Leadership in Education: Strengthening Human Resources and Learning Outcomes Following the 'Program Sekolah Penggerak' Intervention

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Abstract:

"Program Sekolah Penggerak" is a strategic initiative and a challenge for principals in implementing the program, including limited human resources, demands for improving the quality of learning, and adaptation to educational transformation policies. This study aims to analyze principals' strategies after participating in the School Mover program, focusing on improving human resource performance and school learning quality. This study uses a qualitative case study approach. The research informants were three principals participating in the "Program Sekolah Penggerak". Data analysis was done by summarizing transcripts, presenting information, drawing conclusions and verifying. The results of the study indicate that in improving human resource performance, principals involve teachers and staff in formulating schools (vision, mission, goals), implementing a participatory leadership approach, routinely identifying human resource development needs, building a collaborative culture, and giving awards for the achievements and contributions of teachers and staff. Improving the quality of learning is done by increasing academic standards, improving monitoring and evaluation activities, and optimizing differentiated learning. The leadership model of the principal after the School Mover program facilitation, which was originally instructional, tends towards a transformational leadership model.

Keywords: *Human Resource Performance, Learning Quality, "Program Sekolah Penggerak"*

Abstrak:

Program Sekolah Penggerak menjadi inisiatif strategis sekaligus tantangan bagi kepala sekolah dalam menjalankan program termasuk keterbatasan SDM, tuntutan peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran, dan adaptasi terhadap kebijakan transformasi pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang strategi kepala sekolah setelah mengikuti pembinaan program Sekolah Penggerak, dengan fokus khusus pada peningkatan kinerja SDM dan kualitas pembelajaran di sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus. Informan penelitian ialah tiga kepala sekolah yang telah mengikuti program Sekolah Penggerak. Analisis data dilakukan dengan meringkas transkip, menyajikan informasi, mengambil kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam meningkatkan kinerja sumber daya manusia, kepala sekolah melibatkan guru dan staf dalam perumusan sekolah (visi, misi tujuan), menerapkan pendekatan kepemimpinan partisipatif, mengidentifikasi kebutuhan pengembangan SDM secara rutin, membangun budaya kolaboratif, dan memberikan penghargaan atas pencapaian serta kontribusi guru dan

staf. Peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran dilakukan dengan meningkatkan standar akademik, memperbaiki aktivitas monitoring dan evaluasi, serta mengoptimalkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Model kepemimpinan kepala sekolah pasca fasilitasi program Sekolah Penggerak yang semula instruksional memiliki kecenderungan yang mengarah pada model kepemimpinan transformasional.

Kata Kunci: Kinerja *Sumber Daya Manusia, Kualitas Pembelajaran, Program Sekolah Penggerak*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian education, improving human resources (HR) and learning quality in schools has become a major strategic issue (Rusdi et al., 2022). The "Program Sekolah Penggerak" (The School Mover Program) launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture aims to transform the education system by strengthening the role of school leadership (Wijaya & Khoir, 2022). Inequality in the quality of education in various regions, mainly due to weak school leadership, emphasizes the importance of school principals in motivating and fostering human resources (Sanjani, 2023; Leithwood, 2021; Cummings et al., 2021). The transformational leadership approach effectively inspires and improves human resource performance and learning quality (Deng et al., 2023; Fischer, 2023).

Schools in remote areas such as Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta, face more complex challenges in managing human resources and improving the quality of learning (Sa'dullah & Hidayatullah, 2020; Hasanah & Hefniy, 2023). Limited resources and low community participation hinder educational innovation (Sorokin & Chernenko, 2022; Ansori et al., 2023). Based on the theory of Human Capital, superior quality of education can only be achieved by optimizing human resources (Bakker et al., 2023). After facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak", this study explores how school principals can implement strategies to improve human resource performance and learning quality (Chuanchen, 2023; Singh et al., 2023). This research is also supported by the perspective of Organizational Development, which emphasizes the importance of continuous human resource development and adaptive leadership in improving the education management system (Senge, 1990; Zaini, 2024; Fullan et al., 2024; Maulidah et al., 2023; Müller et al., 2024; Schermuly et al., 2022).

The main problem that this research focuses on is how the leadership strategy of school principals after facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak" improves human resource performance and learning quality in schools. Based on existing facts, schools such as Gunungkidul Regency often face significant challenges in improving the quality of learning and human resource management. This is exacerbated by limited resources and low training teachers in the region receive. This issue is crucial because, although "Program Sekolah Penggerak" has been launched to transform education, its impact on improving human resource performance and learning has not been studied in depth. If this problem is not identified and addressed immediately, schools located in remote areas may continue to experience disparities in the quality of education compared to schools in urban areas.

