

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR IN SHAPING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the role of the principal's behavior in shaping teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School. The main focus of the research is to understand how principal behavior, such as effective communication, appreciation of teachers, and ongoing coaching, influences the quality of teacher work. This research uses quantitative methods with a survey approach. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to teachers at Nurul Jadid High School, then analyzed using regression analysis to determine the relationship between principal behavior and teacher performance. The research results show that positive principal behavior, especially effective communication and giving appreciation, has a significant influence on improving teacher performance. Apart from that, structured coaching helps improve the quality of teaching. Participative leadership has also been proven to increase collaboration between teachers. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of school principals in creating a positive work environment to improve the quality of education. Recommendations are given to school principals to continue to build open communication, provide regular appreciation, and carry out ongoing coaching to support teacher professional development.

Keywords. *Principal behavior, teacher performance, effective communication, participative leadership, continuous coaching*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran perilaku kepala sekolah dalam membentuk kinerja guru di SMA Nurul Jadid. Fokus utama penelitian adalah memahami bagaimana perilaku kepala sekolah, seperti komunikasi efektif, apresiasi terhadap guru, serta pembinaan berkelanjutan, memengaruhi kualitas kerja guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebarakan kepada guru di SMA Nurul Jadid, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis regresi untuk mengetahui hubungan antara perilaku kepala sekolah dan kinerja guru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku kepala sekolah yang positif, terutama komunikasi efektif dan pemberian apresiasi, memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan kinerja guru. Selain itu, pembinaan yang terstruktur turut mendorong peningkatan kualitas pengajaran. Kepemimpinan yang partisipatif juga terbukti meningkatkan kolaborasi antarguru. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya kepala sekolah dalam menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang positif guna meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. Rekomendasi diberikan kepada kepala sekolah untuk terus membangun komunikasi yang terbuka, memberikan apresiasi secara rutin, dan melakukan pembinaan berkelanjutan guna mendukung pengembangan profesional guru.

Kata kunci: Perilaku kepala sekolah, kinerja guru, komunikasi efektif, kepemimpinan partisipatif, pembinaan berkelanjutan.

A. INTRODUCTION.

The principal is the main leader in the school environment who is responsible for management, human resource development, and creating a conducive school culture (Ariyani & Zuhaery, 2021; Tonich, 2021). According to educational management theory, effective principal leadership can improve teacher performance and the quality of education (Li & Liu, 2022; Pan & Chen, 2021). However, facts on the ground show that not all school principals are able to motivate teachers optimally. Some teachers feel underappreciated or do not receive adequate guidance. This gap occurs due to differences in leadership styles, lack of interpersonal skills, or lack of leadership training. This raises the question: How does the principal's behavior significantly affect teacher performance?

At Nurul Jadid High School, there are various dynamics that reflect the important role of the principal in shaping teacher performance. Some teachers feel motivated because of the appreciation and good communication from the principal. However, there are also complaints about the lack of coaching, monitoring and constructive feedback. In addition, unplanned teacher rotation creates uncertainty that affects

morale. Initial observations show that the principal's behavior greatly influences discipline, enthusiasm for teaching, and teacher participation in school activities. This phenomenon is an important basis for researching more deeply how the principal's behavior influences teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School.

Previous research has discussed principal leadership and teacher performance. For example, a study by (Eliophotou Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Kılınç et al., 2024) found that a transformational leadership style increased teacher involvement in teaching. Other research by (Wang et al., 2022) confirms that participative leadership is effective in creating a collaborative work environment. In addition, research by (Parlar et al., 2024) explains that the principal's instructional leadership has a significant impact on improving student learning outcomes through strengthening academic culture. Another study from (Liu et al., 2021) emphasizes the important role of distributional leadership in increasing collaboration between teachers and building effective learning communities.

Research by (Samimi et al., 2022) highlighting that the strategic leadership of school principals can influence decision making that impacts the quality of education. Meanwhile, (Buyukgoze et al., 2024) emphasized that collective leadership is able to create a more participatory and innovative work culture in schools. However, this research did not specifically examine the context of Islamic boarding school-based schools such as SMA Nurul Jadid. Therefore, this research will fill this gap by focusing on the role of school principal behavior in the context of Islamic boarding school-based education.

