

## Principal competency model development: Phenomenological design with coaching techniques in Sekolah Penggerak

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**ABSTRACT.** *Sekolah Penggerak* is one of the best episodes of the many *Merdeka Belajar* episodes. A separate curriculum known as *Kurikulum Merdeka* was prepared to support the program. The change in the principal's competency model then became one of the unique phenomena in the curriculum change. The facts reveal that school principals cannot adapt quickly to this phenomenon, so this study aims to help school principals adapt more quickly to changes in competency models with coaching techniques. This study uses a phenomenological design because it wants to know the experiences that principals experience regarding the use of coaching techniques in responding to the phenomenon of changing competency models. The participants were three principals (51-55 years old) with 2-5 years of experience as principals. The instruments used are coaching questions developed in *Sekolah Penggerak*. Data is collected online through Google Meet and analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The study results then revealed that coaching techniques could to assist school principals in developing a model of school leadership competence, especially self-development and other people's development, as well as learning leadership. This study also hopes that the principal will actively involve parents or guardians of students as mentors and learning resources.

**Keywords:** *Principal competency model, phenomenological design, coaching*



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### INTRODUCTION

*Sekolah Penggerak* (SP) is one of the 11 episodes of *Merdeka Belajar* (MB) proposed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in Indonesia. SP is included in the 7th episode of the series (Syafi'i, 2021). SP is a school that emphasizes developing student learning outcomes holistically to realize the *Pancasila Student Profile* starting with principals and teachers who excel in competence and character (Patilima, 2021). The government carried out various strategies to realize the creation of SP. For teachers, the government, in the 5th episode of MB, launched the *Guru Penggerak* (GP) (Faiz & Faridah, 2022). As for principals, the government accommodates them in the form of SP. The government carries out a strict, accountable, and transparent selection to attract principals. They have a strong commitment and motivation to make changes in the education unit. Academic units whose principals are declared to have passed the selection are then entitled to the status of SP (Mariana, 2021).

Some researchers then carried out various studies related to principals to reveal how to develop principals' competence. Nurwati (2015) used the library method combined with the observation method to reveal strategies for strengthening school principals' leadership in



Indonesia in the *intra* and extra school scope. The study revealed that to become an exemplary principal is to use some steps: increasing the principal's competence, managing resources, motivating students and teachers, collaborating with the world of work, and developing school productivity. Sobri (2018) uses a literature study to examine strategies for strengthening the competence of principals to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The study revealed that if the principal can carry out his primary duties and functions well, it can be ascertained that the activities carried out by the principal have the school community's support to improve the quality of education in the school. Neal et al. (2020) used survey research to increase principal participation in the USA by providing incentives and follow-up when filling out a questionnaire. The study showed that the provision of more incentives to school principals did not significantly affect the principal's participation in filling out the questionnaire.

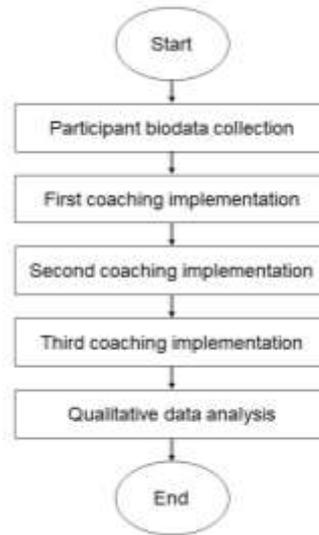
If further analyzing previous research, most of them tend to use literature and survey methods, so the phenomenon of strengthening a principal's competence is not optimally explored, and interaction between researchers and principals tends to be less. In addition, none of these studies attempted to provide treatment so that the competence of principals increased. In other words, the questions related to developing the competence of principals cannot be answered by these studies. Coaching techniques were also not used in these studies. This technique can be used as a form of treatment that can improve the competence of school principals. One method that is quite relevant to examining the phenomenon of strengthening principals' competence is phenomenology because this method can describe the competence of principals in depth. Moreover, the competency model owned by principals in SP has changed. In addition, no previous research had examined SP because the research was carried out before the MB program existed and was carried out outside Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to accelerate the development of the principal competency model in SP by using coaching techniques.

