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by PRIA MITRA PURBA

Submission date: 14-Oct-2023 08:48AM (UTC-0500)

Submission ID: 2156675980

File name: Cek_Sri_Ngayomi,_dkk.docx (38.08K)

Word count: 4202

Character count: 23645

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE DURING THE NEW ADAPTATION PERIOD AT SMPN 1 PERBAUNGAN

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the role of school principals in improving teacher performance during the adaptation period to new habits. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, collecting data from the field, then compiling, analyzing and interpreting, through observation, interviews and documentation studies. The results of this research show that first, school principals have a big role in improving teacher performance during the period of adaptation to new habits. Second, school principals use various effective methods in improving the quality of education. Third, teachers take an active part in implementing the school work program. Thus, the principal as a leader has a big role in the professionalism of the teachers in the school environment he leads. This has an impact on improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Perbaungan, so that it can help the school graduate students with competencies that are able to compete.

Keyword: Adaptation to New Habits, School Principals, Teacher Performance.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di masa adaptasi kebiasaan baru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, pengumpulan data dari lapangan, kemudian disusun, dianalisis dan diinterpretasikan, melalui metode observasi, wawancara dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pertama, kepala sekolah memiliki peranan yang besar dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di masa adaptasi kebiasaan baru. Kedua, kepala sekolah menggunakan berbagai metode yang efektif dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. Ketiga, guru-guru turut aktif dalam melaksanakan program kerja sekolah. Dengan demikian, kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin memiliki peranan yang besar terhadap profesionalisme guru-guru di lingkungan sekolah yang dipimpinnya. Hal ini berdampak pada peningkatan mutu pendidikan di SMP Negeri 1 Perbaungan, sehingga dapat membantu sekolah meluluskan peserta didik dengan kompetensi yang mampu bersaing.

Kata Kunci: Adaptasi Kebiasaan Baru, Kepala Sekolah, Kinerja Guru.

1. INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is a demand for every individual in facing developments in the era with various sophistication of information technology. Focusing on human quality or human resources is an effort to realize the implementation of development in various aspects of human life. In this context, of course the education sector is expected to become the main alternative (priority) for efforts to fulfill the mandate of national independence, namely to make the nation's life more intelligent (Parisma, et.al., 2023). In this way, quality and superior people are achieved for the progress of the Indonesian nation.

Efforts to achieve the realization of quality and superior humans through education in Indonesia indicate the large role of education for humans. Because education is the driving force between humans and their survival (Rohmah, 2017). This shows that humans will not be ready to face the future without education. For this reason, a systematic managerial aspect is needed in managing

education in an institution (Muslimin, 2023). Thus, demands for professionalism on individuals through education must be managed professionally with quality standards and collaborative-competitive implementation.

Quality education to be achieved through schools or educational institutions is not just faced with local competition between Indonesian citizens. But we have been faced with global competition, with the awareness that every individual is a global citizen, who has a central role in the world (Aslamiyah & Abun, 2022). This should be instilled in students in order to increase enthusiasm for learning and self-readiness in responding to the unstoppable global competition that exists, both in the world of education, especially the world of work.

The global challenges that have so far presented a strong current for the development of the world of education, can at least be well anticipated by educational institution administrators. Likewise, since the Covid-19 pandemic occurred, there have been significant changes in every aspect of human life, especially regarding direct interactive distance restrictions (Sahiba, 2022). This certainly presents a new atmosphere that must be responded to adaptively by education stakeholders. Because face-to-face learning has converted to distance learning. Likewise, in the context of direct active learning carried out inside and outside the classroom, conversion to blended learning which combines offline and online learning (Rozi, 2015).

The learning conversion that occurred between pre-Covid-19 and the Covid-19 era presents its own problems for administrators of educational institutions throughout Indonesia, including the Serdang Bedagai Regency area, North Sumatra Province. The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic is certainly not an atmosphere that hinders the implementation of learning in the area, because the government continues to prioritize education, even though it is via online learning platforms (Hasanah, 2022). In this context, school principals have an important and central role in implementing government policies in implementing learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The big challenge experienced by schools is not in the implementation of a curriculum that is not anticipatory for the Covid-19 case, but in the implementation of learning which requires online-based learning methods, strategies and models. School administrators are required to look for alternatives to ongoing (not interrupted) learning to provide to students. In this context, efforts are being made to reduce concerns about "learning loss" or "loss generation" during the emergency situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because, education must be ensured to experience continuity and progress, even though it is faced with various challenges (Syahfitri & Anggeraini, 2022).

In an effort to avoid learning loss and loss generation, the government facilitates the accessibility of students and educators in virtual spaces. This includes providing free credit or free internet packages to educators and students, in order to ease the economic burden on families in responding to online learning. The main aim is to emphasize the government's role in maintaining balance in the academic process and avoiding long-term gaps in access to education for all of the nation's children. Even so, problems still exist, such as internet network problems in some areas, lack of parental

assistance when children use smartphones, and low enthusiasm for children's learning through online learning platforms (Ramadhandi, *et.al.*, 2022).

