

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS AT SDN 17 SINGKAWANG

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Abstract

This research is based on the phenomenon that improving the quality of education in Indonesia, particularly at SDN 17 Singkawang, requires an effective principal role in improving the performance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. This research focuses on three main aspects of the principal's role in improving PAI teacher performance at SDN 17 Singkawang: (1) planning the principal's role in motivating PAI teachers, (2) implementing the principal's role in improving PAI teacher performance, and (3) evaluating the principal's role in improving PAI teacher performance. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies with the headteacher and PAI teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang as research subjects. The results show that 1) the headteacher's planning at SDN 17 Singkawang to motivate PAI teachers involves the preparation of a comprehensive School Work Plan (RKS), including professional development through training and teacher competency development. 2) In its implementation, the headteacher functions as a supervisor who provides guidance and constructive feedback to Islamic Religious Education teachers. 3) The evaluation conducted showed a significant increase in discipline, creativity, and student learning outcomes, which reflects the effectiveness of the headteacher's role in improving the performance of Islamic Religious Education teachers. The headteacher also actively provides motivation and rewards to teachers for their achievements, as well as developing a harmonious and collaborative working atmosphere among teachers and school staff.

Keywords: Teacher Performance; Islamic Religious Education; Principal's Role

INTRODUCTION

A role means something that is played or carried out (Ministry of National Education, 2014). A role is defined as an activity played or performed by someone who has a position or social status in an organisation. According to terminology, a role is a set of behaviours that are expected to be possessed by those in a position in society. In English, *a role* is defined as "a person's task or duty in undertaking". This means "a person's task or obligation in an endeavour or job". A role is defined as a set of behaviours expected of people with a certain position in society. Meanwhile, a role is an action performed by a person in an event (Torang, 2014, p. 86).

The role of a headteacher is inseparable from leadership qualities. Leadership involves a deep relationship between people who want significant change, and that change reflects the goals shared by the leader and their followers. As Allah SWT says in Q.S. Al-Baqarah/2:124.

وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۗ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ

covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers. 124

Translation: And (remember) when Ibrahim was tested by his Lord with certain words (commands and prohibitions), and he fulfilled them. Allah said: "Verily, I will make you a leader for all mankind." Ibrahim said: "(And I also ask) from my descendants." Allah said: "My promise (this) does not concern the wrongdoers." (Q.S. Al-Baqarah/2:124).

Every person is a leader, and every leader has a different personality. The essence of leadership is decision-making, therefore a leader who is indecisive will also be indecisive in making decisions. Similarly, in organisations or education, whether at the top, middle or bottom levels, one is always faced with decision-making issues that must be determined professionally and proportionally. As explained in a hadith which reads:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Meaning: 'You are all leaders, and you will be asked about what you lead'. (HR. Bukhari).

The main message of this hadith is that leadership cannot be separated from morals. Therefore, leaders must possess the qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, and intelligence. In relation to the role of the headmaster in education, this is a very noble job with great responsibility because the headmaster is the spearhead of the school.

The principal's duty is to provide mental strength to teachers, staff and students. This mental strength encourages interest and enthusiasm for work, and can increase the enthusiasm for learning among teachers and students. The presence of the principal in the midst of their environment is highly desirable as extrinsic motivation, both for students and teachers and employees as work partners (Ambarita, 2015, p. 92).

The principal is responsible for running the school organisation. In addition to being a manager and motivator, the principal also functions as a thinker and developer. Their task in this framework is to think about the progress of the school by building enthusiasm in carrying out their duties at the school. Principals are required to be professional by mastering their work well, exceeding the average of other school personnel, and having a high moral commitment to their work in accordance with their professional code of ethics. As a leader, the principal is a subject who must transform their abilities through guidance, direction, empowerment, or advice to the entire school community to achieve the institution's goals effectively and efficiently (Danim & Suparno, 2009, p. 3).

Islamic education teachers are professional educators tasked with helping students understand Islamic religious material. Islamic education teachers also have two duties, namely the duty to carry out activities at school as educators and teachers, and the duty to equip students with a good understanding of Islamic religious material (the Qur'an and Hadith) about religion. They are characterised by polite, peaceful and gentle attitudes and behaviour (Muchith, 2016).

Based on its social and geographical location, SDN 17 Singkawang is a school located in the Singkawang Tengah District, Jawa Subdistrict. The school's geographical location is very strategic because it is close to the highway and easily accessible by public or private transportation. The school atmosphere is also comfortable and clean. With a large number of students, special attention must be paid to student success, and the role of the principal and teachers is crucial in creating a comfortable and high-achieving school. SDN 17 Singkawang has good potential and talent in education, and the credibility of its teachers and education is growing, producing many graduates who can compete outside the school.