## METHOD

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design (Isnawan et al., 2022). This type was chosen. After all, it is pretty relevant to this study because it tries to describe a person's experience of a phenomenon (Dangal & Joshi, 2020). In this case, the person referred to is the principal, and the phenomenon refers to strengthening and changing the competency model owned by principals in SP. In obtaining data, this study uses a coaching technique using the GROW flow (Thipatdee, 2019). This technique is used because it effectively explores current conditions, joint conditions, and what the principal must do to achieve the expected conditions (Musta et al., 2020). The basis for conversation or question-and-answer is a principal, so strengthening principals' competence is based on consideration of individual conditions. The coaching questions used in this study have used standard questions developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. In other words, the evidence for the validity and estimation of the instrument's reliability is sufficient.

Because this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, coaching for principals was carried out online, namely through Google Meet. The recorded conversation then became the primary data used by researchers in analyzing the results. The data analysis technique was carried out using qualitative data analysis consisting of condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Triangulation of data collection time by taking data repeatedly three times for each participant is one way to strengthen trustworthiness in research (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Research ethics was also put forward in this study by asking principals for permission to do coaching without mentioning the identity of principals' names and not forcing principals to disclose information that they did not want to be disclosed (Dooly et al., 2017). The participants in this study were three principals at the Driving School for the junior high school level. All school principals are male, aged 51 to 55 years. Their educational

background is two bachelors in English education and 1 degree in science education. The range of participants' experiences as principals is 2 to 5 years. This research's series of activities can be seen in detail in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Research procedure

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

As previously explained, coaching in this study was carried out three times. The following are the results of the first coaching for each principal.

#### **First Coaching**

Principal A has two notes regarding the agenda for this first coaching, namely the coaching plan for the next three months and the coaching log. In the next three months, Principal A wants to develop a community of practitioners at the school level. As for the measure of achievement of these targets, members of the practicing community understand differentiated learning and how to develop differentiated teaching modules. If it is associated with the category of principal competence in SP, Principal A tends to want to develop the competence category for self-development and others. To carry out the targets and develop competence, principals need the support of the local government, especially the Education and Culture Office, so as not to transfer teachers to the SP. In addition, Principal A also requires the commitment of the school committee to attend school activities when he gets an invitation so that parents or community leaders do not feel alien to school activities or programs.

In his coaching notes regarding the new learning paradigm, Principal A revealed several essential points in common with the prepared plan, namely differentiated learning. According to Principal A, the community of practitioners can be a forum for teachers to learn about the new learning paradigm. According to Principal A, several important things in the new paradigm of learning are assessments, such as diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Principal A also said that teachers at the school always compile weekly performance reports every week. Like the follow-up plan, Principal A expects support from the local government, school committees, and expert trainers so that school programs related to the community development of practitioners are optimal. Principal A also plans to follow up on learning the new paradigm.

In the coaching plan, Principal B plans to strengthen human resources in schools, especially teachers. As for some of the indicators, schools can carry out organic waste processing workshops as a provision for teachers to carry out projects to strengthen the *Pancasila Student Profile*. In addition, Principal B plans to hold a workshop on administrative completeness related to new paradigm learning, especially teaching modules. Principal B also plans to carry out technical guidance related to digital-based learning. In terms of principal competencies, Principal B plans to develop learning leadership competencies with the hope that teachers will be able to make plans, implement plans, reflect, and improve learning activities. In order to carry out the plan and development of learning leadership competencies, Principal B needs support from the Environmental and Hygiene Service as partners in carrying out workshops on organic waste. Expert trainers as resource persons in workshops on preparing the new paradigm of learning administration completeness. Teachers who have participated in digital-based learning as resource persons in digital-based learning technical guidance activities at the school level. In the coaching notes related to the new learning paradigm, the principal discussed matters that could support the development of learning leadership competencies. Such as strengthening human resources, which was quite substantial, the new paradigm of learning referring to digital-based and differentiated learning, and the project to strengthen the *Pancasila Student Profile*, which will focus on processing organic waste. Principal B revealed that there is quite a lot of organic waste in the school because it has many large trees.

