

The Role of Principal Competencies in Enhancing Educational Quality at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto

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ABSTRAK

Educational quality improvement is a key priority influenced significantly by the principal's role as an educational leader. Principals function not only as administrators but also as transformational leaders who drive synergistic efforts to achieve institutional goals. This study analyzes (1) the role of principal competencies in enhancing educational quality at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto, and (2) the implications of these competencies. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, deputy principal for curriculum, and educators. Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, with verification conducted via source and technical triangulation. The findings reveal that the principal plays a strategic role in fostering a conducive learning environment, improving staff performance, and building a culture of excellence. (1) The principal's role in quality enhancement is manifested through three interconnected competencies: Personality, Managerial, and Entrepreneurial. These roles directly impact the fulfillment of the National Education Standards concerning content, process, and graduate competence. (2) The implications are significant, leading to systematic curriculum implementation, directed innovation in program management, and maximized student potential.

Keywords: *Role; Principal Competence; Educational Quality.*

INTRODUCTION

Schools are institutions that require effective leadership to manage and direct personnel toward achieving institutional goals (Farah Sabrina dkk., 2020). The principal is the central determinant of institutional success. The Minister of Education Regulation No. 13 of 2007 established five core competencies required of principals: Personality, Managerial, Entrepreneurial, Supervisory, and Social. These competencies are foundational to educational leadership and are necessary for the principal to effectively plan, organize, mobilize, and regulate teachers to ensure good performance (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia Nomor 13 Tahun 2007).

The principal's leadership is crucial for coordinating, mobilizing, and harmonizing all educational resources to realize the school's vision, mission, and goals (Ismuha et al., 2016). The principal is required to possess adequate managerial and leadership skills to initiate and implement quality improvements (Ismuha dkk., 2016, hlm. 46-55.) In this research context, principal competence is defined as the ability to coordinate and mobilize all educational resources across the five core dimensions of the 2007 regulation (Safrizal dkk., 2024).

Educational quality is achieved when all components (input, process, output, teachers, facilities, funding) are well-organized and fully supported by the principal (Wiyatno & Mulyadi, 2013). Educational quality is an evaluation of the educational process aimed at maximizing student potential while meeting established accountability standards for input (Juliantoro, 2017), process, and output (Harliansyah & Amon, 2022). Quality assurance focuses on the eight National Education Standards (Mujib & Rudi Wijaya, 2022).

A preliminary study indicated that the principal of SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto exhibits strong personal competency, primarily embodying the Javanese principle of “*Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani*” (Lead by example, build motivation in the middle, give encouragement from behind) (Ki Hadjar Dewantara). This principle is applied across all five competency areas: personality, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social.

Regarding quality improvement, the school utilizes the national PMM Application (*Platform Merdeka Mengajar*) for monitoring and recording educational quality. The PMM application processes data on character, environment, and education, generating a quality report card (*raport mutu pendidikan*) used to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. The principal evaluates quality by analyzing the PMM report card and conducting annual evaluation meetings comparing plans and results. Quality improvement involves a systematic approach: identifying problems, setting targets and indicators, and comparing them with reality. The biggest challenge currently faced is the rapid and constant change in educational policy. The school's human resources struggle to keep pace with the pace of policy evolution. The principal's solution is swift response: anticipating and informing staff before policy changes occur, adhering to the principle that institutions must adapt to prevailing policies rather than avoiding the challenges they present. Based on the theoretical background and preliminary findings, this research seeks to analyze in depth the role of principal competencies in improving educational quality at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto.

METODE

Subjects of Research

The data for this study were obtained from statements, both written and oral, provided by key informants to ensure the validity and accuracy of the findings. The research subjects were: (1) The Principal of SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto. (2) The Deputy Principal for Curriculum Affairs. And (3) An Educator (Teacher).

Instruments and Interview Questions

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative approach. This method is used to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the status of a phenomenon as it

exists in the field. Consequently, the research instrument centered on a set of interview questions aligned with the research objectives: (1) How do you demonstrate your Personality Competency in leading the school?, (2) What Managerial approach do you use in school administration and management to ensure educational quality?, (3) How do you view the importance of Entrepreneurial Competency in enhancing educational quality?, (4) How do you ensure the curriculum (Content Standard) implemented meets student needs and educational developments?, (5) What actions do you take to ensure the learning process (Process Standard) is effective and high-quality?, (6) How do you monitor and assess the achievement of Graduate Competencies?, (7) Based on your experience, what is the combined role of your Personality, Managerial, and Entrepreneurial Competencies in improving educational quality?, and (8) What, in your opinion, are the long-term implications of the principal's role in the development and progress of education at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto?.

Data Collection

Data collection from the field utilized triangulation of methods to ensure the reliability of the findings: (1) Observation: Direct observation of the school environment, administrative processes, and learning activities to understand the real-world context. (2) In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews conducted with the three key informants to gather rich, detailed qualitative data. (3) Documentation: Reviewing relevant official documents, such as school policies, curriculum records, and quality report cards (e.g., from the PMM Application).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, supported by interviews and observations, confirm the strategic and multifaceted role of the principal's competencies in driving educational quality at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto. The analysis focuses on three core competencies: Personality, Managerial, and Entrepreneurial, and their direct implications for the school's performance against National Education Standards.

