

## The Role of School Principals in Developing Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers have a central role in the learning process in the classroom, where one of the competencies that must be possessed is pedagogical competence. This competency is important so that teachers can manage learning effectively, develop students' potential, understand learning models, prevent monotonous learning, design learning programs, understand the characteristics of students, and evaluate learning outcomes. The research aims to determine the role of the principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba, Central Bangka Regency. The research method used is qualitative, with research subjects of the principal, vice principal of the curriculum section, and five teachers. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed through the collection, condensation, display, and conclusions drawing/verification stages. The results showed that the SMA Negeri 1 Koba principal plays an essential role as an educator in improving teachers' pedagogical competence through providing guidance, providing encouragement, providing direction, building a conducive atmosphere, providing opportunities, setting an example, providing advice, and conducting training. This role allows teachers to learn and develop, both directly and indirectly.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education (Berliana et al., 2019; Hasanah 2023; Hasanah et al., 2019), is influenced by the quality of learning (Hasanah et al., 2023), which is experienced by students (Hasanah, Ghazy, et al. 2023). One component that plays a crucial role in the classroom learning process is the teacher. (Hasanah et al., 2020; Resmi & Hasanah 2020). Ideally, a teacher is a primary professional responsible for teaching, educating, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. (Syamsuri 2021) So that students can grow optimally (Hasanah 2022), and avoid deviant behavior (Hasanah et al., 2019; Hasanah & Supardi 2020).

Teachers must have adequate competencies to control the learning process (Hasim & Hasanah, 2020) (Kuo & Kuo, 2024; Rawat et al., 2024). Pedagogical competence is one of the four competencies that a teacher must have. (Mandasari et al., 2020; Sudargini & Purwanto 2020), but the pedagogical competence of teachers in Indonesia is still low. Based on a World Bank survey in 2020, the quality of teachers in Indonesia is categorized as low. Teachers in

Indonesia scored 3.52 out of 5 social-emotional scores when adapting to new technology. Developing teachers' pedagogical competence (Ayvaz-Tuncel & Tuncel, 2019; Gabrijelčič et al., 2021) In Indonesia, it is still constrained. This can be seen in teacher-centered learning. (Kornelia Wu and Mahmudah 2021; Shah 2020), less than optimal use of learning technology (Rinekso, 2021), inappropriate learning methods, and monotonous learning resources (Fatmayani,. In the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, the results of the competency test on the pedagogical competence aspect scored 54.54 (Neraca Pendidikan Daerah 2019). This impacts the low PISA score in 2022, which shows that students in Indonesia ranked 68<sup>th</sup> out of 88 countries. (Jayawardana et al., 2022).

Teachers' pedagogical competence in managing learning can be improved by optimizing the school principal's role. However, the principal's role in implementing learning is still not optimal. (Kaso et al., 2021). Many school principals have not yet committed to performing their functions in developing teachers' pedagogical competence. (Shell 2023), and even more, have not mastered their managerial role (Indriani & Hasanah 2021; Pujianto 2015), thus making human resource management not optimal (Yulyanti & Hasanah 2021).

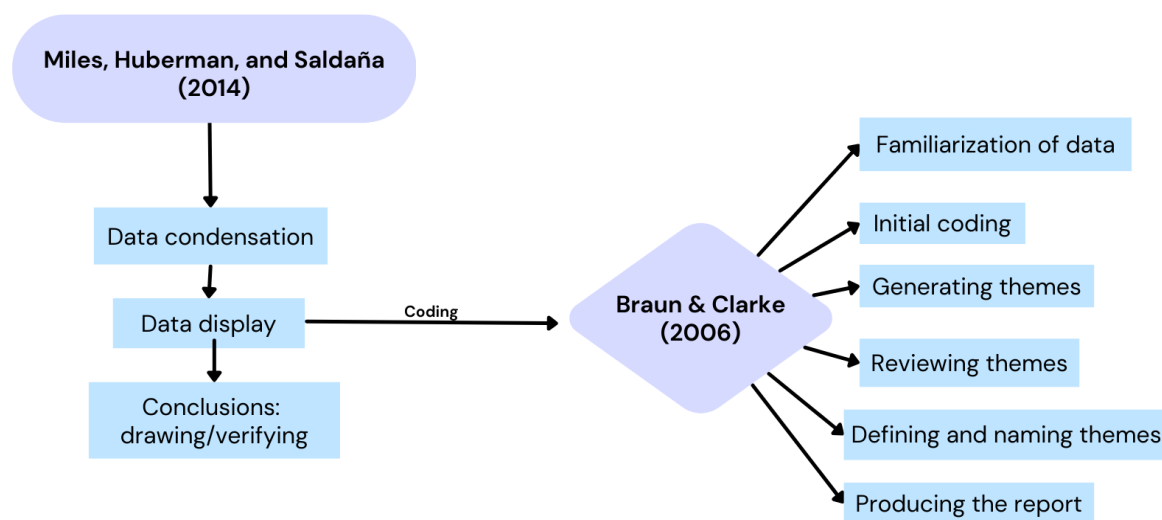
The principal's role in building teachers' pedagogical competence is necessary to create a learning environment that supports teachers' professional growth. Without an effective leader to guide and provide direction, improving teachers' pedagogical competence may be hampered or even halted. Principals are part of teaching and play, improving the quality of education. (Kriswanto & Hasanah 2021), one of the components of education that has a significant impact on improving teacher performance (Lee & Mao 2023).

