

The Principal's Role in Improving Teacher Competence in Madrasah Aliyah

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ABSTRACT

As a leader, a principal is vital in improving teacher competence. Teachers with significantly good competence can improve the quality of their in-class learning. This research describes the principal's role in improving teacher competence in Madrasah Aliyah of Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta (MA ICBB). The research method used qualitative research with a case study. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The subjects were comprised of seven sources, a school principal, and five teachers. The data analysis technique was data collection, reduction, representation, and conclusion. Data validity was obtained from the triangulation technique. The research result showed that 1) a principal encouraged and provided opportunities for teachers of MA ICBB to participate in training and seminars inside or outside school to increase academic competence; 2) a principal controlled and supervised the behavior and performance of teachers to improve teacher personality competence; 3) a principal conducted final semester evaluation meeting that was aimed to invite teachers in the discussion forum concerning on phenomena occurred, that was obtained from interaction and analysis of teachers toward all students in MA ICBB to enhance teacher social competence; and 4) a principal provided the opportunity for all teachers to continue the higher study, attend seminars, as well as he provided information and motivation to teachers to improve teacher professional competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a leader, a principal is essential in improving teacher competence. Teachers with significantly good competence can enhance the quality of their in-class learning. One of the fundamental problems encountered in the current educational world is a low learning process as the consequence of low teacher competence (Istiningsih et al., 2020; Leonard, 2016; Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021) for the use of various strategies and learning methods, teaching materials, and learning resources. Besides these, other factors, which become obstacles, are also impacted by the need for more variety of learning resources used by teachers and students for teaching and learning activities (Zulkifli & Royes, 2018).

Teachers are also the elements of the educational personnel that significantly contribute to influencing the success of these educational purposes because they directly interact with

students to lead them to produce the output according to what is expected. Furthermore, the teacher's competence must be improved by supervising human resource management (Febriana, 2021; Jones & Walters, 2008; Sudrajat, 2020). It is insufficient for the teachers to have only the competence to make the instruction and examination easier but also have the ability to teach how students think creatively and critically (Suyatno et al., 2019; Suyudi et al., 2022) to make the decision and solve problems, and teachers also must have the ability to teach students to communicate and collaborate well, they also must be able to utilize the technology for learning tools and prepare students to utilize its technology as well. A teacher also must be able to educate students to have life skills, responsibility, and social souls (El Asli et al., 2012).

Improving teachers' quality depends on the role of components at school. The principal has the most influential role in improving teacher quality at school (Marce et al., 2020; Megawati et al., 2021; Utama & Sunu, 2022; Zaini, 2022). A leader hugely drives the wheel of the organization. According to Mulyasa (2004), a failure and a success resulting from a specific organization are influenced mainly by the organization's leader because he is the one who drives and decides the organization's direction to reach the desired goals. A principal, as a leader in an educational institution, plays a vital role in improving teacher performance (Alhabsyi et al., 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2022); one attempt to do this is by maximizing the focus on teacher's competence (Damanik, 2019; Mukhtar & MD, 2020; Pianda, 2018).

A principal must supervise teachers to be good instructors and educators. Principal leadership is one of the variables that can influence teacher performance improvements (Purwoko, 2018). On the other hand, both competent and incompetent teachers should be trained for the sake of the time – in the learning process and toward the taught materials. The principal leadership's role in developing teachers' competence is to conduct more in-depth studies (König et al., 2020). The survey is expected to provide input to the MA ICB principal, improving the competence of primary teachers, especially for this school. In general, it can be an essential reference for schools or Islamic boarding schools, especially for improving basic competence in their schools.

In MA ICBB, teachers have graduated with bachelor's degrees with intellectual expertise according to the subjects taught. Teachers have a high discipline for the teaching-learning process and come on time according to the schedule (interview of the principal; January 12, 2021). According to a survey of teacher competencies focused on material expertise, about 89% of teachers have taught according to their expertise. An important factor influencing the improvement of teachers' competencies in MA ICBB is the principal's role in enhancing teachers' competencies (Documentation of MA ICB teacher survey results, unpublished). A school principal designs the process of developing teachers' competencies according to the basic standard of teacher competence that the government and school itself have set (interview with a principal and survey on teachers on January 10, 2022). As a leader, a principal