Research on school leadership and improving human resource performance and learning quality has been done a lot. However, several significant findings are relevant to this research. In their study, Sa'dullah and Hidayatullah (2020) found that schools in remote areas have more significant human resource management and learning obstacles than schools in urban areas. This study also reveals that effective school leadership can reduce obstacles through participatory and innovative strategies. In another study, Akdere and Egan (2020) highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in school human resource development. They found that school principals who use a transformational approach can increase teacher motivation and performance and create a positive work culture. These findings show that transformational leadership significantly impacts improving the quality of learning and human resource performance in schools. However, this study has not explicitly discussed how this leadership is implemented after facilitating Government programs such as Driving Schools. Ananda et al. (2024) also showed that "Program Sekolah Penggerak" positively impacts the quality of learning by implementing the Pancasila student profile strengthening project.

Although there have been several studies that address the role of school leadership in improving the quality of human resources and learning, the gap that is visible is the lack of studies that specifically explore how the leadership strategies of school principals after the facilitation of "Program Sekolah Penggerak" are implemented in schools in remote areas. Most previous studies focused more on the impact of the curriculum and educational transformation in general, without paying particular attention to improving human resource performance in the context of "Program Sekolah Penggerak". In addition, previous studies have yet to see how these strategies are implemented in situations with limited resources. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the leadership strategies applied in one school location.

The novelty of this research lies in the in-depth exploration of the leadership strategies of school principals after facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak" in the context of schools in remote areas. In contrast to previous studies, this study examines how school principals overcome resource limitations through transformational and participatory leadership strategies to improve human resource performance and learning quality. This research also offers a new perspective on how "Program Sekolah Penggerak" can be implemented effectively, even in a less supportive environment. Thus, this research contributes significantly to the literature on educational leadership and human resource development, especially in the context of education in remote areas.

This study aims to identify and analyze the leadership strategy of school principals after facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak" to improve human resource performance and learning quality in schools. This goal is essential because it will provide new insights into how "Program Sekolah Penggerak" can impact human resource development and learning transformation in schools in remote areas. This study's results are expected to guide policymakers and education practitioners in designing more effective human resource development programs in the future. In addition, this study also seeks to contribute to the

scientific literature by providing empirical data on school leadership that has been successfully implemented in the context of limited resources.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This method was chosen because the research focuses on deeply understanding the principal's strategy in improving the performance of human resources (HR) and the quality of learning after facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak". The case study was used because this research requires an in-depth exploration of specific and unique situations in school environments that have implemented "Program Sekolah Penggerak", especially in one school location with three principals involved. This approach is more appropriate compared to quantitative methods that focus more on measuring statistical variables, as qualitative methods allow researchers to dig deeper into processes and interactions between stakeholders, as well as understand the complex social context at each level of school leadership (Tasci et al., 2020; Quintão et al., 2020; Renjith et al., 2021).

Data was collected through several techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with three principals in the same school, namely the State Junior High School in Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region Province. The school was chosen because the three principals had participated in and completed "Program Sekolah Penggerak". The school was considered a relevant representation in the research context. The interviews were conducted from July to November 2023, to explore the perspective of school principals regarding their role in improving HR performance and learning quality. In addition to interviews, observations were also made on the daily activities of the principal at the school to get an accurate picture of how the strategy was implemented. The documentation study was carried out by reviewing reports and documents related to implementing "Program Sekolah Penggerak" at the school.

The data obtained was analyzed using data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman, which included three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification (Mezmir, 2020). First, the data collected through interviews and observations are reduced by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. This reduction process is done by transcribing interviews and observation notes, which are then encoded to identify critical patterns and themes. Furthermore, the data is presented as a matrix or table that allows researchers to see the relationship between the principal's leadership strategy and improving human resource performance and learning quality. Finally, conclusion drawing is carried out through an in-depth interpretation of emerging patterns and themes, using data triangulation from the results of interviews, observations, and documents to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The study results are then verified to ensure the suitability between the data collected and the interpretations produced.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings in the field, it was found that school principals can improvise their skills after the facilitation of "Program Sekolah Penggerak" to

improve human resource performance and the quality of learning in schools. HR performance must make a great contribution to the quality of learning, and vice versa; quality learning is obtained from good HR performance. In this case, it is also marked by a change in the principal's leadership model.

