



## **INCREASING STUDENT LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT: AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH**

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### **Abstract :**

Instructional leadership is an important component for school principals that has a great influence on the school's vision and mission, especially in improving the quality of learning. The focus of instructional leadership lies in improving the quality of learning processes and outcomes through teacher empowerment, so that this leadership motivates and facilitates teachers in improving learning. This study aims to examine the implementation of Instructional Leadership in improving student learning achievement at SMK Informatics Dienul Islam and SMK An-Nur Ibun. The research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, data is collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results show that the instructional leadership of school principals runs effectively through the formulation of vision and mission, improvement of teacher competence, supervision, learning evaluation, and the development of a conducive learning climate.

**Keywords:** *Instructional Leadership, Principal, Student Learning Achievement.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a very important factor in building human resources. In an era of increasingly fierce global competition, efforts are required to improve the quality of education. Therefore, the world of education must continue to innovate, looking for new breakthroughs to achieve the goal of quality education. The aim of education as a process of improving human resources is stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system in article 3 which states that the aim of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, be healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and be democratic and responsible citizens (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003). To realize these national education goals, schools as educational service providers need leaders or school principals who have a good understanding of learning orientation that can support student learning achievement.

Leadership is one of the competencies that school principals must have. According to Mulyasa (2011) Leadership is the ability to influence, move and direct, motivate, invite, advise, guide, order, command, prohibit, and even punish,

as well as foster with the intention that humans as management media are willing to work in order to achieve administrative goals effectively. effective and efficient (Qomusuddin, Ivan Fanani; Bunyamin, 2020). This opinion is in line with Amirullah (2015), leadership is a person who has the authority to give tasks, has the ability to persuade or influence other people through good relationship patterns to achieve predetermined goals. As an educational leader, the principal is a leadership position that cannot be filled by people without based on considerations. (Wahjosumidjo 2005) The appointment of a school principal must be determined through certain procedures and requirements. In his position as an educational leader, the principal is responsible for managing teaching, students, facilities and infrastructure, finances, institutional relations with the community, as well as supervision of education and teaching. The school principal must have the competence and strengths to be a role model for the school community and be able to carry out activities to achieve the goals that have been set.

According to Minister of National Education Regulation number 13 of 2007, the competencies that school principals must have are personality competence, managerial competence, entrepreneurial competence, supervision competence and social competence. The principal as a leader must be able to carry out his duties and provide guidance and direct his subordinates, have a strong will with enthusiasm and self-confidence and provide inspiration in achieving goals. According to Mulyasa (2003), school principals must have the right strategy to empower education staff through cooperation or cooperation, provide opportunities for education staff to improve their profession, and encourage all education staff in various activities that support school programs. The principal is responsible for running the school organization. The phenomenon of low student learning achievement, teachers and students lacking discipline, low teacher motivation, and low school work ethic is evidence of a school principal's inability to manage existing resources in the school effectively and efficiently to achieve educational goals.

There are many leadership models that can be adopted and applied in schools, Instructional leadership (learning leadership) is one leadership style that is suitable to be applied in schools, because schools are a place for learning. The main focus of this instructional leadership is the quality of the process and student learning outcomes that come from teacher empowerment. That way, instructional leadership will motivate and facilitate teachers in improving the quality of learning. Instructional leadership interacts with everything that is a factor in achieving better learning success for students. Learning leadership according to Bush and Glover (2013) is leadership that emphasizes components that are closely related to learning, including curriculum, teaching and learning processes, assessment, teacher development, excellent service in learning, and building learning communities in schools. Learning leadership is leadership that emphasizes 5 aspects in school administration, namely: (1) focusing on learning, (2) building cooperation, (3) analyzing student achievement results, (4) teacher development, and (5) adjusting curriculum and teaching. , and assessment (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006). From this opinion it is clear that improving student learning outcomes is greatly influenced by learning leadership. This means that if student learning outcomes are to be improved, then leadership that emphasizes learning should be applied in organizing the educational process in schools.