Our research position is to highlight aspects of school principal behavior which include communication, appreciation and coaching which have not been studied much in the context of Islamic boarding school-based schools. Thus, this research will expand insight into the effectiveness of school principal leadership in improving teacher performance contextually.

This research aims to answer the following main question: How does the principal's behavior influence teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School? By answering this question, we can understand how school principals, through communication, appreciation, and coaching, are able to raise teacher motivation, increase discipline, and create a conducive and productive learning atmosphere.

The novelty of this research lies in studying the behavior of school principals in the context of Islamic boarding school-based schools, which have distinctive cultures and values. This research also highlights dimensions of school principal behavior, such as communication, empathy, and openness in building relationships with teachers. Focusing on the local context of Nurul Jadid High School provides new insights that have not been revealed much in previous research. In addition, it is hoped that this research

can produce practical recommendations that can be applied in other Islamic boarding school-based schools.

Based on a review of theories and social facts, this research departs from several initial assumptions. The principal's leadership style influences teacher motivation and professionalism, where principals who have a transformational leadership style are better able to encourage increased teacher performance. In addition, effective communication between school principals and teachers can create a harmonious and productive work environment, with openness and participatory policies as key factors in increasing teacher loyalty. In the context of Islamic boarding school-based education, the principal's spiritual approach has an important role in shaping the teacher's work ethic, where the religious values applied can strengthen the teacher's moral integrity and responsibility. Furthermore, there are internal and external factors that influence the effectiveness of school principals in shaping teacher performance. Internal factors include the leadership competence of the principal, while external factors include support for school policies and organizational culture, which determine the success of improving teacher performance. This research will test these arguments in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the principal in shaping teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The case study was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the role of principal behavior in shaping teacher performance. This approach is suitable for understanding the social, cultural and behavioral context that occurs in the school environment holistically. Through case studies, researchers can identify patterns of principal behavior, interactions with teachers, and their impact on the teaching and learning process. This research design also allows exploration of various perspectives emerging from informants, such as school principals, teachers and school staff. It is hoped that the results of this case study will provide a rich picture of how the principal's behavior contributes to improving teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School.

This research was conducted at Nurul Jadid High School, which is located in Probolinggo Regency, East Java. This location selection was based on several main reasons. First, Nurul Jadid High School is known as an educational institution that has a strong leadership system and is based on religious values. Second, this school has a fairly representative number of teachers for qualitative research. Third, Nurul Jadid High School has implemented various teacher development programs that are interesting to research. In addition, researchers have adequate access to conduct interviews, observations and other data collection. By choosing this location, the research is expected to provide relevant empirical contributions to the development of effective leadership models in schools.

Sources of information in this research consist of main informants and supporting documents. The main informants include school principals, senior teachers, new teachers, and administrative staff. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their role and experience in the educational process. Apart from interviews with informants, this research also utilized text sources, such as school documents (vision and mission, school principal work program, activity reports), Islamic leadership guidance books, and relevant online news. These sources are used to enrich qualitative data with historical, theoretical and practical perspectives. The combination of interviews and document analysis aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the principal's behavior and its influence on teacher performance.

Data was collected through two main techniques, namely observation and interviews. Observations were carried out in a participatory manner, where researchers directly observed the principal's interactions with teachers, the atmosphere of meetings, and teacher development activities. This observation aims to see the principal's behavior in a real context. Apart from that, in-depth interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers and staff. The interview guide was prepared with several main focuses, such as the principal's leadership style, internal communication, reward patterns, and teacher development practices. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner so that informants could provide open and in-depth answers based on their experiences.

