



DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONALISM, THE MAIN KEY TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Nur Fatihah

Universitas Nurul Jadid

Email: n.fatihahmahfudz@gmail.com

Abstract:

This journal discusses the professional development of school principals as the main key to quality schools/education. This research explores strategies for developing principal competencies, their impact on school performance, and their contribution to improving the quality of education. Research methods involve literature analysis, case studies, and surveys. The results provide in-depth insight into the important role of school principals in improving the quality of education and provide recommendations for developing their professionalism. This study has significant implications for improving the education system as a whole.

Keywords: *Developing, the Professionalism of School Principals, Quality Education*

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the main foundation in producing a superior and competitive generation. In the course of education, the role of the school principal has a central role as leader and manager of educational institutions. Professional school principals are not only administrative managers, but also pioneers of transformation to improve the quality of education. In efforts to improve human resources in an educational institution, the principal as a top leader has an important role in improving the quality of human resources which needs to be implemented carefully, one role that can be carried out through optimizing the role of the principal. (Abrori and Muali 2020)

This journal, with the title "Developing the Professionalism of School Principals, the Main Key to Quality Education," raises crucial issues related to the key role of school principals in achieving quality education. The professionalism of school principals is an essential element that influences all aspects of the success of activity programs in educational institutions, starting from management, curriculum development, to creating a conducive learning environment.

As we know, the principal has the highest position in the school. Thus, school principals have the greatest responsibility for quality education, and school principals will be required to have a series of actions and strategies that support improving the quality of leadership in the world of education with adequate academic qualifications and expertise.

The role of the principal as an effective leader is to develop a more operational leadership concept, including implementing clear learning objectives, being a resource for staff, creating a school culture and climate that is conducive to learning, communicating the school's vision and mission to staff (Amiruddin, A. , Nurdin, N., & Ali, M., 2021).

As stated in article 12 paragraph 1 PP 28 of 1990, the school principal is responsible for organizing educational activities, school administration, developing other educational staff, and utilizing and maintaining facilities and infrastructure

(Kodiran, 2018). Apart from that, the implementation of regional autonomy requires school principals to be able to adapt to the situation and conditions of the regulations that apply in their respective regions. Based on this main idea, school principals must have skills in the field of leadership. The principal is the party who has direct contact with the process of implementing education in the school. Professional abilities are very necessary to create an effective school (Oktarina 2009).

Quality schools or education do not arise by themselves and are not born because the facilities are adequate and complete. A quality school must be formed, planned well and implemented well. Implementation also requires cooperation between one dimension and another, all stakeholders, and commitment from the school community (Minsih, Rusnilawati, and Mujahid 2019). According to Wahyusumidjo (Priansa, 2014: 33) the success of a school is the success of the school principal.

So, the results of the literature review show that in the approximately 16 years since the Addasuqin Islamic Kindergarten was founded, the principal has only changed twice. The first principal served for 4 years at Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten, then he transferred to another institution. Then he was replaced with a new principal who served from 2002 until now there has been no reform of the principal. The determination of the principal's format is in accordance with Foundation policy. If the foundation wants a new principal to reform, then a change of principal is carried out.

At first, this phenomenon was likely what caused the education system in this institution to remain static and difficult to develop. So to present a solution that suits these conditions by making efforts to develop the competence of school principals in a gradual, continuous and consistent manner, both in aspects, management, communication, innovation, as well as a deep understanding of the current direction of education.

It cannot be denied that there are several educational problems at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten that really require the role of teachers as motivators and facilitators both for fellow teachers and for students in the school environment, by stepping together to participate in helping the school principal realize his vision and mission of building good education. quality, high quality, and is the dream of the people, especially the people of Liprak Kulon Village, Banyuanyar District.

Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten in its learning activities applies the activity model of "learning while playing, playing while learning." Likewise, the concept of game-based learning is called "game-based learning" or "play-based learning." This includes an approach where learning is organized through play experiences and fun activities. No less interesting, the school uses the differentiation learning method, namely different learning according to the students' interests and talents. Differentiated learning is not a chaotic learning process. In simple terms, differentiated learning is a series of reasonable decisions made by teachers that are oriented to student needs (Pitaloka and Arsanti 2022). Meanwhile, within the scope of local content activities, the school offers the Tahfidz Ceria program for students who have competence in the field of tahfidzul Quran, the activities are carried out once a week.