Principal's Strategy for Improving HR Performance

The fundamental essence of "Program Sekolah Penggerak" is to encourage school principals to improve the performance of human resources in schools. One is making the principal himself a helpful role model, trusted and loved by all school residents. The principal reflects this exemplary form through his leadership strategy, school policies/rules set, and (social) relationships inside and outside the school. After facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak", the principal conducted a scan related to the knowledge and skills obtained for all parties involved in the school. A driving school principal carries out five strategies to improve the quality of human resources. The components of the strategy are briefly presented in the table below:

Figure 1. Principal's Strategy to Improve HR Performance

The above study's findings provide an understanding of the principal's strategy for improving HR (Human Resources) performance. The findings align with the relevance of interviews conducted with several interviewees, where the results of the interviews are as follows. "Of course, the first thing is that the principal is obliged to set the vision, mission and goals of the school by adding local wisdom values and school characteristics" (KS.1 Interview). "... Previously, we first set the vision, mission, and goals of the school by synchronizing it with the national education goals, and if the driving school is focused on the formation of the Pancasila student profile" (KS.2 Interview). "… So indeed, the principal's first task is to set the school's vision, mission and goals. Then after participating in "Program Sekolah Penggerak", we develop the vision, mission and goals by the elements in the program and the P5 dimension. This will also attract the public's interest in choosing our school" (KS.3 Interview).

Based on the interviews, the three principals agreed that the initial task of a school leader is to formulate and establish a vision, mission, and goals that are understood by all staff (Kempa et al., 2017; Admiraal et al., 2021; Gomez-Leal et al., 2022). This vision and mission are aligned with "Program Sekolah Penggerak" and national and local educational goals. The principal emphasizes that human resources (HR) are at the core of this initiative, and effective HR management is the key to the school's success (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Yalcinkaya et al.,

2021; Ryu et al., 2022). The first step involves teachers and staff formulating the vision and mission, creating deep participation to foster commitment and mutual understanding of the school's goals.

The principal then applies a participatory approach, in which staff are involved in strategic decision-making (Campos-Garcia & Zuniga-Vicente, 2022; Lessy et al., 2022). This collaboration is manifested in various joint projects involving teachers and staff, including implementing the Pancasila student profile strengthening project. The principal also provides space for teachers to innovate while providing additional support.

Furthermore, school principals routinely identify challenges and needs for human resource development, encouraging teachers to attend relevant training and workshops (Ngoc-Su et al., 2021; Hamouche, 2023). Professional development programs tailored to individual needs have significantly improved teacher performance. Principals also assign additional responsibilities to teachers through specific projects to stimulate their professional development.

Performance evaluations are conducted through periodic constructive feedback, which includes a review of achievements, teaching methods, and contributions to the school environment. This feedback increases motivation and helps identify strengths and areas for improvement (Murphy, 2019; Bohorquez et al., 2022; Fong & Schallert, 2023). Finally, the principal awards achievements achieved by human resources while providing strict sanctions for violations that are detrimental to the institution. This award is considered to be able to increase motivation and pride, as well as encourage human resource commitment to continue to develop.

Principal's Strategy to Improve the Quality of Learning

The main priority in transforming driving schools is to improve the quality of learning. The principal received assistance related to strategies that were considered to accelerate the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and improve the quality of learning. The learning process is the core of education, so the principal focuses on optimizing its implementation. The principal ensures that every student receives practical knowledge while upholding the values of the Pancasila Student Profile. One of the principals said, "We always try to improve the quality of learning. We ensure that every teacher understands the needs of students, and we continue to strive to optimize the implementation of the independent curriculum in schools." (KS.1 Interview)

Good knowledge is considered the main foundation of learning. The virtue of this knowledge is the principal's motivation to continue improving the quality of education in the school. "Program Sekolah Penggerak" gives principals the responsibility to ensure learners develop to their potential in the hope that they can contribute to the nation's progress. Another principal added, "Good learning starts from a deep understanding of the needs of students and their potential. We continue to strive to ensure that every student gets an education that suits their interests and talents." (KS.2 Interview)

Through "Program Sekolah Penggerak", the principal must establish a strategy to improve the quality of learning to produce superior students according to their potential. The long-term impact of students can later contribute to the

nation's progress. The principal's strategy to improve the quality of learning in driving schools is as follows.

Table 1. Strategies and Implications of School Principals to Improve the Quality of Learning

No.	Principal's Strategy	Implication
1.	Designing Process Standards Comprehensively and Sustainably	Comprehensive improvement of the learning process in schools.
2.	Integration of Assessment in Learning	The effectiveness of learning in schools is by the objectives of "Program Sekolah Penggerak".
3.	Utilizing Learning by Using Various Digital Platforms	The realization of technology-based learning.
4.	Implementation of Learning by Learners' Learning Stages and Differentiated Learning	The improvement of students' academic achievement is by their interests.
5.	Learning Collaboration with Parents/Families	Balanced control of student learning between school and at home.