must carry out his role to improve teacher competencies continuously. Previous studies have shown that the principal's leadership enhances teacher competency. Purwoko (2018), through correlational quantitative research on 659 SMKN teachers in the Sleman district, shows that the school principal's leadership positively impacts teacher performance. Other studies state that school principals' leadership also moderately affects teacher performance (Haryono et al., 2020; Zubaidah et al., 2021). Based on this background, this study aims to explore and describe the role of a school principal in improving teacher competence in MA ICBB. The findings are hoped to be an alternative framework for improving teacher competence, especially in *Madrasa*.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a type that discusses the phenomenon of natural background (Creswell, 2013). Meanwhile, a case study is an approach attempting to explore a phenomenon in contexts under various data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Dumez, 2015). With a case study, this finding explores a sensation under the role of a school principal in improving teacher competence in MA ICBB.

2.2. Research Subject

Using a purposive sampling technique, the research subjects comprised 7 Key Informants Interviews (KII), one school principal, and six MA ICB teachers (Ames et al., 2019; Etikan, 2016). The principal is the key person in this research because he is the party that best understands his role in improving teacher competence. The researchers also involved six teachers as comparisons to maintain the objectivity of the data. All involved participants met some criteria for this study: being a principal and teacher in MA ICBB, voluntarily participating in research, and having at least three years of teaching experience. All informants coded with P1-P7 will be anonymous as the qualitative research field ethics (Young, 2017).

2.3. Research Data Collection

Data were collected through key informant interviews, observation, and documentation. Researchers use semi-structured interviews so that data collection is directed according to the research objectives (Aleandri & Russo, 2015; Kallio et al., 2016). The manual discussion was developed based on a general framework of the components of the principal's role in improving teacher competence (Schott et al., 2020). The observation was non-participant, where the researcher only played a role and was not directly involved in the studied social phenomenon (Hall, 2020; Handley et al., 2020). The documentation used to collect the data consisted of documents related to the relevant topics studied (Morgan, 2022a). The three research data, data from interviews, observation results, and document

analysis, used triangulation to reveal the role of school principals in improving teacher competence.

2.4. Data Analysis Technique

The researcher used the thematic data analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Morgan, 2022a). The stages of data analysis consist of six steps: 1) Note-taking. Researchers record data according to what is said by the participant or by the results of observations. Second transcription. Researchers carried out interview transcripts and re-read the data as a whole so that researchers could win the full meaning of all the data collected (Liamputtong, 2009). Third, coding. Researchers code all data; codes that have similar purposes are collected into one categorization (fourth step), several of the same categories are then made into one theme (fifth step), determine how the themes found are displayed in qualitative narratives, and make interpretations findings (sixth step) (Rapley & Silverman, 2011). According to this stage, the researcher found four themes: the principal's role in improving teacher personality compatibility, the principal's role in increasing teacher social competence, the principal's role in increasing teacher pedagogic competence, and the principal's role in increasing teacher professional competence.

2.5. Research Data Validity

The triangulation technique is used for data validity (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). Triangulation is a technique that seeks confluence at one midpoint of information from collected data to check and compare existing data. Four kinds of triangulation as an examination technique utilize sources, methods, investigators, and theories. This study used triangulation of sources to compare and re-check the significance of information obtained through different times and tools in qualitative research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore and describe the role of a school principal in improving teacher competence in MA ICBB. The data analysis results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Data analysis results

Theme	Codes
The principal's role in improving teacher pedagogic competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing attending the seminar 2. Provide opportunities to attend training 3. Strategic work plan for improving the quality of human resources
The principal's role in improving teacher personality compatibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct supervision 2. Role model 3. Rebuke with heart
The principal's role in increasing teacher social competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation meeting at the end of each semester 2. The principal's self-reflection 3. Listen to the teacher's complaints

Theme	Codes
The principal's role in increasing teacher professional competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing the opportunity to continue their studies 2. Actively conduct training 3. Following various types of education and training 4. <i>Daurah kitab</i> training

3.1. The Principal's Role in Improving Teacher Pedagogic Competence

Pedagogic competence is the primary and pivotal role that teachers must have in learning. Academic competence is a teacher's ability to manage instruction for students. The teachers are responsible for improving the quality of the nation's education.

To improve teacher pedagogy, a principal provides teachers in MA ICBB to attend training or seminars that brief them on supporting the instructional and learning process, learning strategy based on student characteristics, teaching materials, and lesson plans.

