Optimizing the Leadership Function of the Principal in Increasing Teacher Loyalty in Schools

Daman Rasman Syarif Hidayat
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: daman@unindra.ac.id

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the principal's role in increasing teacher job loyalty. The research was conducted qualitatively and descriptively in a multisite setting at the UPI Laboratory Elementary School and the UPI Laboratory Junior High School in Bandung. Data were gathered from primary informants such as school administrators, students, boards, and foundations. In-depth interviews, both organized and unstructured, participatory observation, and paper analyses were used to gather data. After reducing the data from field observations, records, and interview transcripts, it is analyzed to determine its authenticity and credibility using the triangulation method. The study's findings indicate that adopting a responsibility and moral perspective is a requirement of the instructor in the sense of a working partnership. Additionally, a family-like atmosphere is fostered by active contact between the principal and students, increasing teacher loyalty.

Keywords: Principal, Teacher, Leadership, Loyalty.

A. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is primarily determined by the learning process in educational institutions, for example, schools. In addition, school principals and teachers are the primary movers who significantly influence the implementation of the student learning process while in the school environment (Suti, 2011). Without good teacher loyalty and an adequate role for school principals in managing schools, it isn’t easy to improve the quality of education or achieve national education standards (Pianda, 2018).

The principal serves as a leader and manager in the classroom, tasked with ensuring the school’s vision, purpose, and priorities are realized. As a leader, the principal is always required to make the best decisions in formulating and implementing school policies. It is this role as a leader who needs the principal to optimize and increase the loyalty of the people who work together around him, namely teachers (Shaked, 2018).
According to Labaree (1992), an improvement of teacher success in learning will be accomplished if the principal can motivate teachers to work diligently and with a high level of commitment to the mission at hand. Without proper assistance from the principal to improve teacher loyalty and success, teachers will never be able to fully fulfill their responsibilities, which include teaching, preparing, directing, and improving each student’s ability. Thus, in order to strengthen and expand teacher engagement and loyalty, the position of school principals as educational leaders must be expanded.

The principal plays a critical role in enhancing the school's consistency through commitment and effective teacher performance. Teacher loyalty and commitment to the school is an ongoing process where teachers are loyal in carrying out their duties and obligations following the direction of the principal. But also attention to them from other aspects apart from the organization to organizational success and sustainable progress. Meanwhile, teachers in school organizations are required to have a high commitment to achieving the school's mission, vision, and goals (Cowther et al., 2009).

In public sector organizations, the inner bond between employees and the organization can be built from the organization's same mission, vision, and goals, not just a work bond (Hakim, 2015). Their bond to work in a government agency is not just a salary, but rather an inner bond, for example, wanting to become a servant of the state and a servant of the community, social status, etc. That is why school principals need to implement a role approach strategy, both as a leader and as a family, to maintain a harmonious, conducive atmosphere and working climate in schools and focus on the school's goals (Karweti, 2010).

The principal has a role in creating a school culture. Suppose it refers to teacher loyalty and teacher motivation, of course. In that case, it cannot be separated from the position and strategy of the principal itself in building the existing culture in schools, especially work culture. Meanwhile (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015) stated in carrying out the role of leader and family. Principals have differences in carrying out these two roles because of gender relations. In school organizations, gender relations describe social ties related to teachers’ roles, duties, rights, and professional responsibilities as educators, which are constructed both socially and culturally and are supported by mutually agreed rules within the school organization. The gender relations that are built will determine the success of the school in achieving its goals because this gender relationship is closely related to the extent to which a school principal can put his role in carrying out his duties as a leader and family to think, analyze and motivate teachers to commit to something meaningful—related to the work environment at school (Dumais, 2002).

The aim of this paper is to discuss the critical role of school principals in increasing teacher loyalty and dedication. Additionally, this report would identify the efforts
that school principals must make in order to maximize teacher loyalty and dedication. This paper would provide a theoretical and functional contribution. In theory, it will raise awareness of the principal's role in fostering teacher loyalty. Almost, it will help the principal better understand his or her position as an educational leader in the school.

B. METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative with a multisite approach to designing research results that depart from the same problem and background, which are then generalized to develop a theory (Ulfatin, 2015). (Bogdan, R.C & Biklen, 1982) a research method with a multisite study approach was deemed appropriate to develop research on the role approach strategy undertaken by the principal in improving teacher performance. The technique used is constant comparative. Namely, data collection is carried out repeatedly at the research location, both on the first and second sites. Data from both sites are analyzed, and the data from the analysis results obtained are used to develop a descriptive model of the existing phenomena.

The data were obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with the UPI Laboratory Primary School principal and the UPI Laboratory Junior High School. Then it was supported by the results of interviews with teachers and foundations who felt directly from the strategy of approaching the role of leader and family applied by the principal in each school. As well as making direct observations of the existing work atmosphere in each school.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As the school leader, the principal cannot be separated from the sharing of his duties, for example, as an administrator, manager of various resources in the school, and teaching leader. Principals who serve as operational staff must have professional competence as school leaders. Referring to the Decree of the Minister of State Apparatus Order Number 296 of 1996 concerning the Position of Teacher, it is stated that the principal is a teacher who gets additional assignments. In other words, the principal must have managerial and leadership abilities to become an effective and efficient educational institution in carrying out the learning process. Or in other words, the school as a learning centre must be of high quality. In improving school quality, the principal’s leadership is essential in making decisions related to various activities at school (Pianda, 2018).

Even though school principals have complex responsibilities, efforts to improve teacher performance must still be made. Principals must focus more attention and
make efforts on teaching leadership. This condition is because the principal as a teaching leader is a model, trainer, facilitator, and supervisor, not a guardian or instructor of teaching. This means that when the principal comes to supervise teachers’ learning in the classroom, the principal must not act as an evaluator or judge. However, when the principal does supervision, he must apply five essential principles, namely (1) consultative, collegial and non-hierarchical relationships, (2) implemented democratically, (3) teacher-centred, (4) based on need, and (5) the existence of professional assistance (Bredeson, 2000).

According to the study’s findings, the principal used a holistic approach as a leader and a family, taking into account a variety of factors related to the challenges encountered by teachers at school. The teacher must complete the strategy of approaching the task as an obligation in professional relations. The principal in the two sites studied played a role as a leader and a family in increasing teacher loyalty. As leaders, the two principals in the school are oriented towards professional relationships between superiors and members. The tasks that have been given to the teacher must be completed following the agreement on what tasks are the teacher’s obligations (Shaked, 2018).

The approach between rights and obligations is the most effective approach by the two principals when they act as leaders. Meanwhile, when playing as a family, the principal applies a persuasive approach strategy. Starting with building active communication with teachers at school, visiting teachers’ homes to make teachers feel comfortable at work. Teachers are also open to the principal regarding what problems are being faced, both school assignments and personal matters of teachers. So that the principal acts as a parent, friend, or friend to the teacher, not just a partnership between the leader and the members.

A spiritual approach to increase teacher loyalty in schools, as leaders in religion-based schools full of religious culture in school management activities. The school principal takes a religious approach strategy by internalizing religious values in the holy book Al-Qur'an and shoheh hadiths regarding duties and obligations in working and studying. Habitual values of honesty, discipline and adherence to religion advise teachers that teachers are not just teaching and carrying out institutional tasks. However, teachers must be good role models for students in terms of morals and aqidah. The school principal also guides teachers on spiritual mastery to support learning in schools through the Koran teacher program. The teacher is obliged to participate in these activities and agreed upon in the form of a contract when the teacher is accepted to teach at the school. With this contract system, it is hoped that teachers will be accustomed to following existing regulations in schools and are committed to carrying out their duties as a form of community and religious service (Luddin, 2013).
The family approach through active communication to increase teacher work loyalty, the principal takes a persuasive approach. When acting as a family, the principal does not keep his distance from the teacher. Teachers are asked to be open in conveying the problems faced, and then they can find solutions together. The principal always tries to build a personal closeness with the teacher, such as discussions outside working hours and visits to the teacher's house so that the family atmosphere at school can run well as part of an effort to increase teacher loyalty in carrying out their duties at school (Mataputun, 2018).