Therefore, research is needed to explore how to optimize the role of school principals in building teachers' pedagogical competence. This paper discusses the role of the school principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba, Central Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Province.

## **2. METHODS**

This research is qualitative (Yue & Ji, 2021). In this study, researchers describe the data as exposure to words or sentences that are qualitative rather than number (Atieno, 2009). This research was conducted in SMA Negeri 1 Koba, located on Jl. Raya Arung Dalam, Koba District, Central Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, 33181. Participants in this study were determined using v, with the following criteria: 1) people who are directly involved in developing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba; 2) Voluntarily willing to be a participant. Data collection techniques in this study through interviews, observations, and documentation related to the role of the principal as an educator in developing the pedagogical competence of teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Koba, Central Bangka Regency. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using thematic qualitative analysis techniques, starting

with coding activities, then the formation of themes, and the discovery of the novelty of the research results (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The qualitative data analysis was conducted in two phases. Initially, a manual coding approach was employed to identify preliminary themes and patterns. This process involved reading and re-reading the data, highlighting significant excerpts, and categorizing them into initial codes following thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). Subsequently, the analysis was refined using a software-assisted method with Atlas.ti 9 to refine the coding, organize themes, and visualize relationships, ensuring a structured and comprehensive analysis. Finally, after the theory is generated with the help of interpretive procedures, it is presented. This research uses data analysis techniques using the steps proposed by Miles et al. (2014) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Visually, the data analysis techniques are depicted in Figure 1 below:

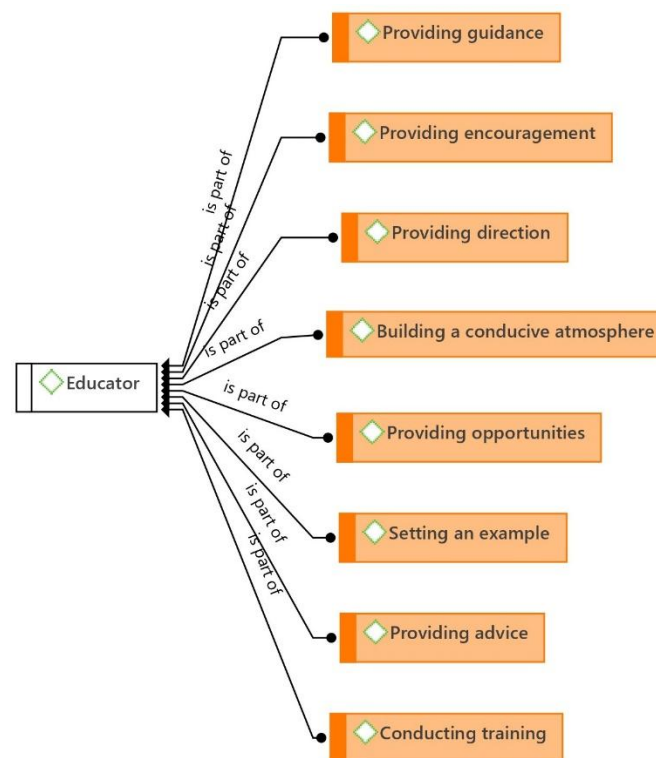


**Figure 1.** Data analysis techniques

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULTS

Based on the results of the data analysis that has been carried out, it is known that the role of the principal as an educator is shown in various forms of action, namely providing guidance, providing encouragement, providing direction, building a conducive atmosphere, providing opportunities, setting an example, providing advice, and conducting training. In summary, this can be seen in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2.** The results of the analysis of the principal's role as an educator

In more detail, Figure 2 can be understood as follows:

### **Providing guidance**

The principal plays a crucial role in guiding teachers at the school. The role of the principal in SMA Negeri 1 Koba in providing guidance involves addressing the issues teachers face. The guidance provided by the principal includes helping teachers develop their pedagogical competence. This coaching is conducted monthly. The following is a relevant statement from a teacher:

The principal implements a coaching approach by providing constructive feedback, helping teachers identify areas for development, and offering support for improvement (N5, lines 169-171).