The role of the head teacher in improving the performance of Islamic education teachers is an important aspect of education, especially with regard to learning. According to E. Mulyasa,

the headteacher has the following roles and duties: Educator, Manager, Administrator, Innovator, Motivator, Supervisor and Leader (Mulyasa, 2004, pp. 100 - 115). Of course, this study aims to explore the concept of the headteacher's role and focuses on how the headteacher can improve the performance of Islamic education teachers. This research is an excellent reference for schools, especially for headteachers who want to make changes to their schools. The various strategies implemented by the headteacher of SDN 17 Singkawang can be used as examples by other headteachers to increase teacher motivation and improve overall teacher performance.

This study strongly emphasises the importance of the principal's role in creating a comfortable working environment where teachers feel supported and encouraged because the principal always provides daily motivational guidance, shares learning innovations, and exchanges opinions on education, which are important moments for establishing a good and harmonious relationship between the principal and teachers. As innovators, headteachers must have the right strategies to establish harmonious relationships with their environment, seek new ideas, integrate every activity, set an example for all educational staff at the school, and develop innovative learning models. A good headteacher always uses techniques to motivate, such as recognising and appreciating teachers' efforts, providing opportunities for teacher innovation, setting clear goals and expectations, and cultivating a culture of collaboration. Motivation is a conscious reason given by an individual to the perpetrator, with a conscious or unconscious urge to perform a certain action with a specific purpose (Uno, 2013, p. 3). This strategy aims to inspire and empower teachers, increase their intrinsic motivation, and commitment to their profession.

A strong relationship between the headteacher and teachers based on trust, open communication, and always contributing together can create a harmonious situation where everyone feels represented when discussing the school. The headteacher plays a very important role in fostering this relationship by providing direction, feedback, and support to teachers.

From the events that occurred at SDN 17 Singkawang, the replacement of the old headmaster with the new one, Mr Izhar S.Pd, this elementary school became an interesting moment to study, based on the results of my observations so far. I observed that many students were unable to recite the Quran and some were even unfamiliar with the Hijaiyah alphabet. During prayer time, many students did not know the call to prayer and even short surahs. This indicates that the creativity of Islamic education teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang is not yet optimal, and the methods used in teaching still rely on lectures and blackboards. Monotonous learning can lower students' motivation to learn.

Based on these problems, the principal needs to motivate and encourage Islamic education teachers to develop learning strategies. In order to find solutions to these problems, the principal needs to carry out his role as a leader () in managing and empowering Islamic education teachers to create new innovations to achieve the desired goals. For this reason, the author is interested in further examining several aspects of the role of the principal at SDN 17 Singkawang. The researcher focuses on the role of the principal in relation to Islamic education teachers and their ability to motivate teachers. Therefore, the researcher formulated this study with the title *The Role of the Principal in Improving the Performance of Islamic Education Teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang*.

2. METHOD

The research approach used is qualitative. This study discusses the improvement of Islamic education teachers' performance through the role of the principal. The type of research used is a case study. Setting is defined as the circumstances, location, or place, tools, and background. Thus, the research setting refers to matters related to the environment, place, or area that will be used as the location or object of research. The location of this research is at SDN 17 Singkawang,

precisely on Jalan Bambang Ismoyo, Singkawang Tengah District. In this study, the human data sources (*key informants*) were the principal of SDN 17 Singkawang and the Islamic Education teacher of class IV SDN 17 Singkawang. These two individuals were considered relevant to be used as sources. This is because both are people who are directly related to the focus of the problem to be studied in this research. In this study, non-human data sources consisted of books and scientific journals, data sources and archives, and documents. Lexy J. Moloeng in Kristi explains that the qualitative data analysis process begins with examining all available data from various sources, namely interviews, observations written in field notes, personal documentation, official documentation, photographs, and so on. After reviewing, the next step is data reduction, unit compilation, categorisation, and finally data interpretation (Poerwandar, 2017, p. 143). This study is a qualitative study, therefore, to examine the validity of the data, the researcher uses two techniques, namely *triangulation* and *member checking*.

3. RESULTS

The Role of the Principal

According to Soerjono Soekanto, a role is a dynamic aspect of status. When a person exercises their rights and obligations in accordance with their status, they are performing a role. Meanwhile, status is a set of rights and obligations that a person has. When a person exercises their rights and obligations in accordance with their position, they are performing a function (Soekanto, 2002, p. 243). In the context of this study, role theory can be applied to understand how the principal of SDN 17 Singkawang carries out his role in improving the performance of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers. The principal, as an educational leader, has several roles to perform, both in a managerial context and in shaping social values at school.