Seeing the phenomenon that is occurring, the question arises, how can school principals and teachers carry out their duties and responsibilities professionally, so that the quality of education is not lost or decreased, and the performance of these teachers can even increase during the adaptation period to this new habit. As stated by Smith in Nurul, *et.al.* (2022) that performance can be interpreted as work performance, work implementation, work achievements, work results or work performance. This shows the importance of the principal's special attention to teachers.

Observing the importance of teacher performance in creating quality and competitive student competencies and skills and the obstacles faced by teachers in the period of adapting to this new habit, there is great hope for the role of the principal as school manager to be able to encourage teacher performance to be optimal in carry out their duties and responsibilities to achieve the school's vision, namely creating people who are lucky, clean, neat, orderly, superior in achievement, and have noble morals and are environmentally conscious (Hardiyati, *et.al.*, 2022).

Based on this, the role of educational institutions, especially formal education, is very much needed to be able to provide solutions during the period of adaptation to new habits. There are many things that schools can do to increase students' skills by preparing a curriculum that is adapted to emergencies. The existence of local content through distance learning provides a great opportunity for schools to develop students' abilities and skills by empowering the natural resources that exist in the environment where they live.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Management

Management is the art of organizing the educational process (Fadhli, 2017). In this context, education requires systemic management so that it can run according to its respective functions and main tasks. Furthermore, Rabiah (2019) stated that management is carried out in functions including planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating.

Learning management as the "heart of the educational process" requires optimal management from various parties, especially school principals and teachers (Adam, 2021). Because teachers need learning leadership practices to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. The school principal is tasked with managing teacher performance improvement, as well as providing facilities that help teachers improve their personal competence, through workshops or other training (Priyatna, 2017).

Learning that is managed effectively and efficiently produces real outcomes and impacts on the development of human quality (Khorl, 2016). This further confirms the central role of management in the educational process (Subronto, *et.al.*, 2021). Furthermore, implementing management based on existing functions will help make it easier for education stakeholders to provide quality learning. Thus, management is needed to optimize teacher performance and create quality learning.

Teacher Performance

A good teacher is a teacher who is able to create a pleasant learning atmosphere and make students feel comfortable when studying with him (Munawir, *et.al.*, 2022). Then, a teacher with a high personality is a teacher who is able to be a role model for his students, as the saying goes, a teacher is someone who is worth emulating, someone whose advice is listened to, and followed and imitated (Rohman, 2020).

The increase in the quality of education cannot be separated from the role of teachers as the most important element in the entire educational process. Even with a pile of tasks and responsibilities that they carry out, teachers must be able to show that they are capable of producing good performance in order to create quality education (Wardany, 2020). Without the support of good quality teachers, efforts to improve the quality of education will be empty and futile, even if supported by other adequate components (Lailatussaadah, 2015). Therefore, it is natural that currently the government is focusing more on improving the quality and performance of teachers as an effort to improve the quality of education (Kartika & Ambara, 2021).

The progress and decline of a school's performance is determined by the quality of performance of its teachers (Zubair, *et.al.*, 2017). Apart from that, another thing to consider is the motivation received by teachers to improve their performance. If the teaching staff at the school have high motivation in working so as to produce optimal performance, it does not rule out the possibility that the school will have good quality education (Istiarsono, 2018).

3. METHOD RESEARCH

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical study approach (Sugiyono, 2006). The focus of the discussion in this research is the role of the principal in improving teacher performance during the new adaptation period at SMP Negeri 1 Perbaungan. The background of this research is located at Jalan Medan-Tebing Tinggi KM 40 Tualang Perbaungan, Tualang, Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province. Data collection uses observation, interviews and documentation studies methods. Next, it is analyzed using data reduction techniques, data presentation and drawing conclusions. To test the validity of the data using data triangulation techniques (Assingily, 2021).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this research are an answer to the problem of the role of school principals in improving teacher performance in the new adaptation period, the methods/methods used by school principals to improve the quality of education, and the support of teachers in implementing school work programs.

The results of this research show that: first, the planning aspect. Based on the results of observations and interviews regarding planning, it is known that the Principal planned learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic by issuing a policy for preparing Learning From Home/BDR

learning which refers to the Circular Letter of the Regent of Serdang Bedagai Number 18.11/421/1825/2020. This policy will valid until April 18 2020. *"The Regent's decision to extend the period of teaching and learning activities from home for students, educators and education staff was made to minimize the impact of the spread of Corona which is still quite worrying"*.