For parent activities, schools hold parenting activities, namely activities related to parenting, such as parenting, education, health and protection and security. The school holds parent classes every month with the aim of providing insight and knowledge to parents as well as providing a forum for sharing for the growth and development of their children. This parenting activity also prepares additional food for children which is given every month at school with a varied, vitamin and nutritious food menu.

Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten is a formal PAUD school based on Islamic boarding schools because it is located in the middle of the Islamic boarding school environment, so many of its traditions and culture are adopted from Islamic boarding schools, such as religious activities which are more dominant in intra- and extra-curricular programs. The Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten has two groups according to age services, ages 3-4 years are the A Smart group, ages 5-6 years are the B Star group, and each group is taught by class teachers and accompanying teachers who are experienced, professional, and have eligible educational qualifications.

It has been recorded that since the last two years, the school has experienced better progress than in previous years. The school principal together with all stakeholders have developed interesting new programs and then implemented them consistently. The formulation used in this research: 1) How to develop the professionalism of school principals at the Addasuqi Liprak Kulon Islamic Kindergarten, Banyuanyar District?

Through in-depth analysis, this journal reviews various strategies and approaches in developing the professionalism of school principals. By incorporating the latest theories and empirical research, we aim to provide in-depth insight into how the professional development of school principals can be the main key in achieving quality education.

We hope that the findings in this journal can provide positive vibes and meaningful views for educational practitioners, policy makers and researchers in strengthening the role of school principals as suppliers of positive change. Thus, it is hoped that this journal can make a substantial contribution to efforts to reform and improve the quality of education in various educational institutions.

This research uses a qualitative approach to explain a phenomenon with a comprehensive explanation of what it is. Qualitative research is research that provides an overview of a phenomenon or situation that occurs. Phenomena in qualitative research are holistic or comprehensive, so that the data found cannot be separated. The reason for using a qualitative research approach is to find out and understand the findings of a phenomenon or event that occurs, apart from that, this research will produce descriptive data in the form of written word descriptions of the subject and observed behavior (Jaya 2020). The research design used is phenomenology. The main focus of phenomenology is real experience. According to Darmadi (2014: 209), phenomenological research explains or reveals the meaning of concepts or experiential phenomena that are based on awareness that occurs in several individuals. The researcher focused on the role of the principal to develop his professionalism as an educational leader at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten so that it becomes a quality school/educational institution. The researcher as an instrument carried out observations regarding the leadership of the principal at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten. Next, conduct in-depth interviews regarding various questions with resource persons, namely school principals and teachers. Next, the data obtained was processed and analyzed to obtain real information from the principal about the principal's leadership in building a quality school at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach to explain a phenomenon with a comprehensive explanation of what it is. Qualitative research is research that provides an overview of a phenomenon or situation that occurs. Phenomena in qualitative research are holistic or comprehensive, so that the data found cannot be separated. The reason for using a qualitative research approach is to find out and understand the findings of a phenomenon or event that occurs, apart from that, this research will produce descriptive data in the form of written word descriptions of the subject and observed behavior (Jaya 2020).

The research design used is phenomenology. The main focus of phenomenology is real experience. According to Darmadi (2014: 209), phenomenological research explains or reveals the meaning of concepts or experiential phenomena that are based on awareness that occurs in several individuals. The researcher focused on the role of the principal to develop his professionalism as an educational leader at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten so that it becomes a quality school/educational institution. The researcher as an instrument carried out observations regarding the leadership of the principal at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten. Next, conduct in-depth interviews regarding various questions with resource persons, namely school principals and teachers. Next, the data obtained was processed and analyzed to obtain real information from the principal about the principal's leadership in building a quality school at the Addasuqi Islamic

Kindergarten.