This is in line with N2's statement during the interview as follows:

Every month, we have meetings; in addition to the principal's coaching, we also have a learning community (N2, lines 142-143).

### **Providing encouragement**

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba encourages teachers such as encouraging teachers to help each other, in the sense that teachers who are more proficient in science and technology help teachers who do not understand, and also provide access to teachers to attend training such as classroom training to broaden their horizons on innovative teaching methods. The following is a statement from one of the teachers:

Then, if we do not understand, senior teachers usually help us with the TU, or whoever is above the school they will help. So the teachers here help each other, especially us parents and senior teachers. As for science and technology, teachers often take part in independent training because there is much training nowadays. I used to take part in training, too, but it was only like Google Classroom training at the beginning of COVID

yesterday. So, the teachers also help each other in science and technology. If they are training or what, for example, if in a meeting, it must be conveyed to help senior teachers. The principal often encourages young teachers to help us elders (N7, lines 21-31).

### **Providing direction**

In providing direction to teachers regarding pedagogical competence, the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba can begin by addressing various issues, such as teacher errors during classroom instruction (KBM). Additionally, the principal offers guidance when there are deficiencies in performance evaluations and teacher discipline. This statement is relevant to N7's statement during the interview as follows:

The principal provides guidance on teaching during the monthly supervisory meetings; there is a routine every month (N7, lines 86-87).

The following is a statement from N2:

First, after teachers report their grades and other details, if there are deficiencies, they will be provided with guidance, possibly concerning teaching methods, behavior, and discipline, as all aspects are evaluated (N2, lines 91-94).

### **Building a conducive atmosphere**

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba develops teachers' pedagogical competence by building a conducive atmosphere within the school environment. A supportive learning climate among teachers builds a compelling, conducive atmosphere. The climate involves teachers collaborating and committing to support students' growth, development, and achievement. This statement is relevant to N4:

The learning climate in SMA Negeri 1 Koba is already very conducive, and it is crucial to ensure that the learning environment supports student development and teacher professionalism. The principal fosters a conducive learning climate by synergizing several key elements, such as teacher collaboration, support and training, the use of educational technology, equity and inclusivity, ethics, and discipline. Creating a positive learning climate in SMA Negeri 1 Koba is also important to achieve educational goals. This involves cooperation among teachers, students, parents, and school staff and a commitment to developing an educational environment that supports student growth, development, and achievement (N4, lines 22-31).

### **Providing opportunities**

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba has implemented various strategic steps to develop pedagogical competence by providing opportunities to teachers. The principal allows teachers to attend seminars or workshops organized by relevant educational institutions. Participation in these activities allows teachers to share experiences, gain new insights, and expand their professional networks. The following statement affirms that the principal has provided opportunities for teachers:

In terms of leadership, the principal has provided opportunities; for example, ooo there are activities, such as seminar or workshop activities and IHT activities, for teachers to participate in, but it depends on each teacher if the teacher wants to do, he/she can participate for competency development, especially pedagogical competence and others as well as professional and others (N2, lines 27-31).

Moreover, the principal also provides opportunities for all teachers and staff at the school to express their concerns without favoritism. I found this during the observation of attending a meeting with teachers at the school. This statement is relevant to N5:

The principal allows teachers to express ideas, concerns, or suggestions (N5, lines 161-162).

### **Setting an example**

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba sets an example by being a positive role model in the implementation of teaching. By doing so, the principal provides concrete evidence of the importance of good behavior within the school environment. This statement is relevant to N1:

First and foremost, I am the one who can set an example for the teachers and continuously motivate all of us to enhance our competence (N1, lines 172-174).

### **Providing advice**

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba advises teachers, which is considered a strategic action. The principal provides advice to teachers with the hope of advancing the school. The following is a relevant statement from a teacher:

The principal often provides advice anyway (N7, lines 85).  
This aligns with N7's statement during the interview:

For example, he provides advice during guidance sessions, hoping that learning at this school will be very good (N7, lines 131-133).