In the coaching plan, Principal C revealed that he wants to improve the quality of teachers in learning in the next three months. Some indicators of the achievement of the plan are principal C conducting supervision, monitoring, and evaluation related to teacher learning. Principal C invites teachers to observe student-centered learning conducted by model teachers and asks teachers to play an active role in subject teacher deliberation activities. Principal C needs teachers, especially model teachers, as examples of implementing student-centered learning so that the plans run smoothly. In addition, supervisors for supervisors and expert trainers are expected to provide support by attending supervision activities and monitoring and evaluating learning in schools. Like the coaching plan, Principal C in the coaching log also discussed that student-centered learning would be able to form when the principal fixes the quality of teachers. Teachers are expected to be able to apply differentiated learning and share good practices at the Subject Teacher Deliberation forum in SP.

## **Second Coaching**

In the second coaching, the researcher confirmed the principal's plan and identified the obstacles that the principal experienced. The following is a description of the results of the second coaching. There are several vital points in the conversation told by Principal A. The development of the community of practitioners has been running. However, its members are still limited to the learning committee because, until that time, Principal A has not clearly understood who the members of the practitioner community are. According to the principal, the existing practitioner community will be the pioneer for forming a larger practitioner community. Principal A also took the initiative to collaborate with universities to become members of the community of practitioners.

In the coaching session, Principal A also discussed other things outside the practitioner community, such as teachers' workload on the latest government regulations. Principal A revealed that art subjects were not included in *DAPODIK*, so it was difficult to pay for certification. Principal A also revealed that the practitioner community is expected to understand the implementation of diagnostic assessments and how to develop differentiated teaching modules. Principal A, in his conversation, revealed that principals need expert trainers to provide input regarding how to carry out diagnostic assessments and differentiated learning. In response to this plan, Principal A then plans to develop self-understanding of the community of practitioners and develop the community of practitioners to become more extensive and more

varied. Principal A is also committed to holding follow-up discussions with expert trainers regarding diagnostic assessments and preparing differentiated teaching modules.

Regarding the plans that have been prepared in the first coaching, Principal B has organized one of the plans, namely an organic waste processing workshop. The workshop has reached the stage of the project to strengthen the *Pancasila Student Profile* with the theme of organic waste. Meanwhile, the other two agendas planned by the principal have not yet been implemented. The busyness of Principal B and teachers in the past month. However, in this session, Principal B began to divide the agenda or plan into several small plans. On this coaching opportunity, the principal plans to hold a communication information technology workshop in the first and second weeks of December 2021 as a follow-up to achieve digital-based learning.

Regarding learning the new paradigm, Principal B also plans to carry out a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment related to student learning styles and interests in the third week of December 2021 to realize an in-depth understanding of human resources regarding the new paradigm of learning. Furthermore, Principal B also plans to carry out a cognitive diagnostic assessment and the preparation of differentiated teaching modules in the fourth week of December 2021 as one of the embodiments of learning the new paradigm.

Principal B then expects support from the school's information technology team so that they can become resource persons in the information and communication technology workshop. The workshop targets all teachers in the school as participants. For diagnostic assessment activities, Principal B expects support from expert trainers and several education experts at universities as resource persons in diagnostic assessment activities and the preparation of teaching modules. In essence, Principal B in this session plans to continue the plan and realize it so that the plans that have not been implemented run according to the predetermined schedule. Principal B will also look for the university to make a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) assist in understanding the new paradigm of learning.

There is one plan that has been carried out by Principal C, namely supervision and monitoring of learning for teachers. Principal C has carried out these activities together with the school supervisor. Principal C shows the supervision and monitoring report to implement these activities. Two plans have not been implemented this month: inviting teachers to observe student-based learning and teachers being actively involved in the implementation of subject teacher deliberations. These two plans have not been implemented due to the schedule or agenda of the principal, and teachers are full. Although the teachers who will become model teachers have been determined by Principal C. Regarding the subject teacher consultation, Principal C plans to coordinate with the subject teachers in SP to follow up on the plan. Principal plans to carry out subject-teacher deliberation activities after the end of semester exam activities.