Data collection techniques are techniques or methods that can be used by researchers to collect data. The data collection techniques used in this research were interviews, observation and documentation. The validity of the data in this research uses triangulation. According to (Umrati and Wijaya 2020) data triangulation is a technique of checking data from various sources in various ways and at various times. In qualitative research, two types of triangulation can be used, namely technical triangulation and source triangulation. Triangulation techniques are different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source. Qualitative data analysis is carried out by working with data, organizing data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing, looking for and finding patterns, finding what is important and what is learned and deciding what can be told to others. Meanwhile, source triangulation is exploring the truth of certain information by using various data sources such as documentation, archives, interview results, observation results, or by interviewing more than one subject who is considered to have a different point of view.

Triangulation is essentially a multimethod approach carried out by researchers when collecting and analyzing data. The basic idea is that the phenomenon under study can be understood well so that a high level of truth can be obtained if approached from various points of view. Photographing a single phenomenon from different points of view will enable a reliable level of truth to be obtained. Therefore, triangulation is an effort to check the correctness of data or information obtained by researchers from various different points of view by reducing as much as possible the bias that occurs during data collection and analysis. As is known in qualitative research (Belakang et al. 1960)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of the professionalism of school principals has a very significant impact on the realization of quality education, considering the central role of the principal in guiding, managing and increasing the effectiveness of the entire school. With improved leadership skills and a deep understanding of educational innovation, school principals can create learning environments that are inspiring, supportive, and focused on increasing student achievement.

Developing the professionalism of school principals also opens the door to implementing effective management practices, wise use of resources, and positive engagement with staff and the school community. Through these efforts, principals can establish a school culture that is progressive, results-oriented, and promotes close collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. Thus, the continued professional development of school principals becomes a strong foundation for achieving the goals of quality education that is inclusive, innovative and in line with the demands of the times.

The professional development of school principals for quality education is directed at creating leaders who are empowered, innovative, and able to lead schools towards educational excellence. Thus, this will have a positive impact on students' learning experiences, improve academic achievement, and shape a better society through education.

Efforts to increase the professionalism of school principals will not be realized, without the internal motivation and awareness of the principal, as well as the enthusiasm to serve, which will give birth to a school vision and clear conceptual abilities from the principal. This is an important factor, without awareness and motivation to serve, all the efforts made will not provide optimal results, which will cause the realization to not be optimal (Mahardhani 2016)

Several things were found from the results of research at the Addasuqi Liprak Kulon Islamic Kindergarten, Banyuanyar District, including:

The leadership style of the Principal at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten applies a distributive leadership style that emphasizes collaboration, sharing responsibilities, and empowering teaching staff and education personnel to increase the progress and effectiveness of the school. With distributive-relational leadership, school principals can further empower teachers and employees to get involved, thereby strengthening work

teams with quality interpersonal relationships. A solid work team with quality interpersonal relationships makes it easier for school principals to create organizational commitment (Satyawati 2020). Adopting from Hallinger, distributive leadership is measured by 3 (three) dimensions (Hallinger, 2003) including: (1) Support, including indicators: establishing and promoting a school vision collectively, motivating and stimulating members of an organization; (2) Supervision, including indicators: directing, controlling and monitoring; (3) Collaboration, including indicators: delegation of tasks, participatory decisions, openness of team members, and mutual trust. So it can be concluded that distributive leadership is a concept in management and leadership that emphasizes the distribution of responsibility, power and decision making among members of a team or organization, rather than just focusing on one single leader. In distributive leadership, leadership roles and responsibilities are expanded and shared among team or group members.

With this distributive leadership, the involvement of all stakeholders in the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten began to appear open. Because awareness of the importance of planning, determining and making decisions from all stakeholders including school principals, teachers, parents and the local community is starting to feel that this is an important provision in implementing the school's vision and mission towards a more empowered and quality school.

The head of the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten began to be motivated by the need to become an adaptive and innovative leader to face the ever-changing challenges in the world of education. The ability to respond to changes in the educational environment is the main key for school principals and teachers, so that they remain informed about the latest developments in education, government policies and global education trends. This allows them to plan steps that suit the needs of the school and students.

Couros, how principals and educators can lead innovative change (Mahmoud and Atrosi 2019). A school culture that encourages creativity and innovation by providing support for teachers and staff to take constructive risks in trying new teaching methods and creating an environment that supports innovative ideas. Ensure that teachers and staff continuously participate in training and professional development, such as workshops, seminars, or online training to update their skills and introduce them to the latest practices in education.