A principal also provides the opportunity for educational personnel or teachers to participate in training and seminars through school administration, which provides exercises for them in MA ICBB, i.e., during the pandemic, the government requires all schools to limit the activities and direct physical contact so that they must conduct online learning. This hampers teachers unfamiliar with internet-based applications supporting instructions, such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc. Because of this phenomenon, the MA ICBB principal provides training for teachers to use those internet-based platforms. This is by the statement of Participant 1, such that:

"Instruction during the pandemic conducted virtually/online utilizing the applications/tools that support virtual learning activities. The school held training to guide teachers unfamiliar with the internet, which it has provided to suit the need of each teacher" (Interview was conducted on March 15, 2023).

This statement was supported by Participant 2, that:

"a principal has conducted a training on the use of online learning system that was limited to teachers and carried out alternately because of the pandemic, and a training was also conducted through Google Meet and Zoom." (The interview was conducted on March 15, 2023).

The principal also held the agenda in the form of strategic and annual work plans to increase the quality of human resources regularly carried out before the new semester. This develops teaching methods and curriculum management and improves the quality of teachers in delivering instruction to students in MA ICBB. This is similar to Participant 1 statement, such that:

"a school held a meeting for designing work plans regularly before the new semester, led by the principal, to find out the technical or no-technical needs of teachers to give their

best" (The interview was conducted on March 15, 2023).

This aligns with the opinion of Daryanto (2011) in terms of increasing teacher pedagogic competence. A principal must carry out the policies and practices on student behavior management, be the companion of teachers and various teaching methods, and invite the teacher to the areas where they need to be supported for improvement. A principal also made a strategic annual work plan to implement quality improvement. In addition, he formed a research group among teachers focused on learning technology, which consisted of teachers with various expertise. A principal facilitated them with the research facilities. The study in this community focused on the practices of learning technologies, which teachers first created and then trialed for some time.

3.2. The Principal's Role in Improving Teacher Personality Compatibility

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Permendiknas) No. 18 of 2007 concerning Certification In-Service Teachers, personality competence refers to how a teacher acts according to religious, legal, and social norms and Indonesian national culture. Teacher behavior is an example that students will imitate, so teachers need to behave in a way that reflects the values of *Pancasila*.

In improving teacher personality competence in MA ICBB, according to an interview with the researcher and a headmaster of MA ICBB, with his authority, he conducted direct supervision toward teachers for the sake of their behaviors and performances. This supervision of a principal included some activities: supervising the implementation of in-class instruction, checking and assessing the completeness of teacher administration, and providing motivation and coaching to teachers to achieve educational goals according to National Education Standards. This supervision was conducted periodically, in which a principal supervised teacher personality competence through internal meetings that teachers of MA ICBB attended. This aligns with the statement of the Participant 3, such as:

"Not long ago, once the principal held a supervision by invitation. The activity lasted under the lecture of a principal regarding learning administration" (The interview was conducted on March 15, 2023).

A principal strived to represent an excellent example as a robust leader for in-school self-development, being open-minded toward all teachers and personnel in carrying out his position's primary duties and function and overcoming and controlling himself in dealing with problems at school.

Furthermore, participant 3 stated that a principal often invited teachers to sit together, reprimanded them with good talk, and did not discourage them. This statement is as follows:

"a principal invited teachers to sit together, converse, or conduct small meetings led by

him. He reprimanded with the good talks. He addressed the problems with a cool head and did not rush" (Interview on March 15, 2023).

A successful leader of Madrasa is visible when he can carry out the function and his leadership well toward teachers, staff, students, and others. According to Hawi (2013), in improving personality competence, a principal must 1) provide training for developing teacher personality, 2) form relationships well and professionally among teachers and societies hands-on the educational mission, 3) ask teachers to carry out exceptional guidance for students in needs or with disabilities, 4) provide training or invites the teacher to carry out the school administration, and 5) ask teachers to conduct simple research by reviewing the basic concepts of scientific research and conduct it. According to Hendarman (2015), a principal must supervise and improve the supervision and control of teachers to improve their performance.

3.3. The Principal's Role in Increasing Teacher-Social Competence

According to the Standard of National Education, social competence becomes the fourth competence referring to the juridical foundation (Law No. 14 of 2005 about teachers and lecturers). This competence relates to how teacher competence describes the interaction between students and surrounding people.