The first step is to design process standards comprehensively and sustainably. This plan includes strengthening the curriculum, improving teaching methods, and adopting Pancasila student project-based learning. Although the program has only been running for two years, there has already been an improvement in the quality of learning in the schools involved. However, access is limited due to the school's location far from the center of Government. The second step is to develop the integration of assessment in learning. The principal routinely monitors and evaluates learning with the support of the Driven School supervisor and facilitator. Evaluations are carried out weekly (formative) and at the end of the semester (summative). The third step is the use of digital technology in learning. The principal encourages technology integration by involving an exceptional team and utilizing the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM). Students can work using technology while the school team manages social media to attract public interest.

The fourth step, differentiated learning, is applied to adjust the teaching method to the student's ability and interest. The principal ensures that teachers understand the needs of students through the help of BK teachers to map students' learning styles. The fifth step is to build cooperation with parents. Regular meetings are held to discuss the progress of student learning and involve parents in supporting the learning process at home. The principal also provides leeway for students involved in self-development activities outside of school as long as academic tasks remain prioritized.

Implementing these measures creates a solid and collaborative learning culture in schools, involving all stakeholders in improving the quality of education (Kim, 2020; Fuad et al., 2022; Zemlyak et al., 2023). This culture forms a framework that supports improving learning quality through collaboration between students, teachers, staff, and parents.

Trends in the Leadership Model of School Principals After Facilitation

"Program Sekolah Penggerak" is a catalyst for school change. The program encourages school principals to adopt leadership with an instructional approach.

However, findings in the field show different results. The principal follows an instructional leadership model in the early stages of participation in "Program Sekolah Penggerak". However, after entering the program scanning stage into all components of the school, the principal shows a leadership pattern that leads to transformational leadership. The findings present data that instructional leadership leads to a transformational leadership approach. The transformational leadership of the three principals has a significant impact on the organizational environment in the school and, indeed, still has a weak but also significant effect on students. Based on the results of interviews conducted with the three principals, several research findings were found, including the following:

Figure 2. Tendencies of School Principals' Leadership Models Post-Facilitation

A leader must create a positive work environment where employees can develop and develop, thereby creating a higher sense of achievement and staff satisfaction (Sinclair et al., 2021; Cann et al., 2021; Kumari & Kumar, 2023). The role of leadership is an essential strategy in an institution, being one of the determining factors for success in achieving the institution's vision, mission, and goals (Muliati et al., 2022; Kilag et al., 2023). The principal's interview data is as follows: "... So what we learned in the program is how we can prepare teachers so that their performance is improving. They can participate in training, workshops, training, education of driving teachers to further studies" (KS.3 Interview, 2023).

Based on the information in the interview, the principal, after the facilitation of "Program Sekolah Penggerak", had previously projected his educators to be able to improve their competence and expertise in the learning process. In data mining, it was obtained that the principal, after facilitating "Program Sekolah Penggerak", applied various tactical approaches to improve human resource performance and learning in schools.

The activities carried out by the principal include redesigning the school's operational goals and curriculum by adjusting the character dimension in the Pancasila student profile strengthening project. The socialization of the goal design was conveyed to all stakeholders in the school as a form of effort or strategy to achieve the desired change target. The principal motivates teachers and staff to express creativity and innovation and participate in school activities collaboratively. When teachers and education staff feel motivated and recognized for their contributions, they work more effectively and are dedicated to achieving a common goal. In the end, the principal is considered a figure who always encourages work productivity, can provide motivation, can stimulate skills, and always gives individual attention. Thus, after the facilitation of "Program Sekolah

Penggerak", school principals tend to use the transformational leadership model.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that school principals who have received facilitation from "Program Sekolah Penggerak" can significantly improve the performance of human resources (HR) and the quality of learning in schools. These findings provide new insights into the shift in the principal's leadership model, from instructional to transformational, which positively impacts the school's organizational environment and student academic achievement. The active involvement of the principal in designing the vision, mission, and goals that align with the Pancasila student profile strengthening program is the key to the successful implementation of this program. In addition, the collaboration built between school principals, teachers, and parents provides a synergistic effect in achieving educational goals that are more inclusive and adaptive to student needs.

This research provides an essential understanding in the educational literature, especially in strengthening the understanding of how transformational leadership in the context of education can improve human resource performance and learning in schools. This study also updates the perspective on the principal's leadership strategy by emphasizing the importance of a participatory and collaborative approach that was previously less discussed in the context of "Program Sekolah Penggerak". However, the study has some limitations, such as the limited scope of three junior high schools in one particular region and gender and age influences that have not been explored in depth. Therefore, more comprehensive follow-up research is needed to expand the variety of locations, institutions, and methodological approaches that can provide a more comprehensive picture of leadership implementation in other schools. Future research may also consider gender and age aspects of school principals to enrich understanding of the factors that influence the success of these educational programs.

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