Continuously monitor educational developments and measure the effectiveness of innovative initiatives. By engaging in an effective evaluation system, principals can assess what is working and what needs to be adjusted, while providing space and support for experimentation. Encourage teachers and staff to try new things without fear of punishment if something doesn't work, because failure can be a step towards innovation.

As has been done by the head of the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten together with all educators who are now starting to actively share real actions and good practices on the independent teaching platform, share experiences through learning communities to develop competencies, diligently explore inspiring and innovative learning videos to be developed in learning activities in the school, as well as various other innovative activities that are really needed at this time.

Empowering teachers is an important key to creating a successful and productive educational environment. This includes empowering teachers as leaders in the classroom, inviting them to be involved in school decision making, or giving them trust and freedom to design creative ideas.

The quality of education is influenced, among other things, by teacher empowerment (Manaf, 2016) (Widodo and Sriyono, Counseling Guidance Study Program, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, 2020), Murray (2010) also stated that empowerment makes teachers able to involve, share, and influence which in the end have a positive impact on his life.

The following are some effective efforts that have been implemented by the head of the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten to empower teachers: 1. Continuous Professional

Development: Engaging educators/teachers in education, training and continuous professional development. Ensure teachers have access to resources and opportunities to continuously improve their skills in teaching, using digital technology, and adapting to increasingly trending changes in education 2. Providing Autonomy and Creative Freedom: Providing teachers with autonomy in their respective classes. Teachers have the freedom to design curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation strategies that suit student needs. The aim is to give teachers the opportunity to express their creativity and feel ownership in the learning process. 3. Facilitate Collaboration: Encourage collaboration between teachers and school operators/TUs, holding regular meetings, workshops and collaborative projects so teachers can learn from each other, share ideas and develop good practices together. 4. Support Teacher Well-being: Pay attention to the physical and mental well-being of teachers. By ensuring teachers have supportive working conditions, time for rest, and necessary welfare resources that are adjusted to the school budget, while proposing additional teacher honorariums to regional and central governments. 5. Consider Teachers' Ideas and Input: Involve teachers in the school decision-making and planning process. Ideas and input from teachers are very valuable for developing superior school programs. 6. Providing Recognition and Appreciation: Appreciating the efforts of teachers and all their achievements. These include open praise, awards or promotions. This can increase motivation and a sense of pride in their work. 7. Technology and Leadership: Integrates technology into his leadership practices to support orderly and neat learning and school administration. In interaction, they have also used video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp group video calls or Google Meet for virtual meetings, which allows collaboration without geographical limitations. 8. Inclusive Education and Differentiated Learning: Recognize the importance of supporting inclusive practices, by accommodating the differences and needs of students with various backgrounds and abilities. Apart from that, the principal also supports differentiated learning, namely learning that is different according to students' interests and talents. The goal of differentiated learning is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop according to his or her potential. The way to implement differentiated learning at the Addasuqi Islamic Kindergarten is, first, the teacher knows the individual needs of students first through observation and interaction. The next step is to determine the learning style, methods and strategies that will be provided according to the student's skill level, interests and level of understanding. Then, provide various learning resources, teaching aids, educational games and learning materials, which allow students to explore topics according to their personal interests. Until the evaluation stage, the assessment is adjusted to the assessment criteria for the expected level of understanding. 9. Engagement with the Community: The principal is active in organizations, engaging with the local community and working with external partners to increase support and resources for school improvement.

CONCLUSION

This research has presented a broad picture of the development of professionalism of school principals as the main pillar in achieving quality education at the Addasuqi Liprak Kulon Islamic Kindergarten, Banyuanyar district. An in-depth analysis of the findings of this research produced several conclusions that can guide the direction of professional development of school principals for the future of education, including: 1. The leadership role of school principals in quality education. When school principals receive strong professional development, they can make a major contribution to the quality of education. Effective leadership shapes school culture, which supports learning, creates an inclusive environment, and improves teacher and student performance. 2. Development of distributive leadership and transformative approaches emerge as key factors in achieving quality education. School principals who are able to inspire, empower, and distribute leadership responsibilities can motivate and guide school staff towards better achievements. 3. The importance of continuous professional development. Principal professional development should not be a one-time basis.