Like the previous principal, Principal C has also made several derivative plans from the plans that have been prepared. Principal C plans to conduct a diagnostic assessment in December 2021 because that is the final month for the odd semester. Principal C also plans to conduct workshops on preparing of teaching modules to follow up on the diagnostic assessment results. Both of these plans are expected to be completed before the teacher observes the implementation of student-centered learning. Regarding the *Pancasila Student Profile* strengthening project, Principal C plans to implement the *BLOK* system, which will be implemented after the end of semester exam activities. The principal will also plan MoUs with universities to strengthen their understanding of the new learning paradigm. Because of the plans that have not yet been implemented, Principal C then hopes for support from the management of the subject teacher deliberations so that these activities in SP can run optimally. In addition, Principal C expects expert trainers to be able to provide input to schools regarding the implementation of new paradigm learning or student-centered learning.

### Third Coaching

In the third coaching session, Principal A revealed that the community of practitioners had been running. However, not optimally because the deliberation of subject teachers in SP has not run optimally. Principal A, in this session, also revealed that in the following months, Principal A would focus on developing differentiated teaching modules. Principal A plans to hold a teaching module workshop so that at least the learning committee can develop its teaching modules related to the subjects being taught. He was considering that the subject teacher deliberations in SP have not run optimally. Principal A hopes that the subject teacher deliberations will immediately activate activities so that the subject teacher deliberations in schools can develop optimally. Sharing good practices is something that, according to Principal A is considered good enough so that teachers can develop learning optimally.

In this session, Principal B revealed that the workshops for learning new paradigms and technical guidance for digital-based learning had not been carried out due to school activities at the end of the year. Principal B then committed to carrying out these activities in the third week of December 2021. Principal B also, in this session, discussed the previous workshop activities. Principal B realizes that there are various types of data in schools that can be used as data to improve the quality of learning. Principal B then committed to creating a team tasked with collecting and analyzing various data sources. The support needed by Principal B is supervisors and expert trainers who can act as resource persons in the new paradigm learning workshop activities. The ability of a teacher to be a resource for digital-based learning. In addition, the learning committee must be willing to participate in workshops and technical guidance for digital-based learning and teachers to become team members.

Principal C, in this conversation, discussed several things, such as the principal would hold a subject teacher deliberation activity in the third week of December 2021. Principal C also revealed that teachers would conduct observation activities to implement student-centered learning in the first week of January 2022. Several planned activities could not run optimally due to teachers' busy schedules in December 2021, which coincided with the end-of-semester exams and report card filling. The project to strengthen the *Pancasila Student Profile* has been going well. Only about 30% of the project has not been implemented. Principal C also plans to carry out a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment in December 2021, which is designed with the implementation of subject-teacher discussions. To carry out the plan well, Principal C expects support from the board of the other subject teachers to immediately carry out coordination forum activities with other SPs to share good practices with other members. The support of expert trainers is then highly expected so that the implementation of the new paradigm of learning can run optimally in schools.

### Discussion

Overall, Principal A has been able to carry out the plans drawn up in the first month in the third month. In other words, the principal has developed a competency model for himself and others. Principal B has also been able to carry out one of the plans related to learning leadership and promised in the third month to implement plans that have not been implemented. In other words, Principal B has also been able to develop a learning leadership competency model, although not optimally. Likewise, with Principal C, the principal has been able to carry out the plans related to learning leadership that has been prepared.

The results of this study are then in line with Fessehatsion (2017), who revealed that principals could develop competence in every curriculum change by facilitating teachers to make changes to the curriculum. In addition, principals will also adapt in the form of various desired competency models to improve the quality of learning by providing school-based training and development programs, appropriate resources, and leadership styles (Fauzi et al., 2021). The

results of this study are also in line with Nomniam and Arphattananon (2018). They revealed that principals must have the ability to develop teachers in schools to improve the quality of student learning. The results of this study are also in line with several previous references, which revealed that principals must recognize various types of teacher professional development needs. In addition, the principal must also be able to assist the teacher in improving the quality of student learning. The principal expects that teachers have the will and ability to design self-development independently, both inside and outside the school environment (Caldwell, 2014; Hallinger, 2012).