Learning leadership is very important to implement in schools because it is able to: (a) increase student learning achievement significantly, (b) encourage

and direct the school community to improve student learning achievement, (c) focus the school community's activities towards achieving the vision, mission, and school goals, and (d) building a learning community for the school community and even being able to make the school a learning school (Ana Dwi Utami, 2012). In line with the opinion of Cotton (2003), the instructional leadership model is a leadership model that can encourage increased student achievement. According to Tulus Tu'u (2004) learning achievement is the mastery of knowledge or skills developed by subjects which is usually shown by test scores or numbers given by the teacher. Meanwhile, according to Mohammad Surya (2004), learning achievement is the result of learning or changes in behavior regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes after going through a certain process, as a result of individual experiences in interaction with their environment. From this opinion, the author can conclude that student learning achievement is a measure of student success as shown by grades or tests after taking certain subjects. Because instructional leadership has a strong influence on achieving the school's vision and mission, especially in improving the quality of learning and student achievement.

The principal plays a very important role in the success of an educational institution. School principals need to hone their leadership skills to improve the quality of their school so that it becomes an outstanding school, so that to become a successful school principal, he must perform well and must also be skilled at directing and bringing the educational institution he leads to success. An institution is said to be successful if it has succeeded in producing graduates who have good personalities, excel and achieve all the competencies that are the learning objectives. The principal must also understand the teaching program so that he is able to provide assistance to teachers who are experiencing difficulties. For example, in each program and teaching strategy, the assistance provided by the school principal to teachers can be in the form of facility support, necessary teaching materials, strengthening mastery of the material and training teaching strategies (Syaiful Sagala, 2010). Bambang and Andrews (1990) also emphasized that school principals must improve their learning leadership in terms of providing learning guidance to teachers, being able to communicate learning goals well, being active in the school environment, being able to play an active role in staff development and having the trust of teachers as leaders..

From the results of temporary observations that researchers found at An-Nur Ibum Vocational School, there was a problem, namely the problem of the principal's instructional leadership. This can be seen from the phenomenon of the principal not being able to act decisively in giving direction to teachers for making RPP (Learning Program Plan). Therefore, the role of the school principal is needed in overcoming this problem, just as a school principal must act decisively and implement the rules regarding making RPPs (Learning Program Plans) which each teacher must have. Apart from that, at An-Nur Ibum Vocational School and Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School, there is also a phenomenon where the principal has not been able to provide optimal supervision for teachers in the learning process, such as the principal rarely monitoring teachers in the teaching and learning process, thus having an impact on teachers. who likes to give assignments to his students and then leave the class. Therefore, school principals must provide more optimal supervision for teachers in the learning process.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used is a qualitative method with a case study approach. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to understand

phenomena in depth (Qomusuddin, Ivan Fanani; Romlah, 2021), especially regarding the implementation of school principals' instructional leadership in improving student learning achievement.

The case study approach focused on Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School and An-Nur Ibum Vocational School, so that researchers could explore the specific context and leadership practices implemented by school principals at these two institutions. Data was collected through interviews, observation and documentation. Data were analyzed through reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to understand the implementation of instructional leadership in improving student learning achievement.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A school principal must strive to implement good instructional leadership in the educational institution he leads. Because this will create a productive work environment and create effective learning that grows outstanding students. If a school can produce outstanding students who are useful for the country and society, then it can be said that the school is successful. Based on the results of observations made by researchers at Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School, and AN-NUR Ibum Vocational School based on questions in the form of interviews conducted with related parties, namely: the principal, deputy head of curriculum and teachers at AN-NUR Ibum and Dienul Informatics Vocational School Islam. and from several documentation obtained during observations from the two schools, it was found that the principal had made several efforts to implement instructional leadership, including:

### **Formulate the School's Vision and Mission**

From the results of interviews with school principals, information was obtained that there were differences in the preparation of the school's vision, mission and goals between Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School and AN-NUR Ibum Vocational School. At Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School, in implementing learning leadership, the Principal formulates the vision, mission and goals of the school, together with teachers and stakeholders, then formulates a joint work program with the school community to achieve school goals in accordance with the school's vision and mission. After the work program has been prepared, it is then communicated to all school residents and stakeholders in the school.