Instead, there needs to be a continuous development program that supports updating knowledge, leadership skills, and understanding of developing educational trends. 4. Challenges in developing the professionalism of school principals. Research highlights several challenges, such as limited time, resources, and organizational barriers. To overcome these challenges, support from higher levels of leadership, policy changes that support leadership development, and collaboration between schools are needed. 5. Effective collaboration and communication. Collaboration between principals, teachers and other school stakeholders through effective communication forms the foundation for the professional development of school principals. The exchange of ideas, best practices, and resources can lead to continuous updates. 6. Recommendations for the future. As future steps, further investment is needed in the professional development of school principals, increased policy support, and the provision of incentives that can motivate school principals to continue developing their leadership.

This conclusion confirms that the professional development of school principals has a crucial role in forming a superior education system. By understanding these findings, we can plan strategic steps that can bring education to higher standards and have a positive impact on students' learning experiences and overall school performance.

REFERENCES

- Abrori, Muhammad, and Chusnul Muali. 2020. "Peningkatan Kualitas Sumber Daya Manusia Melalui Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 1 (1): 1–16. <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/jumpa>.
- Belakang, A Latar, DAFTAR PESERTA UJIAN LISAN AL-QUR, A N DISEMINASI D A N REKRUTMEN MUSYRIF, TAMIRDAN AH, Erle Stanley Gardner, Nathaniel E Helwig, Sungjin Hong, Elizabeth T Hsiao-wecksler, Erle Stanley Gardner, and Miftahuddin. 1960. "No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析Title." *Mushaf Aisyah Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemah* 2023 (5): 63–65. <https://www.readcube.com/articles/10.21831%2Fmoz.v4i1.4386>.
- Jaya, Made. 2020. "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif: Teori, Penerapan, Dan Riset Nyata - I Made Laut Mertha Jaya - Google Buku." *Anak Hebat Indonesia*. https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=yz8KEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA216&dq=metode+kualitatif+dan+penerapannya&ots=snBf3UzOdS&sig=PnoNXnkKF92f8jzeBS86y5LkM8w&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=metode+kualitatif+dan+penerapannya&f=false.
- Mahardhani, Ardhana Januar. 2016. "Kepemimpinan Ideal Kepala Sekolah." *Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 3 (2): 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.24269/dpp.v3i2.82>.
- Mahmoud, Lama, and Hanar Atroshi. 2019. "Book Review: The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent and Lead a Culture of Creativity (Courros, 2015)." *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* 15 (2): 85–87. <https://doi.org/10.18538/lthe.v15.n2.293>.
- Minsih, Minsih, Rusnilawati Rusnilawati, and Imam Mujahid. 2019. "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membangun Sekolah Berkualitas Di Sekolah Dasar." *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar* 1 (1): 29–40. <https://doi.org/10.23917/ppd.v1i1.8467>.
- Oktarina, Nina. 2009. "Fakultas Ekonomi Unnes Profesionalisme Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pengelolaan Pendidikan Untuk Mewujudkan Sekolah Efektif." *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi* 4 (1): 129.
- Pitaloka, H, and M Arsanti. 2022. "Pembelajaran Diferensiasi Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka." *Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Sultan ...*, no. November: 2020–23. <http://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/sendiksa/article/view/27283>.
- Satyawati, Sophia Tri. 2020. "Pengaruh Kepengawasan Dan Kepemimpinan Distributif-Relasional Terhadap Komitmen Organisasi Kepala Sekolah Dasar Di Kabupaten Semarang." *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 10 (2): 142–51. <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.js.2020.v10.i2.p142-151>.
- Umrati, and Hengki. Wijaya. 2020. "Analisis Data Kualitatif Teori Konsep Dalam

Penelitian Pendidikan.” *Sekolah Tinggi Teologia Jaffray*, no. August: 8–10.
Widodo, W, and Heru Sriyono Program Studi Bimbingan Konseling Fakultas Ilmu
Pendidikan dan Pengetahuan Sosial. 2020. “Strategi Pemberdayaan Guru Dalam
Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan.” *Faktor Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan* 7 (1): 7–12.