The word *kepala madrasah* consists of two words, namely "*kepala*" and "*madrasah*". The word "*kepala*" can be interpreted as "*chairman*" or "*leader*" in an organisation or institution. Meanwhile, "*school*" is an institution where lessons are received and given. From the meaning of these words, a school principal is someone who is assigned by their subordinates to lead a school where the teaching and learning process takes place (Mulyasa, 2004, p. 25).

A headmaster can be defined as the person responsible for the implementation of education, administration, development of educational personnel, utilisation, and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, as well as a supervisor of the teachers under his or her leadership and a career path () from the functional position of teacher. This definition is not much different from Wahjosumidjo's definition, namely as a functional teacher who is assigned to lead a school where the teaching and learning process takes place, or a place where interaction occurs between teachers who give lessons and students who receive lessons (Wahjosumidjo, 2011, p. 81).

Teacher Performance

Teachers are an important component in the educational process. Teachers are sales agents of educational institutions. Teachers are considered key to the success of an educational institution. Teachers are educational personnel who carry out their duties competently and professionally. Teachers do not only teach or transfer knowledge. Teachers are also required to be able to provide guidance, set an example, train students, serve the community, and perform other administrative tasks (Masrum, 2021, p. 1).

Performance is a translation of the English word "*performance*". The word "*performance*" comes from the word "*to perform*", which means to demonstrate or carry out. *Performance* means work achievement, work implementation, work accomplishment, work or work performance. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, performance is something that is achieved, a demonstrated achievement, or work ability. In the training material "Teacher Performance Assessment" published by the Directorate of Education Personnel, performance is a form of behaviour of a person or organisation with a focus on achievement (Barnawi & Arifin, 2012, p. 11).

The performance referred to is performance that is expected to have or produce good quality while still achieving the desired results. A job must be evaluated in terms of the level of consistency achieved and the amount of work completed according to schedule (Syamsudin, 2019, p. 56). Teachers must be able to plan lessons, write objectives, present lesson material, ask questions to students, teach concepts, communicate with students, observe the class, and assess learning outcomes.

From the above opinions, it can be concluded that teacher performance is the results achieved by teachers in carrying out the learning tasks assigned to them, as seen through learning planning activities, learning implementation, learning assessment implementation, and follow-up on assessment results.

Islamic Religious Education

Education is a cultural process to improve human dignity and character, and it lasts throughout life, carried out in the family, school and community environments. Therefore, education is a shared responsibility between the family, community and government. Education in the process of achieving its goals needs to be managed in an integrated and harmonious system.

Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognise, understand, appreciate, and believe in the teachings of Islam, accompanied by the requirement to respect followers of other religions in the context of interfaith harmony so as to achieve national unity and integrity. According to Tafsir, "Islamic education is guidance given by one person to another so that they can develop to their full potential in accordance with Islamic teachings" (Tafsir, 2008, p. 32). Meanwhile, according to Nata, "Islamic education is an effort to consciously and deliberately guide, direct, and nurture students in order to develop a personality that is in accordance with Islamic values" (Nata, 2009, p. 340).

The Role of the Principal in Improving the Performance of Islamic Education Teachers

The role of the principal in improving the performance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is a crucial aspect that has a broad impact on the quality of religious education in schools. This narrative will be developed by describing in more depth the various roles and their implementation in daily practice at school.

Planning the role of the principal in motivating Islamic education teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang

Careful planning is a crucial foundation for developing the quality of education. The principal, as the leader of the school, plays a major role in developing programmes that are oriented towards improving the quality of teaching and developing teacher competencies. In this context, the principal is not only responsible for administrative planning but also for designing activities that can motivate teachers and students.

At SDN 17 Singkawang, the principal developed a School Work Plan (RKS) that included various short, medium and long-term programmes based on the results of the previous year's evaluation. This programme involved all relevant parties, especially teachers, in the process of reflection and the formulation of strategic steps to be taken in the following year. The principal also facilitates professional development for teachers through training tailored to curriculum development needs, such as training in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The principal ensures that every programme implemented focuses not only on physical facilities but also on teaching quality, which affects the competence of PAI teachers in delivering material to students.

This is in line with Sani's 2023 research, which revealed that the principal at SMPN 1 Manggeng manages programmes that involve teachers in the planning and evaluation process. The study found that the preparation of school work plans (RKS) that directly involved teachers created their involvement in decision-making, which ultimately improved the quality of teaching.

Principals have an important role in planning and ensuring that these programmes are in line with broader educational goals (Sani, 2023).