Data analysis was carried out through several stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. At the data collection stage, the results of observations, interviews and documents were recorded in detail. Next, the data was reduced by sorting relevant information according to the research focus. With this analytical method, the research is expected to produce in-depth and comprehensive findings regarding the role of the principal in shaping teacher performance at Nurul Jadid High School.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effective Communication to Increase Teacher Work Motivation

Open, clear and two-way communication between school principals and teachers creates a comfortable and conducive work environment. With effective communication, teachers feel heard, appreciated, and receive the right direction. This motivates them to work better, increase creativity in teaching, and be more active in school activities. This finding was strengthened by a statement from one of the teachers who said that; "The principal always conveys information clearly, especially when there are changes to the curriculum or new programs. We also feel comfortable providing input because the principal is always open to our suggestions." (Ps₂₄)

Furthermore, one of the teachers at Nurul Jadid High School said that; "I feel appreciated because the principal often asks about the obstacles I face in class. This good communication makes me more enthusiastic about teaching. When I experience difficulties in managing the class, the principal always provides encouragement and motivation. He also does not hesitate to provide suggestions based on his own experience. This really helps me to continue to develop as an educator" (Ln_24)

The interview results show that effective communication from the principal creates an open and comfortable work environment for teachers. Clarity in conveying information, especially regarding important changes such as curriculum or school programs, helps teachers understand the direction and goals of the institution. In addition, the principal's attitude of accepting input creates a space for positive dialogue, so that teachers feel valued and involved in decision making.

One of the teachers at SMA Nurul Jadid said that the principal's good communication had a positive impact on teaching motivation. Teachers feel cared for because the principal actively asks about the obstacles they face in class. This form of open communication makes teachers feel valued, supported, and increasingly enthusiastic about improving the quality of teaching.

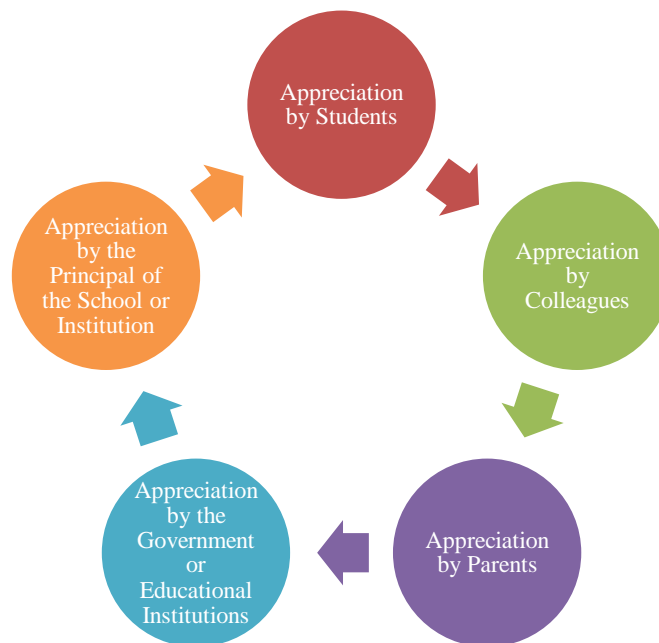
The following is a table containing observed aspects, observation findings, and sources/documentation related to Effective Communication on Increasing Teacher Work Motivation:

Observed Aspects	Observation Findings	Source/Documentation
Delivery of Information	of The principal conveys information clearly during meetings and school briefings. Teachers feel they understand the goals of the school well.	Notes on observations of meetings - Minutes of meetings
Openness Feedback	to Teachers feel heard and are free to provide suggestions in discussions with the principal.	- Recording of teacher meetings
Communication Frequency	The principal regularly holds weekly meetings to discuss learning progress and obstacles.	- Weekly meeting schedule - Report on meeting results
Response to Teacher Problems	to The principal actively follows up on teacher complaints, such as problems with learning facilities. Teachers feel appreciated and cared for.	- Teacher complaint book

This table presents a summary of the relationship between the effectiveness of school principal communication and increasing teacher work motivation, obtained through observation, interviews and documentation analysis.