Regarding social competence, MA ICBB organized the agenda as an evaluation meeting held every final semester, which all the staff, teachers, and a principal of MA ICBB attended. Based on information from a principal of MA ICBB, this meeting asked teachers to discuss the phenomenon at school directly and invited them to solve problems concerning psychology, skill, interest, talent, and others. This evaluation meeting aims to train teachers to accept feedback and suggestions related to the teaching-learning process. In the interview, participant 1 stated that:

"In the evaluation meeting, the principal chaired the meeting, directed, and provided input for teaching-learning activities managed by teachers and students to be more active" (Interview on March 15, 2023).

Furthermore, participant 4 stated what supporting and explaining the activities in the final semester evaluation meeting in MA ICBB, like the following statement:

"If a problem is found in the school environment, the principal always tries to solve it immediately by deliberation and appointment to school administrators and teachers who can solve existing problems" (Interview on March 15, 2023).

This activity reflected that the principal was not an idealistic leader, and he listened to teachers' complaints in MA ICBB. This demonstrates the flexibility that leaders must have to

blend into all the school communities.

This aligns with Gunawan's (2000) opinion that the principal must build the mentality of teachers to make criticism and input related to the teaching-learning process. He must also build democracy and appreciate students' thinking and opinions to improve the quality of education. The principal also trained teachers to respect student's diversity. Eventually, the principal organized all learnings involving students in them.

3.4. The Principal's Role in Increasing Teacher Professional Competence

Based on the observation in MA ICBB, it has been identified that for some teachers, their background and the subjects they taught are unrelated due to the lack of educators in MA ICBB. Since then, the principal of MA ICBB, in his interview, has provided opportunities for teachers to pursue higher degrees. This is proven by six teachers and staff who have continued master's degrees and five teachers who have graduated from middle school pursuing bachelor's degrees.

In addition, the school has also actively conducted training to improve teacher professionalism and provide information and motivation to teachers in MA ICBB to attend seminars to maximize teaching competence and transfer information and knowledge to students. While interviewed, participant 2 stated that:

"a principal held sorts of seminars and training, such as a training to design the administration, create questions, and use learning method, to improve teacher professionalism competence" (Interview on March 15, 2023).

Participant 4, furthermore, stated as follows:

"The training can be in the form of seminars and *Dhaurah Kitab*. Teachers who want to continue their study are also allowed by the principal, aimed to be more expert in their fields" (Interview on March 15, 2023).

The educational profession, especially in teaching, has the main task of providing a service for society in the academic world. Aligned with that, it is clear that teacher professionalism implies increasing all resources and efforts to provide optimal services for the community. According to Ma'mur (2012), in improving professional competence, a school principal must increase the motivation to work with educators and education personnel, using a system of rewarding achievements and sanctions for violations of the code of ethics regulations. School principals must also implement and formulate supervision and use the results of care as material to improve teacher competence.

Improving school education quality must be balanced with the synergy of various educational components, especially teacher professionalism competence. This is in line with Arifin (2017), a principal must take steps as follows to develop teacher professionalism

competence: a) building the commitment to make teachers consistent and persistent, also keeping up the development of science and technology, b) encouraging teachers to write scientific papers and do the classroom action research, c) inviting teachers to be actively involved in the activity of the development, enriching learning materials from thematic teaching meeting (MGMP), actively attending seminars, training, and scientific forums, and providing opportunities for the teacher to continue studies master and doctoral levels.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to describe the role of school principals in improving teacher competency at MA ICB Yogyakarta. Based on data analysis, this study concludes that, firstly, in enhancing the pedagogic competence of teachers in MA ICBB, a principal encourages and allows them to participate in training and seminars in school and outside the school environment, provides internal movement such as training for utilizing the internet-based application to support online learning and carry out annual strategic work plan to improve the quality of human resources. Secondly, in enhancing the personality competence of teachers in MA ICBB, a principal plays an active role by conducting supervision and supervising directly to examine the behavior and performance of teachers in MA ICBB. Thirdly, in increasing the social competence of teachers in MA ICBB, a principal has played his role well and actively by carrying out a final semester evaluation meeting, which teachers and staff attended, intending to invite them to discuss the phenomenon that occurred in the school environment, which is obtained from interaction and analysis of teachers toward all MA ICBB students. Fourthly, in increasing the professional competence of teachers in MA ICBB, a principal provides the opportunity for teachers to pursue higher degrees. Also, he provides training and information for them to improve their professionalism and ability to use their expertise. This finding offers a framework for a school principal to enhance teacher competence under personality, social, pedagogy, and professional competencies, especially for Madrasa teachers.

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