



The Principal as an Agent of Quality Improvement: The Role of Classroom Observation in the Professional Development of Teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tulung

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ABSTRACT

School principals play a role in improving school quality. School principals are teachers who are given the additional task of managing educational units and leading learning in their schools. One of the three competencies of school principals is professional competence, which includes the sub-indicator of school principal learning leadership, namely learning leadership in planning, implementation, assessment, and student learning achievement, taking into account the characteristics of teachers. The principal has the task of conducting supervision, which is now better known as classroom observation. The objectives of this study are: 1) to develop teacher professionalism, 2) to develop teachers' ability to choose learning methods, 3) to develop teachers' ability to control the classroom. The classroom observation conducted by the principal on 27 teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tulung can develop teacher professionalism, develop teachers' ability to choose learning methods, develop teachers' ability to control the classroom, thereby improving the quality of SMP Negeri 3 Tulung.

ABSTRAK

Kepala sekolah berperan dalam meningkatkan kualitas sekolah. Kepala sekolah adalah guru yang diberi tugas tambahan untuk mengelola pendidikan dan memimpin pembelajaran di sekolah mereka. Salah satu dari tiga kompetensi kepala sekolah adalah kompetensi profesional, yang mencakup sub-indikator kepemimpinan pembelajaran kepala sekolah, yaitu kepemimpinan pembelajaran dalam perencanaan, pelaksanaan, penilaian, dan pencapaian hasil belajar siswa, dengan mempertimbangkan karakteristik guru. Kepala sekolah memiliki tugas melakukan supervisi, yang sekarang lebih dikenal sebagai observasi kelas. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah: 1) mengembangkan profesionalisme guru, 2) mengembangkan kemampuan guru dalam memilih metode pembelajaran, 3) mengembangkan kemampuan guru dalam mengontrol kelas. Observasi kelas yang dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah terhadap 27 guru di SMP Negeri 3 Tulung dapat mengembangkan profesionalisme guru, mengembangkan kemampuan guru dalam memilih metode pembelajaran, mengembangkan kemampuan guru dalam mengendalikan kelas, sehingga meningkatkan kualitas SMP Negeri 3 Tulung.

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INTRODUCTION

As the most influential leader who determines the progress of the school, the principal must have administrative skills, high commitment, and flexibility in carrying out their duties. Quality leadership of the principal must have the ability to improve teacher performance through educational staff development programs. Therefore, the principal must have the personality or traits and abilities and skills to lead an educational institution (Uray Iskandar, 2013). One of these skills is the skill of observation. Several factors influence the improvement of school quality, one of which is the principal conducting classroom observations or supervision. Supervision is an act of monitoring and the principal, as an official in a position above or higher than teachers, observes or supervises the work of teachers (Isnaini, 2022).

The effectiveness of learning can have an impact on quality improvement. Several factors can influence the effectiveness of learning, one of which is academic supervision by the principal (Nurpuspitasari et al., 2019). The main objective of academic supervision is to improve teachers' abilities in planning learning activities, implementing learning activities, assessing learning outcomes, and utilizing assessment results to improve learning outcomes. learning services, creating a pleasant learning environment, utilizing available learning resources, and developing appropriate learning interactions (strategies, methods, techniques) (Febiani Musyadad et al., 2022). The objectives of this study are: 1) to develop teacher professionalism, 2) to develop teachers' ability to choose learning methods, 3) to develop teachers' ability to control the classroom. Teachers have the potential to be creative and improve their performance.

However, there are many things that often prevent them from maximizing their potential, including the teachers' own abilities in the teaching and learning process as well as the available educational facilities and infrastructure. Given this, there is a clear need for continuous supervision of teachers to be carried out in a systematic and targeted manner (Program et al., 2015). Therefore, this study is titled: "The Principal as an Agent of Quality Improvement: The Role of Classroom Observation in Teacher Professional Development."

Professional Competence is the ability of teachers to master learning materials broadly and deeply, which includes mastery of the subject curriculum at school and the scientific substance that encompasses the material, as well as mastery of its structure and methodology: (1) Mastering the material, structure, concepts, and scientific mindset that support the lessons taught; (2) Mastering the competency standards and basic competencies of the subject taught; (3) Being creative in developing the learning material taught; (4) Developing professionalism continuously by engaging in reflective actions; (5) Engaging in self-development and communication by utilizing ICT (Darmadi, 2015).

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative approach, which is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from respondents or people whose behavior is observed. This study describes various things related to the focus of the issues raised. Data were collected through observation and interviews.

In this narrative qualitative study, data was collected by directly observing the research subjects, either through interviews and discussions or by observing teachers directly in the classroom. This qualitative research emphasizes observation, understanding, which is deep, natural, and described descriptively (Waruwu, n.d.). This qualitative research also describes what, why, and how a phenomenon occurs (Rijal Fadli, 2021). Furthermore, data analysis in this study uses descriptive interactive analysis. As well as data validity with triangulation. This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Tulung, Klaten, Central Java, on 27 teachers, both civil servants and honorary teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One of the principal's duties is to conduct classroom observations, which are observations of teachers. Under the current curriculum, the independent curriculum that will become the national curriculum, the observation activities carried out by the principal refer to those already included in the PMM (Independent Teaching Platform). The term classroom observation was formerly known as supervision.