This is different from what is done at AN-NUR Ibum Vocational School, the vision, mission and goals of An-Nur Vocational School are formulated and determined by the Foundation. The principal and all school residents are only implementers. Therefore, the school principal must be able to describe and develop a joint work program with the school community to achieve the school's goals in accordance with the vision and mission that have been set. For example, to explain the vision of morals, the school principal creates a program for carrying out midday prayers, noon prayers in congregation, afternoon prayers in congregation, and coaching morals or etiquette for teachers and friends. The work program that has been prepared will be communicated to all school residents and school stakeholders. The curriculum developed by the school principal must be oriented towards improving student learning outcomes in order to improve the quality of education in the school and achieve school goals.

The similarity is in communicating the vision, mission, goals and programs that have been prepared with all school residents and stakeholders in the school. The vision and mission must be communicated well, so that the expected goals

are achieved. This is in accordance with what was stated by Sani (2015) who stated that in formulating the vision and mission it should be communicated to all school members, including teachers, education staff and students. All programs developed by school principals must be oriented towards improving student learning outcomes in order to improve the quality of education in schools and achieve school goals. To achieve good achievement, learning leaders establish and communicate a clear vision and mission for the school that is oriented towards high student achievement and superior quality learning (Brolund 2016: 42). Apart from that, Dewi (2020: 384) also added that there is a need for a vision and mission to achieve school goals. So that the learning process can produce outstanding students.

### **Increasing Teacher Competency and Professionalism**

The development of teacher professionalism by the school principal as an instructional leader focuses on the teacher's ability to carry out the teaching and learning process in the classroom in order to improve student learning achievement. The teacher is the person who is directly related to the implementation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, and is the main actor in improving student learning achievement through a quality teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the efforts made by the principal at Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School and AN-NUR Vocational School to implement learning leadership in improving student learning achievement is by holding In House Training (IHT) activities or workshops at the beginning of each school year which aims to improve teacher competency so they can present learning materials properly and correctly, increasing knowledge, abilities and skills in managing learning and presenting learning materials in accordance with the learning implementation plan. The product produced from this In House Training activity is a complete teaching program plan (RPP) in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The hope is that later in teaching and learning activities teachers will have an overview and guidelines for implementing learning activities.

Another effort made by school principals to improve teacher competency is requiring every teacher to be active in Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) activities to assist teachers in problem solving in teaching, taking part in training both online and offline and providing opportunities for teachers to take part in PLPG. (Teacher Professional Education and Training).

### **Carry out Supervision and Evaluation of Learning Programs**

From the results of interviews with the principal of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School, data was obtained that the principal carries out periodic supervision of learning. Documentation shows that the head of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School carried out the evaluation using the prota, process, syllabus, lesson plan and supervision format. And the results of the learning evaluation process are shown by a recapitulation of assignment grades, daily test scores, PTS (Mid-Semester Assessment), PAS (Final Semester Assessment) scores and report card scores. The principal of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School is usually once every 3 months after implementing PTS and PAS holding evaluation meetings with all teachers to evaluate student learning outcomes, see the obstacles experienced and try to find solutions.

The principal of An-Nur Ibum Vocational School when carrying out supervision is usually carried out suddenly by going around to see directly the conditions of the class and the teacher's teaching activities. The principal of An-Nur Ibum Vocational School is very open in receiving input from students and

parents about what is happening at school. For example, if a student or parent complains about a teacher, the principal will confirm and follow up. So that the learning process will run well and comfortably. The learning evaluation process is shown by recapitulating assignment scores, daily test scores, PTS (Mid-Semester Assessment), PAS (Final Semester Assessment) scores and report card scores..