### **Conducting training**

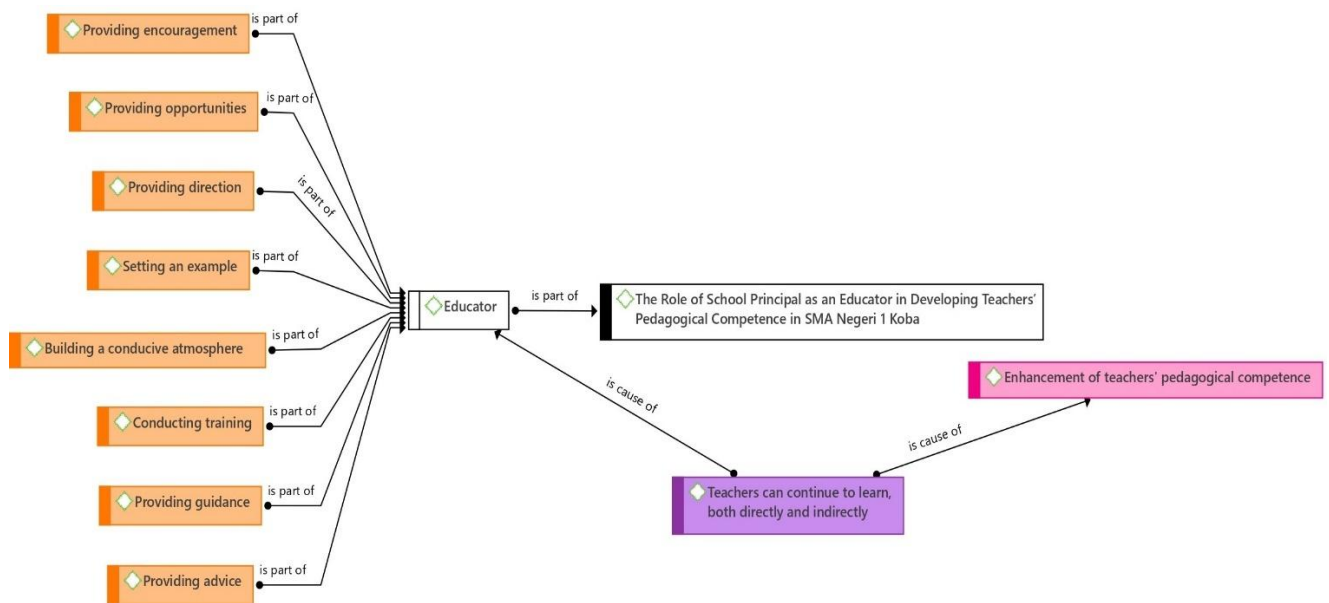
The SMA Negeri 1 Koba principal conducts training sessions for teachers to enhance their pedagogical competence. These training programs are designed to provide teachers with new knowledge and skills that can be applied in the classroom. The training conducted by the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba covers various aspects, including innovative teaching strategies, the use of technology in education, and a deep understanding of the curriculum and applicable learning standards. The principal needs to ensure that the training materials are tailored to meet the needs and challenges the teachers face at the school. This statement is relevant to N5's statement during the interview as follows:

By providing training programs that can develop teachers' professionalism, thereby improving their skills and pedagogical knowledge in SMA Negeri 1 Koba (N5, lines 132-134).

The following is a statement from N6:

Technological advancements do not mean we are falling behind; instead, with training programs, webinars, and in-house training (IHT), teachers will advance in the learning process, specifically in the use of technology (N6, lines 29-32).

## DISCUSSION



**Figure 9.** The role of the school principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba

The role of the school principal (Hasanah 2021; Widiyarti et al., 2023), is a crucial topic in improving teacher performance (Kurniawan & Hasanah 2021), especially in developing teachers' pedagogical competencies (Miasih & Hasanah 2021; Sudargini & Purwanto 2020). The role of the school principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competencies in SMA Negeri 1 Koba is illustrated in Figure 9.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the role of the principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba includes providing guidance, providing encouragement, providing direction, building a conducive atmosphere, providing opportunities, setting an example, providing advice, and conducting training.

The principal's guidance is crucial for teachers in developing their pedagogical competence. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba assists teachers by addressing their issues. The principal understands teachers' needs and challenges by providing appropriate guidance and creating effective solutions through targeted meetings. For example, helping senior teachers apply technology-based teaching media in line with current developments can foster an environment that enhances teachers' pedagogical competence. This aligns with Sutisna et al. (2023) A principal's effectiveness as an educator is reflected in their ability to guide teachers, staff, and students.