The results of this study indicate that the principal has been able to carry out the plan well. This result is in line with Day and Sammons (2014), who revealed that principals could make relevant or realistic plans in facing challenges to achieve learning goals. In carrying out the plan from month to month, the principal makes reflections and evaluations (Hitt et al., 2018). This result is also in line with several previous studies, which revealed that principals must be able to determine improvement plans to achieve student learning goals (Karadag, 2019; Wiyono, 2018). The principal in this study did not force the teacher to follow all the agendas made. Because it was always adjusted to the busyness of the teacher at school, this result is also in line with Campbell (2008), who revealed that principals must be able to carry out professional behavior ethically by teaching values to students at school. This study also obtained the results that the principal is trying to develop a model of learning leadership competence and has made it happen. These results are in line with ACDP (2013), which reveals that the principal must be able to maintain or develop a school environment that facilitates students' learning. Ham et al. (2019) also revealed that the principal must listen to the aspirations of students so that learning is more adapted to the learning needs of students.

The principal in this study also tries to provide examples, both with personal examples, and model teachers on how to implement student-centered learning. This result is in line with Sumintono et al. (2015), who revealed that the principal must be able to provide support, role model, and feedback on the planning, practice, and assessment carried out by the teacher. Several previous references also revealed that principals must be able to facilitate teachers in reflecting on their teaching practices in order to be able to plan and take concrete actions to improve teaching quality (Caldwell, 2014; Ham et al., 2019; Toyib et al., 2020). In general, the principal in this study is rather challenging to involve parents as companions and learning resources at school. The results of this study contradict Caldwell (2014), who revealed that the principal must open up space so that parents can actively participate in the teaching and learning process at school. In addition, Pan and Nyeu (2014) also revealed that parents could be integrated into planning, implementing, and evaluating or reflecting on education so that learning is more contextual and follows everyday life (Salim et al., 2021).

Although the principal stated that he wanted to develop a learning leadership competency model, the principal also developed a school management competency model because he has been able to lead and manage school programs that impact students. Principals are said to be able to take executive action when they principal can manage the resources needed to run school programs, as a leader in regular meetings, be role models, and motivate school members to be involved in a program (Hallinger, 2012). In addition, the principal can also be said to have a model of school leadership competence because it has involved school residents and various stakeholders in determining the direction of change that the school will aim for. These results are in line with ACDP (2013), which reveals that principals must be able to become leaders in school self-evaluation in determining steps for school change. The evaluation, of course, involves the involvement of various stakeholders and school residents.

## CONCLUSION

The principal has been able to develop the principal competency model in SP. Principal A has developed a competency model for self-development and others, and Principals B and C have developed a learning leadership competency model within three months. The principal also obtained this result without forcing the teacher to implement the program of SP. The awareness of each teacher regarding the existing program at the school. This study also reveals that the principal will tend to be followed by the teacher when the principal can provide an example before giving instructions. For example, when the principal asks the teacher to carry out student-centered learning, the principal should be able to carry out the student-centered learning practice. Principals' competence tends to lack in this study, involving students' parents or guardians as mentors and learning resources because parents are too busy at work. Some students do not live with their parents but with grandparents.

This study then recommends that the principal involve parents or guardians of students as companions and learning resources for students. Principals should invite parents to be actively involved in various school programs, including program planning, implementation, or evaluation, so that the existing programs in SP can run optimally. Furthermore, this study recommends for future research focus on the results of coaching in the following months, especially regarding the involvement of parents by principals in various school programs. Subsequent research can also be carried out with teacher participants in SP because it is not only principals who experience changes in competency models. Teachers experience changes in competency models from four competencies in the 2013 education curriculum to three competency models in the SP curriculum.

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