs, practical obstacles, and changes in professional behavior. Integrating these two perspectives allowed for a holistic picture of the effectiveness of principals' strategic management while supporting data triangulation. Documentation studies were used as a secondary data source to verify and strengthen the findings of observations and interviews. The analyzed documents reflect the strategic management process and teacher professional development in both schools.

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The documentation study phase was used as a secondary data source to verify and strengthen the findings of observations and interviews. The documents analyzed reflect the strategic management process and teacher professionalism improvement in both schools. The main documents include Strategic Planning Documents, such as the School Work Plan (RKS) and RKAS to assess program consistency and budget allocation. Program Implementation Documents, including In-House Training modules, minutes of Kombel activities, and clinical supervision reports. Performance Evaluation Documents, in the form of Teacher Performance Assessment (PKG) results, professional portfolios, and attendance and discipline data. The success of the program was evaluated through the strategic evaluation and control phase by assessing the achievement of teacher competency improvement targets. Quantitative Indicators (Hypothetical) include an increase in class observation scores from academic supervision results and the percentage of teachers implementing new learning media in one semester. Qualitative Indicators include improving the quality of student-centered teaching modules, changes in teacher professional behavior in carrying out professional duties, and improving the quality of teacher communication with fellow teachers, students, and parents.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the principal's strategic management at Patengan Elementary School and Rancabali Elementary School in Bandung Regency plays a significant role in improving teacher professionalism. The managerial strategy is systematically implemented through four main stages: a SWOT-based environmental analysis that identifies limitations in mastery of learning technology and HOTS question preparation; strategy formulation through sharpening the vision and mission and establishing academic supervision, learning communities, and needs-based training; strategy implementation through cycle-based academic supervision and in-house training; and evaluation and control through performance monitoring and follow-up improvements. The strategy implementation demonstrates the principal's role as a strategic leader who emphasizes academic supervision as a process of professional mentoring, strengthening a collaborative culture, and motivating teachers. This approach

encourages active teacher involvement in continuous competency development. The success of the program is reflected in the improvement in the quality of lesson planning, the implementation of contextual learning, and the strengthening of teachers' pedagogical, professional, and social competencies. These findings emphasize the importance of planned, adaptive, and sustainable principal strategic management in improving the quality of learning in elementary schools.

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