To be able to fulfill online learning, the school principal formed a curriculum preparation team consisting of the Deputy Principal for Academic Affairs and several subject teachers accompanied by an assignment decree to create an online curriculum during the adaptation period to new habits while still implementing health protocols which in principle prioritize the quality of learning. In this case, a BDR Learning Implementation Plan, Online Learning Module/BDR, online teaching schedule, as well as learning media, learning methods and evaluation methods that are suitable for BDR are produced. Prepare facilities to carry out BDR starting from online teaching rooms for teachers, lockers for collecting assignments, internet, and computers/laptops.

In this case, the school principal has carried out the role of planning to implement online learning/BDR by involving all elements of the school by maximizing the role of each human resource in accordance with their main tasks. Even though there is a reduction in working hours in accordance with Regional Government regulations, teachers and education staff continue to attend school and are absent as usual.

Second, the organizational aspect. Schools are expected to create an organizational structure, determine staffing and determine the duties and functions of each staff member. In accordance with the organizing role, the principal during the online learning / BDR period did not change the school structure, but assigned school personnel to each school program by making a decree on their assignments. From the researcher's explanation and observations, in implementing this online learning the school principal did not make changes to the organizational structure, but instead created a special team in accordance with the school program. So that everyone continues to carry out their role according to their respective duties.

Third, the aspect of providing motivation. Mobilizing staff means motivating teaching staff and also staff through various means so that they can carry out their duties as fully as possible with pleasure. To maximize the performance of education staff and teachers, school principals provide training in the use of online learning media by utilizing internal human resources. The school provides lockers as a place to collect assignments in each class and envelopes to fill in assignments according to each field of study. This is done to make it easier for teachers and students to distribute subject assignments while still implementing health protocols, because the results of assignments that have been assessed will be posted on the wall of each class so that students representing the class can see them when they come to school. So here there is still no direct contact between teachers and students. School principals provide assistance to teachers who teach online by quickly responding to difficulties faced by teachers.

The explanation above shows the efforts made by the school principal to motivate teaching and staff staff to continue carrying out their duties professionally and be ready when faced with various situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic that is currently being experienced. Next, the fourth is the supervision aspect. Supervise, control and guide all staff and school residents. In this case, the school principal supervises all school members through WhatsApp groups, daily reports and direct observations which are carried out continuously, routinely and on a schedule. Monitoring and supervision carried out by school principals is aimed at maintaining the quality of teaching staff and teachers so that they produce performance in accordance with previously determined plans.

Supervision carried out by the school principal applies to all parties in the school environment. Then, if there are problems from their subordinates, this is the role of the principal to provide solutions and direction to the problems or obstacles experienced by their subordinates. The principal also mobilizes all school officials, including students, to participate in carrying out their respective duties and responsibilities. To make the supervision process more effective, the principal is included in every WA group in the school, both in learning classes, extracurricular groups, student groups and other program groups.

In this way, the school principal can provide a quick response if there is a problem in the school environment. The principal routinely greets his subordinates in the WA group and those present at school to observe the behavior patterns of his subordinates, so that they can quickly find out if a problem occurs, whether it is illness, or anxiety, and so on. This is done because this behavior can affect teacher performance in the classroom, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Urge teachers to always be cheerful and happy when dealing with students. From this explanation, the supervisory actions carried out by the school principal can be said to be effective in ensuring that the school is running in accordance with the school's vision and mission. Continuous supervision is carried out by the school principal on a routine and scheduled basis. This is proven by the loyal, friendly and happy attitude shown by the school community towards the principal and the school itself.

Fifth, the evaluation aspect. Evaluate educational processes and outcomes as a basis for improving and growing quality, as well as carrying out problem solving both systematically analytically and creatively solving problems, and avoiding and overcoming conflicts. Considering the teacher's performance which can be seen from planning learning, implementing learning, and evaluating learning, so that if the teacher does not carry out that performance well and according to the rules then the teacher can be considered to have not performed well. Evaluation continues even during the period of adapting to new habits, although nowadays most people expect understanding or tolerance by not maximizing their duties.

The results of interviews and observations by researchers show that the head carried out the evaluation in accordance with his routine and structured planning in accordance with the School Work Plan (RKS) and Annual Work Plan (RKT) that had been determined. Overall, it can be seen that the principal is carrying out his duties according to his role in improving teacher performance, although

there are many obstacles that can hinder teacher performance, but because communication is carried out smoothly by the principal through the media or directly, all problems can be resolved and resolved.

Ways/Methods Used by School Principals to Improve the Quality of Education

In line with the challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0, education is important in determining the quality of human resources. The high level of superiority of a nation is no longer seen from how much natural resources it has, but rather how its human resources can manage its natural wealth in such a way that it can be enjoyed by its people, so it is clear that superior quality human resources are needed in various areas of life (Melisa, *et al.*, 2022).