Appreciation for Teachers

Providing awards for teacher performance, whether in the form of praise, incentives or formal awards, is a form of recognition for their efforts. Regular appreciation increases teacher morale, loyalty and satisfaction. Teachers who feel appreciated tend to be more motivated to continue improving the quality of teaching. Based on the results of observations, appreciation for teachers can come from various parties, which contributes to increasing work motivation and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties as educators. The following are some forms of appreciation found:



Support for this finding was conveyed by one of the teachers who stated that; "We often receive awards when we achieve academic targets, such as certificates and thanks at meetings. This makes us more motivated to continue innovating." (Ky_24)

Apart from that, a teacher at Nurul Jadid High School said that; "When I successfully carried out a class project, the principal gave me appreciation directly in front of my fellow teachers. This simple thing made me feel appreciated and my enthusiasm for working better." (Nm_24)

The interview results show that appreciation from the school principal plays an important role in increasing teacher work motivation. Awards given, both formally such as certificates and verbally in official forums, create a feeling of being appreciated and

recognized for the efforts that have been made. Appreciation given directly in front of colleagues not only strengthens work morale but also builds a positive and competitive work atmosphere. This shows that recognition of teacher achievements can be an effective encouragement to increase innovation in the learning process.

One teacher said that they often received awards, such as certificates and thank you notes at meetings, after achieving academic targets. This form of appreciation increases their motivation to continue to innovate. Apart from that, another teacher at Nurul Jadid High School stated that the principal gave him direct appreciation for the success of the class project he had implemented. The award given in front of his fellow teachers made him feel appreciated and even more enthusiastic about his work.

Continuous Development to Improve Teacher Competency

Regular training, supervision and mentoring programs help teachers develop pedagogical and professional skills. With ongoing coaching, teachers can update teaching methods, understand the latest curriculum, and improve their ability to evaluate student learning outcomes. This finding was also supported by the statement of one of the teachers who revealed that; "The principal regularly holds training and workshops. We also get feedback after supervision, so we know what needs to be improved." (Sf_24)

Apart from that, a teacher at Nurul Jadid High School revealed that; "As a new teacher, I received mentoring from senior teachers assigned by the principal. This coaching program really helped me improve my teaching skills." (Uh_24)

The results of the interviews show that continuous coaching carried out by school principals through training, workshops and supervision has an important role in improving teacher competence. Feedback given after supervision helps teachers understand deficiencies and aspects that need to be improved in the teaching process. In addition, the mentoring program provided to new teachers through guidance from senior teachers creates a supportive learning environment. This mentoring not only accelerates the adaptation of new teachers, but also improves their teaching skills effectively.

One of the teachers stated that the principal regularly held training and workshops accompanied by feedback after supervision. This helps teachers know aspects that need to be improved in the learning process. Apart from that, a teacher at Nurul Jadid High School revealed that as a new teacher, he received assistance from senior teachers assigned by the school principal. This coaching program is very useful in improving his teaching skills.

The following is documentation regarding ongoing coaching activities aimed at improving teacher competency at Nurul Jadid High School. This activity involves educators in training sessions, discussions and evaluations to develop their professional skills. With this coaching, it is hoped that teachers can continue to improve the quality of teaching and adapt to dynamic educational developments.



Figure 0.1

Participative Leadership to Increase Teacher Collaboration

Principals who involve teachers in decision making create a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. With participative leadership, teachers are more active in discussing, working together in teams, and sharing best practices. This increases cohesiveness between teachers and strengthens collaboration in creating an effective learning environment. This finding was strengthened by a statement from one of the teachers who said that; "The principal always involves us in preparing school programs. We often discuss together to find the best solution for the learning process." (Dh_24)

Apart from that, a teacher at Nurul Jadid High School revealed that; "I am often invited to be involved in planning meetings for school activities. The principal also encourages us to work together in teams, so that relationships between teachers become more solid. We not only discuss the curriculum and learning methods, but also share experiences and look for joint solutions to improve the quality of education. This collaborative work environment makes us more motivated and feel appreciated in every contribution we make" (Ny_24)

The interview results show that the principal applies participative leadership by involving teachers in the decision-making process, especially in preparing school programs. Through joint discussions, teachers feel they have space to convey ideas and actively participate in finding the best solutions for the learning process. In addition, the principal's encouragement of teachers to work together in teams creates a positive, collaborative culture. This not only strengthens relationships between teachers but also increases cohesiveness in implementing school programs together.