The supervision referred to in this study is teacher/class observation. In implementing this supervision, the principal acts as a mentor and partner to teachers, supporting continuous professional development (Kurniyanti, 2024). This study took a sample of 27 teachers consisting of 17 regular civil servants, 8 PPPK civil servants, and 2 G'IT (non-permanent teachers). The study was conducted by observing the performance of these 27 teachers using the PMM application.

Through the implementation of classroom observation, it is hoped that teachers can develop their competency. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has created the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), which is an educational platform with many features that help teachers complete their tasks more easily (Isnaini, 2022). This is supported by government policies on the implementation of the independent curriculum as stated in the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Decree Number 56 of 2022 concerning guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum in the context of learning recovery (Kepmendikbudristek_2022_56 Guidelines for the Implementation of the Kurikulum merdeka, n.d.).

Each teacher selects one indicator from the eight indicators available on the PMM (Merdeka Mengajar Platform) application. During this observation stage, the principal, as the observer, monitors the teacher's performance by observing the teacher's classroom teaching to determine whether the teacher's actions are in line with the indicator selected by the teacher, using the observation rating form available on the PMM application. After the classroom observation stage, the teacher and principal discuss the observation results to determine the follow-up actions to be taken by the teacher. The principal then provides a rating with three categories: 1. Not yet implemented; 2. Implemented but not yet effective; 3. Implemented and effective. The principal provides recommendations to the teacher so that their performance practices can improve in the future.

Based on the recommendations provided by the principal, teachers reflect and develop follow-up plans, and the results are recorded in the follow-up discussion form available in the PMM application. From this follow-up discussion form, the principal assesses the teachers. At this stage, the principal assesses the teachers' awareness when reflecting. There are three assessment categories: 1. Aware of challenges and causes beyond their control; 2. Aware of challenges and causes within their control; 3. Aware of challenges and causes within their control and their impact.

Next, the principal conducts performance coaching by discussing follow-up implementation with teachers and assessing what teachers have done, which has been written down on the follow-up reflection form. Here, teachers

determine their learning choices as follow-up actions, for which forms are available on PMM. There are three categories of value choices available on PMM, namely: 1) Undertaking follow-up actions; 2) Practicing inspiration from follow-up actions; 3) Sharing good practices resulting from inspiration from follow-up actions. The principal will explain the reasons for giving these assessments, which are written in the columns provided on PMM.

The principal then assesses the improvement in performance shown by the teacher and their plan for continuous improvement. There are three categories of assessment for teachers, namely: 1) Efforts to improve performance are being made; 2) Efforts to improve performance are in line with the expectations of superiors; 3) Efforts to improve performance have received positive responses from students.

The results of the study show that out of 27 teachers, 22 teachers received a rating of 2. Meanwhile, 5 teachers received a rating of 3. This assessment is also a performance appraisal for teachers, which is integrated with the BKN performance appraisal. A rating of 2, when converted into a performance appraisal, is classified as good, in line with the expectations of superiors. Meanwhile, assessment category number 3, when converted into a performance assessment, receives a very good qualification, exceeding the expectations of superiors. No teachers were included in assessment category number 1. This means that the teachers' performance was good and very good. And from the results of the teachers' reflections, follow-up plans, and follow-up actions taken by the teachers, the results of learning focused on students were evident.

With this observation system, teachers can plan, implement, discuss with the principal, reflect, plan, and follow up and improve performance to support student-centered learning. In addition, with the principal's assistance to teachers in planning, implementation, and reflection, as well as follow-up plans and implementation, their competencies improve. This has an impact on student-centered learning, which becomes more effective and focused. Research shows that the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) can help teachers improve their skills, including pedagogical, personal, social, and professional skills, as well as information technology skills (Aulia et al., 2023).

The implementation of classroom observation activities can improve teachers' professionalism in carrying out their duties. Teachers who are to be observed have prepared their teaching materials well. Discussions between the principal and teachers can find the best solutions to problems encountered by teachers in the classroom. Classroom observation also provides teachers with valuable experience in improving and enriching teaching methods that can be applied in the learning process. Teachers' control of the classroom has also improved. Teachers use teaching methods that are more suited to the needs of students, which makes students comfortable and happy in participating in learning, thereby reducing the number of students who are apathetic towards learning activities in the classroom. Students are more active and enthusiastic in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

Classroom observations were conducted by the principal on 27 teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tulung, both civil servants and honorary teachers. The conclusion of this study is that the principal plays a major role in improving school quality. This study focused on the role of the principal in conducting classroom observations of teachers. Classroom observations conducted by the principal can develop teachers' professionalism,

develop teachers' ability to choose teaching methods, and develop teachers' classroom management skills. Teachers have the potential to be creative and improve their performance, which ultimately leads to improved school quality.

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