This human resource advantage is of course obtained from quality education. In this case, the principal asks the teacher to carry out learning tasks in accordance with the online RPP which has been prepared and approved by the principal, the learning media in the school has been fulfilled, such as comfortable classrooms, wifi, literacy hut, pavilion which can be used as a place for discussion and student learning, as well as libraries. During the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers adapted learning to adapt new habits through BDR (Learning From Home) with an online system. So teachers are facilitated to learn using online learning media and methods with several applications such as Wa group, Zoom meeting and Google meet, but what is widely used and agreed upon is Wa Group considering the economic conditions of students at the lower middle level. Until today the learning process has been good and enjoyable.

In the process, BDR learning cannot be separated from various problems from students, teachers and parents. In this case, the school principal appoints guidance and counseling teachers to help find solutions or solve problems effectively and if the guidance and counseling teachers are unable to solve them, they will be transferred to the principal, where later the person with the problem will be called to school and find the best solution so that the process learning continues well.

Improving teacher performance is indeed the main thing, especially in the new adaptation period because teachers are the ones who directly deal with students and parents as students' companions at home during online school. To make it easier for learning to run smoothly, schools facilitate teachers to teach students from school by providing space and wifi, except for teachers who cannot attend school due to reasons approved by the principal. To facilitate the smooth acceptance of student assignments, STUDENT LOCKERS are provided in which plastic envelopes/bags are provided for all fields of study in each class. Here students can submit their assignments by keeping them in an envelope according to their subject and take the next assignment from the teacher at the STUDENT LOCKER, then students can see the results of the assignment evaluation in their respective class's Mading so that with this flow there is no direct contact with the teacher.

The learning system built by SMP Negeri 1 Perbaungan during the adaptation period to new habits can be accepted and interpreted well by the entire school community, including teachers, staff,

students and also students' parents. They feel that this is the best thing to do ²⁵ during the Covid-19 pandemic which still has a significant impact in various areas of life and so that there is no widespread transmission among the community, especially children who are the nation's next generation. Extra-curricular activities such as Scouts, PMR, and Paskibra as well as school pensi and bazaars, national holiday competitions and also religious holiday competitions are still being carried out but while adhering to health protocols.

Based on document studies, interviews and researcher observations, it can be seen how school principals play an active role in improving teacher performance. Apart from facilitating learning, schools also provide opportunities for teachers to improve their competence by involving teachers in training activities held by the Education Department and internally, namely using teachers who have certain skills to share knowledge in schools. This also raises teacher motivation to think and act professionally, so that they are willing to volunteer to become resource persons in their own schools. This shows that the human resource development ³⁰ carried out by the school principal has been implemented.

Teachers' Support in Implementing School Work Programs

Referring to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, article (1) states that teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal education, primary education and secondary education, it is important to improve and develop teacher competency.

¹⁷ Student learning outcomes are influenced by the teacher's competence in delivering teaching materials/materials during the learning process. Limited knowledge in delivering material, both in terms of learning methods and media, will also affect student learning outcomes. In response to this, the school principal seeks ¹¹ to improve teacher performance through MGMP (Subject Teacher Conference), KKG (Teacher Working Group) and other training in accordance with the teacher's field of study and other competencies needed by teachers to improve teacher professionalism.

In response to this, the school principal makes a work plan that must be carried out by all elements of the school, so that the school's vision and mission can be achieved if deemed necessary and can exceed the school's achievement standards. As it is understood that teachers are an extension of the school principal in implementing school programs and regulations, teachers really support all activities related to school programs which must be conveyed to students, because good understanding and meaning of teacher performance will directly shape character. positive students.

¹ From the results of interviews and observations of researchers, the majority of teachers support the principal's instructions/policies to implement school programs as stated in the RKT (Annual Work Plan), especially young teachers who have worked for more than 5 years, and also teachers there are

not many new ones. Meanwhile, senior teachers just follow the principal's policy and carry out according to their abilities.

The support given by teachers to the principal's policies can be said to be good, because the majority of teachers provide support, through classroom learning and extracurricular activities. The challenges faced by school principals in being able to make this policy and work program a success were obtained from senior teachers, they already feel safe with the existing conditions, so getting out of the safe zone is something that is difficult for them to do. To change the habits they have been doing, for example teaching only using conventional models, to change the teaching model using technology they have given up first. To achieve the success of a program, the entire school community must support the program, in this case the school principal also provides solutions for teachers who experience difficulties in the online learning process.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it is concluded that first, school principals have a big role in improving teacher performance in the period of adapting to new habits. Second, school principals use various effective methods in improving the quality of education. Third, teachers take an active part in implementing the school work program. Thus, the principal as a leader has a big role in the professionalism of the teachers in the school environment he leads. This has an impact on improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Perbaungan, so that it can help the school graduate students with competencies that are able to compete.

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