

Implementation of Democratic School Principal Leadership Style in Influencing Teacher Performance to Improve Teacher Competence

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to identify and analyze the implementation of a democratic principal's leadership style in enhancing teacher competence and performance at SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian. **Method:** A descriptive method with a qualitative approach was applied. Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and interviews to gather comprehensive insights into the leadership practices and their impact. **Results:** Findings revealed that the democratic leadership style of the principal significantly influenced teacher performance and competence improvement. The principal actively listened to complaints and suggestions from teachers, fostering open communication. Teachers were encouraged to participate in decision-making processes. Strategies implemented to enhance teacher competence included providing motivation, recognizing achievements through awards, conducting teacher training programs, and supporting teachers in pursuing higher education. **Novelty:** This study highlights the pivotal role of a democratic leadership style in educational settings, specifically in enhancing teacher competence. The emphasis on participatory decision-making and tailored strategies for professional development offers a practical model for leadership in schools aiming for teacher empowerment and performance improvement.

INTRODUCTION

The principal plays a very important role in improving teacher professionalism, teacher performance, and the quality of education in schools. Undoubtedly, the very important role played by the principal as the manager of educational institutions includes designing, organizing, implementing, managing educational staff, and supervising educational programs in schools or madrasahs. The role of a good principal will certainly influence the performance of teachers, making them enthusiastic about doing their work. This creates a sense of security, recognition, and attention given to the teachers [1].

A leader who sees themselves as an integral part of their group is known as a democratic leader. Democratic leadership applied by a superior results in the empowerment and involvement of group members in problem-solving and decision-making together with their superior [2]. In a group, leadership is very important because a leader is responsible for guiding their members to achieve a common goal [3]. According to Gouzali Syadan, some types of democratic leadership behaviors are as follows: prioritizing work between superiors and subordinates, giving subordinates opportunities to advance and develop themselves, considering subordinates as colleagues, not hesitating to mentor subordinates, and transferring knowledge to them [4].

Principals are the people responsible for enhancing program accountability and student success, as well as those responsible for driving school progress and growth [5].

The leadership of the principal must be empowered to ensure that teachers can provide effective teaching to improve the quality and standards of education in the school [6]. In this case, the role of the principal is very important and necessary. To achieve the school's goals, the principal must have a strong foundation and a democratic leadership style. This leadership style should encourage all teachers to fully commit to providing education to students. The principal must also be innovative and creative in improving student quality [7].

Teachers are an important component of the educational environment, and they have a direct relationship with students as both sources and subjects of learning [8]. To obtain a high-quality education, it is important to pay attention to the quality of teachers and their performance while teaching in the classroom. This is important to remember because with qualified and high-performing teachers, students will enjoy lessons and have the opportunity to participate in interesting academic and non-academic competitions [3]. The performance of good teachers will ensure that the school becomes a quality school. To ensure that good teachers succeed, the principal must have the right leadership approach [9].

High-quality teachers can certainly provide effective education, instruction, and training. Teachers are considered capable of encouraging students to maximize their potential and discover their talents and interests [10]. One of the factors that influence student achievement and learning objectives in schools is teacher competence [11].

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data collection was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The approach of this research aims to convey data about the location, actions, processes, and individuals present in the field. This research is located at SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian. A qualitative method is used to obtain specific data, data that contains meaning. In qualitative research, data analysis is conducted interactively and continuously, both during the data collection process and afterward over a certain period. The qualitative data analysis process includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership is a very important role in an organization because they have the ability to influence organizational resources to move and follow directions that align with their desires to achieve the organization's goals [12]. To achieve the school's goals, namely its vision and mission, the principal's leadership style is the attitude, actions, or language used to drive, motivate, manage, design, and implement programs developed together with fellow teachers and all staff members [13]. In a democratic leadership style, a leader involves group members in decision-making and problem-solving through deliberation; the leader also wants to listen to others' opinions and appreciate each member's potential to achieve a goal [14].

At SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian, the author concludes that the principal applies a democratic leadership style. Democratic leadership emphasizes group participation, with the leader centered on group discussions and decisions [2]. This is reinforced by an interview with Mr. Nanang Rouful Akbar, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., Principal of SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian, regarding time discipline rules to prevent teachers and staff from being negligent, such as arriving late to school. If a teacher or staff member does not comply with the regulations, they will be fined five thousand rupiah each day. However, teachers who adhere to the rules will receive a reward. This is based on the input and approval of the teachers and staff and was agreed upon during the Work Meeting at the beginning of the new academic year.