The principal can build the role as a leader and supervisor by building personal relationships through measurement and clear objectives of the tasks that must be completed by the teacher (Drago-Severson, 2012)—building teacher commitment to work, of course, the principal needs to make a conducive work culture in schools so that teachers are always carried away by the atmosphere of the work climate at school and can work as well as possible. To achieve this, the principal needs to build active communication with the teacher. Active communication becomes a means for teachers to translate the direction of the principal. In addition to communication, the principal's role is to set an example (Pan & Nyeu, 2019).

The principal must set an example to the teacher, such as attending school on time, completing administrative paperwork and collecting timely, honest, responsible and exemplary attitudes, words and actions. Through a role like this can be a strategy for school principals to increase teacher loyalty at work. Then the principal must also pay attention to every teacher in the school in their daily activities. It does not rule out that there could be problems with teachers who are reluctant to teach or do not collect learning administration completeness because they experience problems and feel unnoticed by the principal to become negligent towards his job. So the principal must continue to supervise and pay attention to all teachers as part of his role as a leader in the school.

Apart from the role of leader, other strategies can be applied by principals in increasing teacher commitment. The spiritual approach is considered necessary because spiritual values are believed to make humans behave according to the positive values of religious teachings that they believe (Fry & Matherly, 2006). For schools with a background in religion-based schools, a spiritual approach effectively increases teacher commitment through spiritual touch about working part of worship. Then sincerity and sincerity in educating is a charity that will not be broken throughout life—spiritual values like this need to be internalized by the principal in giving influence to the teacher. Naturally, because of the attachment to belief in spiritual matters, the teacher always commits to working (Fry & Matherly, 2006).

The assumption is that the principal is the priest for the teacher in the school. Of course, the principal must be able to show his religious side as a leader. Principals need to show good aqidah and morals to provide role models for teachers. The
principal also requires to give an example of the values of honesty, honesty, patience, and discipline at work. If this can be applied well, a spiritual approach can increase teacher work commitment because positive values in religion can influence humans to behave towards good deals. The awareness that doing work is part of worship can make teachers devote all their thoughts and energies to seriously carry out their duties responsibly because of the influence of the elements of the spiritual approach taken by the school principal (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020).

The following approach that the principal can take in increasing teacher loyalty is the approach of being the closest person to the teacher or family to the teacher when he is in the school environment. The principal is a leader, a parent, and even a friend who can create a sense of comfort when the teacher is at school. With kinship relationships that are well fostered, teachers can express all their complaints about problems faced with school assignments and personal issues that can also affect teacher concentration while working at school (Sari, 2020).

The principal, of course, must also have a humane sense of the teacher, that the teacher is not just a colleague but also a family for the principal. This means that if there are teachers facing problems, it will also be a problem for the principal concerning the tasks that the teacher must complete. Suppose the teacher experiences issues that make the teacher himself unable to carry out his duties optimally. In that case, it will undoubtedly impact the learning process in the school, which will cause more severe problems if the principal is unable to handle the situation by taking a family approach (Gusman, 2020). Meanwhile, if the atmosphere of family relations is well established in the school environment, the teacher will bring up the problems faced by the school principal themselves. Meanwhile, on the positive side, if the family approach taken by the principal is well established, it will increase teacher loyalty and productivity at work (Juniaawati, 2017). There is an inner attachment to the school that is so strong that there is an initiative to work optimally in helping the school achieve the school’s vision, mission, and goals.

D. CONCLUSION

The principal applies a role approach strategy as a leader of the school principal by implementing a role approach strategy as a leader. The existence of rewards for teachers who can carry out tasks well is the principal’s way of motivating teachers always to be loyal to work. The spiritual approach taken by the principal to increase teacher loyalty in schools is through the perspective of religious values, a balance between rights and obligations. The values of honesty, discipline and obedience in implementing are strategies to increase teacher work loyalty, conveyed by the principal, both as a leader and as a family in carrying out their roles. The principal carries out the family approach through active communication to increase teacher loyalty through visits to the teacher’s house to create openness and personal
closeness as a family so that teachers can be open if they experience problems in carrying out their duties with this personal closeness, it is hoped that the teacher can always be motivated and increase commitment at work.