In addition, indirectly, in enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba, the principal encourages teachers to develop their pedagogical skills. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba encourages teachers to support one another when faced with problems or difficulties. For example, regarding science and technology (IPTEK) in SMA Negeri 1 Koba,

the principal encourages younger teachers to assist those less familiar. The principal also motivates teachers to broaden their horizons by developing innovative teaching methods, which may involve organizing various contextual training sessions and workshops tailored to the teachers' needs to improve their pedagogical skills. The encouragement provided by the SMA Negeri 1 Koba principal can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning within the school environment. In line with Kurnianingsih (2017), Prihantini et al. (2021) state that the principal's role as an educator includes encouraging teachers.

As an educator, the principal can contribute to developing teachers' pedagogical competence by providing direction. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba guides teachers in teaching activities to minimize errors and deficiencies in the classroom learning process. The principal provides a deep understanding of the applicable educational standards, including the curriculum implemented at the school and the learning requirements that teaching must meet. With this understanding, teachers can better direct their teaching in alignment with the school's policies and objectives. This perspective aligns with Malingkas (2022), who states that the principal as an educator has the responsibility to provide direction that can be applied by students, which is consistent with Asmani (2012), who views the principal as an educator providing direction and knowledge to both students and teachers. The principal's high commitment to the learning process and curriculum development necessitates special attention to teachers' competence.

In addition, building a conducive atmosphere is also one of the principal's roles in developing teachers' pedagogy. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba builds a conducive atmosphere through various means, such as promoting cooperation, providing support, and offering training. Cooperation allows teachers to share experiences, ideas, and successful teaching strategies. A conducive atmosphere will positively impact teacher performance at school and student achievement. Therefore, principals must effectively fulfill their role in creating an environment that supports teachers in building their pedagogical competence. This is in line with Malingkas (2022), who states that creating a supportive and conducive climate in school is one of the principal's functions as an educator.

As an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence, the principal can facilitate this by offering opportunities for teachers. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba does this by enabling teachers to engage in activities that enhance their skills, such as seminars, conferences, and workshops. The principal allows teachers to share experiences and acquire new insights by providing these opportunities. Additionally, the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba encourages teachers to voice their concerns openly. This practice helps teachers continuously update their knowledge and stay informed about the latest developments in education. This approach aligns with Mulyasa's (2020) view that principals should also create opportunities for teachers to improve their knowledge and skills.



As an educator, the principal plays an important role in setting a good example for teachers, educational staff, students, and other school community members. The principal's involvement in direct teaching or through supervision and support is a positive model for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills. The example set by the principal can inspire teachers to develop their pedagogical competence. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Koba talks about the importance of a positive attitude in the school environment and provides concrete evidence through action. This aligns with Priansa (2017), who states that a principal's effectiveness as an educator is reflected in their ability to serve as a role model for all school community members. Consistent with the findings of Kurniawan and Hasanah (2021) This indicates that the principal, as a role model for teacher creativity, gives instructions and provides concrete examples through developed creative work. The principal's efforts to set an example are expected to motivate teachers to understand better the importance of developing competence and creativity. This is also consistent with Sunaengsih et al. (2019), who assert that leadership role modeling is key to the success of managerial programs.

In addition, the principal needs to advise teachers in developing their pedagogical competence. The principal recognizes that teachers with strong pedagogical competence can positively impact student learning. This aligns with the views of Alhabsyi et al. (2022); Prihantini et al. (2021), who states that a principal acts as an educator by advising school community members.

The principal indirectly develops teachers' pedagogical competence in SMA Negeri 1 Koba as an educator by conducting training sessions. The principal understands the importance of developing pedagogical competence by conducting training programs to provide teachers with new knowledge and skills. This, in turn, helps further develop teachers' pedagogical competence at the school. The aligns with Mulyasa (2020) which states that in improving teacher performance, the principal as an educator can involve teachers in training programs. Similarly, Fitrah (2017) emphasizes that the principal must actively engage teachers in training and educational activities as an educator.

Based on the findings, the role of the principal as an educator in SMA Negeri 1 Koba is evident in enabling teachers to develop their pedagogical competencies through learning, both directly and indirectly. According to Mulyasa (2020), the principal as an educator must continuously strive to improve the quality of learning conducted by teachers in the school. In this regard, the factor or level of experience significantly impacts the principal's professionalism, particularly in supporting teachers' understanding of their task implementation. Experience as a teacher is the principal's ability to perform their duties and the training and education they have received.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data found, it can be concluded that the role of the school principal as an educator in developing teachers' pedagogical competence is carried out through providing guidance, providing encouragement, providing direction, building a conducive atmosphere, providing opportunities, setting an example, providing advice, and conducting training. The principal's role as an educator enables teachers to develop their pedagogical competence through direct and indirect learning.

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