The preparation of the RKS involving teachers and transparent annual evaluations are very important first steps in creating better quality education. The principal at SDN 17 Singkawang has performed this role well, as seen in how they continuously evaluate and improve work programmes to achieve long-term educational goals.

The implementation of the principal's role in improving the performance of Islamic education teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang

The principal not only plays a role in administrative management but also in supervising teachers. This supervision serves to ensure that the learning process runs in accordance with the objectives that have been set and to improve the overall quality of teaching. As a supervisor, the principal must provide guidance to teachers to help them identify their strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.

The principal at SDN 17 Singkawang conducts supervision that not only focuses on assessing teacher performance but also aims to improve teaching techniques through constructive feedback. The principal visits classrooms and provides direct guidance to PAI teachers, including on the use of more effective learning methods. As part of professional development, the principal also facilitates teacher participation in Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and off-site training. These activities encourage teachers to continue developing their competencies, both in terms of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Research by Nurhadi in 2022 shows that supervision by the principal plays an important role in improving the quality of learning in the classroom. In this study, the headteacher supervised by providing continuous guidance to teachers, which improved the quality of their teaching (Ali, 2022, p. 9). This is very similar to the findings at SDN 17 Singkawang, where the headteacher prioritised supervision that supported and guided teachers to continue to develop.

Effective supervision is not only about monitoring, but also about guiding and providing opportunities for teachers to develop. The principal at SDN 17 Singkawang successfully carried out this role by providing much-needed support in the professional development of teachers, which in turn improved the quality of teaching and learning.

Evaluation of the role of the principal in improving the performance of Islamic education teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang

Evaluation is an important step in measuring the effectiveness of the programmes that have been implemented, as well as determining the necessary improvement measures. In the context of education, evaluation includes not only the assessment of teachers but also the learning outcomes of students resulting from the teaching process. The principal must regularly evaluate student learning outcomes to ensure that the quality of learning provided by teachers has a positive impact on the achievement of educational goals.

An evaluation at SDN 17 Singkawang showed a significant improvement in student discipline, creativity, and learning outcomes. The principal monitors teacher performance and student learning outcomes through summative evaluations and End-of-Year Assessments (PAT). The results of these evaluations show a significant increase in Islamic education (PAI) scores, as reflected in the development of student scores from year to year. The principal also identifies areas for improvement, both in terms of teaching methods and classroom management, to continue to improve the quality of learning.

Sani's 2023 research also shows that evaluating teacher performance and student learning outcomes is an important aspect in determining the effectiveness of principal supervision (Sani, 2023). Regular evaluations help principals to see the extent to which the programmes

implemented have succeeded in improving the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. This research supports the findings at SDN 17 Singkawang, where continuous evaluation plays a major role in improving student learning outcomes and overall teaching quality.

The evaluation conducted by the principal at SDN 17 Singkawang resulted in a significant improvement in student learning outcomes. With a structured evaluation, the principal can monitor the progress of teachers and students and determine the steps that need to be taken for further improvement. This evaluation process is important to ensure that educational goals are achieved properly and continue to improve from year to year.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, the following are conclusions related to the role of the principal in improving the performance of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang: The principal at SDN 17 Singkawang made careful plans to motivate PAI teachers by compiling a School Work Plan (RKS) that included short, medium, and long-term programmes. The preparation of this SWP involves all teachers in the process of socialising and reflecting on the programmes that have been implemented previously. The principal also pays special attention to the professional development of teachers, such as by holding training relevant to the needs of teacher competency development, including the Teacher Working Group (KKG) programme.

The principal's role in improving PAI teachers' performance is clearly evident through direct supervision of the learning process. The principal not only acts as a supervisor but also as a mentor who provides guidance to improve teachers' teaching techniques. This supervision focuses on improving the quality of learning and providing space for teachers to develop creativity in teaching. In addition, the principal actively motivates and rewards teachers who excel, both in the form of praise and good evaluation scores. Discipline and creativity in teaching are also taken into account, by ensuring that teachers arrive on time and teach according to the predetermined schedule.

The evaluation of PAI teachers' performance is carried out continuously through summative evaluation results and the End of Year Assessment (PAT). The principal monitors changes in teachers' discipline, creativity, and learning quality. This evaluation shows a significant improvement in teacher discipline, as reflected in their punctuality and teaching in accordance with the schedule. In addition, teacher creativity has also increased, with the application of innovative approaches in teaching, such as integrating students' daily habits, such as praying before eating, into the learning process. The results of the student evaluation also show an increase in PAI learning scores, reflecting the effectiveness of the learning strategies implemented by teachers. All of this shows that the evaluation conducted by the principal has succeeded in having a positive impact on the quality of education provided by PAI teachers at SDN 17 Singkawang.

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