One teacher said that the principal always involved them in preparing school programs, including discussing together to find the best solution for the learning process. Apart from that, a teacher at SMA Nurul Jadid revealed that he was often invited to be involved in planning meetings for school activities. The principal also encourages teamwork among teachers, which ultimately strengthens relationships between teachers and increases cohesiveness in running school programs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that principal behavior, such as effective communication, appreciation of teachers, continuous coaching, and participative leadership, has a significant influence on teacher performance. These results are in line with research from (Ahmed & Malik, 2021; LaGree et al., 2023) which confirms that communicative and appreciative leadership increases employee work satisfaction and productivity, including teachers. In addition, research by (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; Tannehill et al., 2021) stated that continuous professional development can improve teachers' pedagogical competence. However, there are differences with research (Maqbool et al., 2024; Pizzolitto et al., 2023) which states that an authoritative leadership style is still effective in certain educational contexts, while the findings at Nurul Jadid High School emphasize the importance of participative leadership. The implications of these findings confirm that school principals who implement positive behavior are able to create a conducive work environment, increase teacher motivation, and ultimately have an impact on better teaching quality.

The results of this research show that positive principal behavior has a functional impact in the form of increasing work morale, collaboration and learning quality. On the other hand, if the school principal does not show effective communication or does not provide appreciation, then dysfunction can occur in the form of decreased teacher motivation, low participation in school activities, and decreased teaching quality. Effective communication creates openness which increases teacher motivation. Appreciation provides recognition of performance, which triggers higher work morale. Ongoing coaching directly improves teaching abilities, while participative leadership builds a sense of ownership that strengthens teamwork.

Principal behavior can be seen as a structure that directly influences teacher performance (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Meyer et al., 2022). Effective communication functions as a bridge of information that clarifies the school's expectations for teachers, so they can work with clear direction (Ganon-Shilon et al., 2023; Gilson & Biggs, 2024). Appreciation acts as a reinforcement that motivates teachers to continue to improve the quality of teaching (F. Zhang, 2022). Continuous development is a means of increasing teacher capacity, so that their competence continues to develop (Sancar et al., 2021; X. Zhang et al., 2021). In addition, participative leadership builds a

collaborative work culture that strengthens relationships between teachers (Buyukgoze et al., 2024; Meyer et al., 2022). This principal's behavioral structure creates a conducive and productive work environment, which ultimately improves the overall quality of learning (Kilag et al., 2023).

This finding is very relevant to the context of Nurul Jadid High School which has religious values and a family-based work culture. Participative leadership is in accordance with the deliberative values applied in this school, thus strengthening the bonds of cooperation between teachers. In addition, appreciation of teachers that is carried out openly reflects appreciation for the teacher's dedication in carrying out their duties. The continuous development program implemented by the school principal is also in accordance with the principles of sustainable education which are part of the school's vision. Therefore, the findings of this research are not only relevant academically but also contextually to the work culture at Nurul Jadid High School

Practically, the results of this research underline the importance of school principals continuing to build open communication, providing regular appreciation and providing structured coaching. This can be used as a recommendation for other school principals to improve teacher performance in their respective schools. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the transformational leadership theory which states that leaders who are able to inspire, motivate and develop their subordinates will improve organizational performance. In addition, this research adds insight into the study of educational management by highlighting the important role of school principal behavior as the main factor in shaping teacher performance.

D. CONCLUSION

The main findings of this research indicate that the principal's behavior, which includes effective communication, appreciation of teachers, continuous coaching, and participative leadership, has a major influence on improving teacher performance. The role of the school principal as a transformational leader is very important in creating a positive work environment, increasing the spirit of collaboration, and encouraging the continuous development of teacher competence. In addition, humanist and participative leadership is able to build a harmonious work culture, which ultimately has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and student achievement. From an educational management perspective, this research confirms that participative leadership is very relevant in the context of schools based on religious values such as SMA Nurul Jadid.

Even though it provides significant contributions, this research has several limitations, such as the scope of the research which was only carried out in one school, so the results cannot be generalized to other schools with different contexts. In addition, teachers' gender and age factors have not been specifically analyzed, which

may influence perceptions of principal behavior. Therefore, further research is needed by considering variations in gender, age and teacher experience, as well as using quantitative survey methods to obtain broader and more measurable data. Future research can also involve more schools with different cultural backgrounds to obtain a more comprehensive understanding and as a basis for more targeted education policies.

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