The Role of Principal Competencies in Quality Enhancement, Managerial and Entrepreneurial Competence to Establishing Systematic Governance

The principal's Personality Competence serves as the moral and professional standard for educators, staff, and students. The principal is observed to adopt a humanistic approach, providing guidance and direction through empathy and understanding rather than authoritarianism. This is exemplified by the application of the Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha principle, where the leader acts as a role model. Collectively, the principal's strong personality fosters a positive and supportive work culture, which, in turn, enhances the overall performance and quality of education (see Table 1).

Managerial Competence is pivotal in the systematic governance of administration, curriculum, and learning activities. The principal employs a humanistic management style characterized by mentorship and clear communication. The study found that the principal effectively coordinates curriculum planning, which is deemed systematic and realistic. Regular meetings ensure continuous monitoring of instruction execution. Furthermore, managerial policies are strategically aligned with the school's operational duties and needs, demonstrating effectiveness in supporting the learning process and task distribution, thereby significantly contributing to the achievement of the school's vision and mission.

The principal's Entrepreneurial Competence plays a strategic role in enhancing educational quality by fostering innovation and self-reliance. This competence is characterized by a clear vision, a strong spirit for creating opportunities, and the ability to leverage technology and external collaborations. Concrete examples include initiating digital literacy programs, managing the school's website and YouTube channel, and developing project-based curricula. These innovative endeavors not only enrich the educational experience but also successfully build a positive image of the school within the community, thus strengthening the quality of graduates.

Impact on Educational Quality Standards

The principal's strategic role ensures the curriculum aligns with national Content Standards and students' developmental needs. Through routine coordination meetings, facilitation of training via the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM), and instructional supervision, the principal motivates teachers to develop contextual, adaptive, and relevant materials.

The principal also maintains the quality of the Process Standard by actively promoting professional development (e.g., PMM training) and continuous evaluation. The PMM application is utilized as a supervisory and monitoring tool with clear success indicators. Crucially, the principal grants teachers the freedom to innovate within their domains, resulting in a more effective and creative learning environment.

Finally, the principal actively ensures the achievement of the Graduate Competency Standard, aligning student outcomes with the national curriculum, the school's vision, and the demands of the workforce or higher education. Graduate competencies are specifically oriented towards religious values (e.g., noble character and faith), monitored through regular student prayer activities and quarterly evaluations with homeroom teachers. This demonstrates the principal's position as a committed instructional leader.

Implications of Principal Competencies

The competent role of the principal at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto yields significant and positive Implications for educational quality. The principal's combined competencies (Personality, Managerial, and Entrepreneurial) successfully establish a collaborative and adaptive learning culture, positioning the principal as a role model of professional consistency and vision.

This robust leadership translates into tangible results: increased quality of educators, improved educational services, and higher student achievement. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial initiatives enhance the school's public image, leading to increased community trust and appeal. These achievements collectively support the successful fulfillment of the three main educational standards: content, process, and graduate competence.

The long-term implication is the creation of a dynamic and quality-driven educational system. Leadership that is visionary, collaborative, and responsive to challenges (such as policy changes and resource limitations) ensures that SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto remains an institution committed to continuous improvement in educational service quality across all aspects, both academic and character-building.

Tabel 1. The Role of Principal Competencies in Quality Enhancement

No.	Competency	Observational Finding	Link to Educational Quality Improvement
1	Kepribadian	Kepala sekolah disiplin hadir tepat waktu, bersikap ramah, serta memberi keteladanan dengan prinsip “Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani”.	Membentuk budaya sekolah yang positif, meningkatkan kedisiplinan guru & siswa sehingga mendukung standar proses pembelajaran.
2	Manajerial	Kepala sekolah menyusun Rencana Kerja Sekolah (RKS) secara partisipatif, memanfaatkan aplikasi PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar) untuk monitoring mutu, serta mengadakan rapat evaluasi berkala.	Menjamin keterlaksanaan kurikulum, menjaga kesesuaian dengan standar isi, dan meningkatkan ketercapaian standar kompetensi lulusan.
3	Kewirausahaan	Kepala sekolah menginisiasi program literasi digital, bazar kewirausahaan siswa, serta cepat merespons perubahan kebijakan pendidikan.	Mendorong inovasi pembelajaran, meningkatkan daya saing siswa, serta memperkuat standar kompetensi lulusan.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the role of principal competencies in enhancing educational quality at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto, it is concluded that the principal's success is determined by the effective interplay of three core competencies. First, Personality Competence is crucial as it establishes the principal's character, integrity, and personal qualities as a role model for the entire school community. Second, Managerial Competence provides the strategic ability to manage all aspects of the school organization professionally and systematically, ensuring operations

are oriented toward continuous quality improvement. Third, Entrepreneurial Competence drives innovation by enabling the principal to identify opportunities and manage resources to enhance the school's independence and competitiveness. These three competencies collectively ensure that the quality of education at SMAN 1 Pacet Mojokerto meets the required Content Standard, Process Standard, and Graduate Competency Standard.

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