REFERENCES

1. Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Methods Of Social Research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
2. Bredeson, P. V. (2000). The School Principal's Role in Teacher Professional Development. Journal of In-Service Education, 26(2), 385-401.
3. Crowther, F., Ferguson, M., & Hann, L. (2009). Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success. Corwin Press.
4. Drago-Severson, E. (2012). New Opportunities for Principal Leadership: Shaping School Climates for Enhanced Teacher Development. Teachers College Record, 114(3), 1-44.
5. Dumais, S. A. (2002). Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success: The Role of Habitus. Sociology of Education, 44-68.
6. Fry, L. W., & Matherly, L. L. (2006). Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Performance: An Exploratory Study. In Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.
7. Gruenert, S., & Whitaker, T. (2015). School Culture Rewired: How To Define, Assess, And Transform It. ASCD.
8. Gusman, H. E. (2020). Hubungan Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dengan Kinerja Guru Di SMP N Kecamatan Palembayan Kabupaten Agam. Jurnal Bahana Manajemen Pendidikan, 2(1), 293-301.
9. Hakim, A. (2015). Peran Kepemimpinan Dan Budaya Organisasi Terhadap Kinerja Sumber Daya Manusia Di Wawotobi. Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis, 16(1), 1-11.
10. Juniawati, N. (2017). Kontribusi Kepemimpinan Partisipatif dan Supervisi Kepala Sekolah terhadap Kinerja Mengajar Guru SD Negeri Se-Bandung Timur. Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan, 24(2), 121-130.
11. Karweti, E. (2010). Pengaruh Kemampuan Manajerial Kepala Sekolah dan Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Motivasi Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru SLB Di Kabupaten Subang. Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, 11(2), 77-89.
12. Kusumaningrum, D. E., Sumarsono, R. B., & Gunawan, I. (2020). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Pembelajaran, Kepemimpinan Perubahan, Kepemimpinan Spiritual, Budaya Sekolah, dan Etika Profesi terhadap Kinerja Mengajar Guru. JMSP (Jurnal Manajemen dan Supervisi Pendidikan), 4(3), 198-219.
13. Labaree, D. (1992). Power, Knowledge, And The Rationalization Of Teaching: A Genealogy Of The Movement To Professionalize Teaching, Harvard educational review, 62(2), 123-155.
14. Luddin, A. B. M. (2013). Kinerja Kepala Sekolah dalam Kegiatan Bimbingan dan Konseling. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 19(2).
15. Mataputun, Y. (2018). *KEPEMIMPINAN KEPALA SEKOLAH: Berbasis Kecerdasan Intelektual, Emosional, dan Spiritual Terhadap Iklim Sekolah*. Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia.
16. Pan, H. L. W., & Nyeu, F. Y. (2019). Changing Practices of School Leadership in Taiwan: Evolving Education Reforms. In *Perspectives on School Leadership in Asia Pacific Contexts* (pp. 47-60). Springer, Singapore.
17. Pianda, D. (2018). *Kinerja Guru: Kompetensi Guru, Motivasi Kerja Dan Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah*. Jejak Publisher.
18. Sari, Y. (2020). Peningkatan Kerjasama di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Bahana Manajemen Pendidikan*, 1(1).
19. Shaked, H. (2018). Why Principals Sidestep Instructional Leadership: The Disregarded Question of Schools’ Primary Objective. *Journal of School Leadership*, 28(4), 517-538.
20. Suti, M. (2011). Strategi Peningkatan Mutu di Era Otonomi Pendidikan. *Jurnal Medtek*, 3(2), 1-6.
21. Ulfatin, N. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif di Bidang Pendidikan: Teori dan Aplikasinya*. Malang: Media Nusa Creative.