The principal of SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian adopts a leadership style that is firm and polite, does not look down on others, and does not differentiate between the status of teachers. The principal of SD Muhammadiyah patiently attends to the needs of the teachers and staff members. The principal of SD Muhammadiyah strives to foster trust and respect among each other, as well as to understand how staff members make decisions. Because they always hold formal discussions and want to ask about issues related to the school or learning, it can be concluded that the principal is democratic.

The performance of a teacher is the quality and quantity of work achieved by the teacher in carrying out their duties according to their responsibilities as an educator. In other words, teachers must perform their duties as best as they can without giving up [9]. The performance of a teacher can be seen from how the teacher teaches with the professional expertise they possess [15].

Teacher performance improves with the principal's democratic leadership style. With all the facilities and infrastructure available at the school, teachers benefit greatly from classroom learning, and their performance is maximized. Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted by several teachers at the school, we feel greatly assisted in delivering lessons to the children because of facilities and infrastructure such as air-conditioned classrooms. With the presence of air-conditioned classrooms, we as teachers or educators feel comfortable, and this supports our performance.

The principal's democratic strategy in teacher performance to improve teacher competence includes providing teacher discipline training, monitoring and controlling teacher performance, giving motivation, and offering rewards. This is reinforced by an interview with the principal, Mr. Nanang Rouful Akbar S.Pd.I, M.Pd. In enhancing teacher performance and competence, we have implemented various strategies such as providing teacher performance training, discipline training while in the school environment, monitoring and controlling, and offering rewards. With these strategies, the improvement of teacher competence will always proceed well. The principal must possess the skills and competencies necessary to manage the school.

According to interviews conducted with several teachers, the principal of SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian provides opportunities for teachers to continue their education to higher levels. The principal helps teachers adapt to changes in the education world

through training or seminars. And the principal will reward teachers who are highly competent. to increase teacher motivation, things like giving awards and recognition for their work, providing space for innovation, offering guidance and training, granting authority, and giving special attention to teachers [16].

From the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of democratic school leadership can have a significant impact on teacher performance to improve teacher competence. The principal plays an important role among group members, according to the democratic leadership style used in this situation. It has been proven that the democratic leadership style helps teachers, school staff, and even parents work together well. Members feel more engaged and valued when they are involved in the group [17].

In implementing democratic leadership, the principal can effectively develop a teacher's performance. In their efforts to improve the competence and professionalism of teachers, the principal provides motivation, rewards, training to teachers, and support to teachers who wish to continue their education at the next level. This will have a positive impact on the development of teacher performance and the improvement of teacher competence. Additionally, providing various learning tools that meet the needs of teachers for each subject will further encourage teachers to do their best to achieve learning objectives.

The above description illustrates that the implementation of a democratic leadership style by the principal greatly influences teacher performance in enhancing competence. One of the factors that influence the goals of education and learning in schools is the competence of teachers. However, teacher competence does not stand alone, but is also influenced by other factors such as educational background, teaching experience, and length of service [18].

This is in line with the research findings of Faridah, on the influence of the principal's democratic leadership style on teacher competence. This study explains that the principal's democratic leadership style has a positive and significant impact on teachers' pedagogical competence, teachers' personal competence, and teachers' professional competence [19]. Democracy is also defined by protection and security, especially freedom of speech, minority rights, and human rights. With democratic leadership, a democratic work environment can be achieved [2].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study concludes that the democratic leadership style implemented by the principal at SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian significantly influences teachers' performance and competency enhancement. This leadership style fosters active participation among teachers, improves collaboration, and aligns tasks with responsibilities. Strategies such as discipline guidance, performance monitoring, motivation, and rewards are key to this improvement. **Implication :** The findings emphasize the practical and theoretical importance of adopting a democratic leadership

style in schools. Principals can use these insights to create an inclusive environment that enhances teacher performance and competency. Additionally, stakeholders, including supervisors and educational institutions, can leverage these strategies for broader educational development. **Limitation:** The research is contextually limited to SD Muhammadiyah 2 Krian, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. The study also primarily focuses on the role of democratic leadership in teacher competency and does not explore other potential influencing factors. **Future Research:** Future studies could expand on these findings by exploring the effectiveness of democratic leadership styles across various educational levels and settings. Additionally, examining other leadership styles or external factors influencing teacher performance could provide a more comprehensive understanding of educational leadership dynamics.

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