This learning supervision aims to improve teachers' professional abilities in the learning outcomes process and also aims to provide assistance in developing better teaching and learning situations. Because whether the quality of education at school is good or not really depends on the teaching and learning process at school. With a learning process that runs effectively and efficiently, student learning achievement can be improved and the quality of education in schools can be improved. This is in accordance with what was stated by Lunenburg & Irby (2006: 87), namely that the development of teacher competence which significantly contributes to student learning outcomes is the development of abilities related to instructional planning, the teaching and learning process, and evaluation, this can be done by the principal by supervising the class and providing constructive feedback to improve the learning process. Glickman (2010:7) states that effective supervision will build good communication between the principal and teachers which will become the glue of school success (Supervision as the glue of a successful school), if its implementation uses the following principles; 1) collegiality and avoiding hierarchical relationships between teachers and school principals, 2) supervision as a deepening of the material, 3) focus on teacher development rather than purely administrative fulfillment, 4) provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other teachers, 5) involving teachers in the process discovery of weaknesses and strengths.

Developing a conducive and enjoyable learning climate

The success of instructional leadership in improving student learning achievement cannot be separated from efforts in managing the learning environment at school. So, in order to provide good educational services, a comfortable learning environment in the classroom and outside the classroom is very necessary.

The efforts made by the principal of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School to create a positive learning climate are by providing facilities and infrastructure that support learning, such as improving classrooms, libraries, laboratories, toilets and other facilities which the school continues to strive for in stages. Another thing is that the principal also gives rewards in the form of scholarships to students who get the highest grades in their class.

The principal of An-Nur Ibum Vocational School is developing a conducive learning climate by completing facilities and infrastructure that can support the learning process, such as building a practical laboratory, equipping a computer laboratory, providing internet facilities, and creating comfort for students at school with child-friendly teaching. So that students feel comfortable in carrying out learning and when they are in the school environment. The principal also tries to increase students' learning motivation by giving rewards to the best students in each class in the form of scholarships. And to increase teacher enthusiasm in carrying out their duties, the principal also gives rewards to teachers.

In connection with the need for support for learning facilities, Caldwell (1998) states that this is due to a change in the role of the teacher from simply conveying information to the role of the teacher as a facilitator so that a teaching environment is needed that can support the implementation of the teaching and

learning process more flexibly, meaning that it can carry out appropriate teaching and learning activities. in accordance with the teaching materials presented.

The obstacle experienced by the principal of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School in implementing learning leadership in improving student learning achievement is the lack of teacher awareness in implementing effective and interesting learning, which has an impact on learning boredom in students and makes students unproductive in learning and results in the learning process being incomplete. effective. This may be due to the lack of learning media in schools. The solution taken by the principal of the Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School to overcome these obstacles is to provide input to teachers to create interesting learning media, and try to complete the school's facilities and infrastructure, so that students will be enthusiastic about learning. Another obstacle is the lack of attention from parents to their children. . This is because many parents still think that education is enough to be given at school. The solution taken by the school principal is to hold a parents' meeting at the beginning of each school year to socialize school programs and require that every report card be taken by a parent or guardian..

The obstacle experienced by the principal of An-Nur Ibum Vocational School in implementing learning leadership in improving student learning achievement is that school activities are busy outside of school, so he cannot directly monitor daily learning activities at school. The solution taken by the principal of An-Nur Ibum Vocational School was to use a situational leadership model in carrying out his leadership.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research conducted at Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School and An-Nur Ibum Vocational School regarding instructional leadership in improving student achievement, it can be concluded that the principal's instructional leadership at Dienul Islam Informatics Vocational School and An-Nur Ibum Vocational School has been implemented, namely by implementing the formulation and communicating the school's vision and goals, increasing teacher competence and professionalism, carrying out supervision and evaluation of learning programs, developing a conducive and enjoyable learning climate.

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