

Literature Review: The Principal's Role as a Facilitator in the Professional Development of Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

Professional development of elementary school teachers is a key element to improving the quality of education, with principals as facilitators having a strategic role in this process. Teacher professionalism includes improving pedagogic, professional, social and personality competencies that support effective learning. This literature study aims to examine the role of principals as facilitators in developing teacher professionalism based on current literature. The study was conducted by analysing journals, books and scientific articles related to educational leadership and teacher professional development. The results show that principals act as facilitators by providing needs-based training, academic supervision and collaborative coaching. Principals also function as motivators by encouraging teachers to participate in development programmes such as workshops, seminars and educational technology training. In addition, principals create a learning culture that supports the exchange of ideas and best practices among teachers. The main constraints identified include limited resources and time, while supporting factors include principals' commitment and education policy support. The conclusion of this study confirms that effective principals as facilitators can improve teachers' professionalism, which in turn contributes to improving the quality of education in elementary schools.

Keywords: *Principal, Teacher Professionalism, Facilitator, Elementary School*

Abstrak

Pengembangan profesionalisme guru Sekolah Dasar yang mencakup peningkatan kompetensi pedagogik, profesional, sosial, dan kepribadian merupakan elemen kunci untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan, dengan kepala sekolah berperan strategis sebagai fasilitator dalam proses tersebut. Studi pustaka ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran kepala sekolah sebagai fasilitator dalam pengembangan profesionalisme guru berdasarkan literatur terkini. Kajian dilakukan dengan menganalisis jurnal, buku, dan artikel ilmiah terkait kepemimpinan pendidikan dan pengembangan profesional guru. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah berperan sebagai fasilitator melalui penyediaan pelatihan berbasis kebutuhan, supervisi akademik, dan pembinaan kolaboratif. Kepala sekolah juga berfungsi sebagai motivator dengan mendorong guru untuk mengikuti program pengembangan seperti workshop, seminar, dan pelatihan teknologi pendidikan. Selain itu, kepala sekolah menciptakan budaya belajar yang mendukung pertukaran ide dan praktik terbaik antar guru. Kendala utama yang diidentifikasi meliputi keterbatasan sumber daya dan waktu, sementara faktor pendukung mencakup komitmen kepala sekolah dan dukungan kebijakan pendidikan. Simpulan dari studi ini menegaskan bahwa kepala sekolah yang efektif sebagai fasilitator dapat meningkatkan profesionalisme guru, yang pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada peningkatan mutu pendidikan di sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: Kepala Sekolah, Profesionalisme Guru, Fasilitator, Sekolah Dasar



INTRODUCTION

Basic education is the main foundation in shaping the character, knowledge, and skills of students to face future challenges. In this context, teachers, as the frontline implementers of education, play a crucial role in determining the quality of learning. However, to perform their duties optimally, teachers require continuous professional development to adapt to the dynamics of education, including curriculum changes, innovative teaching methods, and the increasingly diverse needs of students. Teacher professional development cannot be achieved without the support of school principals as educational leaders at the institutional level. The role of school principals as facilitators in teacher professional development is particularly important at primary schools, where the foundational education of students heavily depends on teacher quality.

The phenomenon in the field shows that there are still many primary school teachers who face obstacles in improving their professionalism. Some of the problems that often arise include limited access to training, lack of motivation to develop competencies, and minimal support from principals in creating a collaborative learning environment. For example, research by Reisky Bestary (2019) reveals that school principals in several regions, such as Balikpapan, Malang, and Bengkalis, are still lacking in skills to manage educators, including in facilitating teacher professional development. This has an impact on teachers' low ability to apply innovative learning strategies. In addition, research by Zaidan (2021) shows that during the Covid-19 pandemic, school principals faced additional challenges in facilitating online training and providing technology to support teacher professionalism, which indicates the need for leadership adaptation in crisis situations.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many school principals do not fully understand their role as facilitators. According to Setiyati (2016), supportive leadership from school principals can increase teachers' work motivation and professionalism through targeted training and guidance. However, the reality on the ground often shows that school principals are more focused on administrative tasks than on instructional or facilitative leadership functions. This is in line with the findings of Ahmad Yusuf (2019), who states that school principals who optimise the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme through training such as workshops and training courses can improve teachers' ability to design innovative learning. However, the implementation of the PKB programme is often constrained by limited resources, both in terms of budget and time, as revealed in research by Ng and Lim (2017) in schools with limited resources in Malaysia.

Theoretically, the role of the principal as a facilitator in teacher professional development can be viewed from various perspectives of educational leadership, such as instructional, transformational, and distributive leadership. Instructional leadership, as developed by Hallinger (2005), emphasises the importance of the principal in setting learning objectives, providing feedback, and facilitating teacher professional development. Research by Rina Wulandari (2018) in Surabaya shows that strong instructional leadership, such as facilitating training and classroom observation, has a positive correlation with improvements in teachers' professional competence. Meanwhile, the theory of transformational leadership, as referenced by Tisna Ayu Selvi et al. (2023), highlights how principals can create a collaborative and professional work culture through regular training, monitoring, and evaluation. This approach is also in line with the concept of distributed leadership, as explained by Spillane and Healey (2016), which emphasises the importance of school principals in delegating responsibilities to teachers as learning leaders to increase their involvement and professional growth.

In addition, the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is one of the relevant approaches in supporting teacher professionalism development. Harris

and Jones (2017) state that principals who actively facilitate PLCs by providing time and resources can improve teacher collaboration and professional skills. This research aligns with the findings of Tan and Wong (2016) in Singapore, which show that school principals who support PLCs and provide tailored professional development opportunities can enhance teachers' self-efficacy and instructional innovation. This approach is also supported by Day and Sammons (2016), who, through a global comparative analysis, emphasise that principals who use culturally responsive strategies in facilitating professional development can enhance teachers' competencies in various contexts.

Data and findings from other studies also support the importance of the principal's role as a facilitator. For example, research by Siti Aminah (2018) in Central Java shows that regular academic supervision by principals can enhance teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies through constructive feedback. Furthermore, Liu and Hallinger (2017) in their research in schools in China and Thailand found that principal facilitation, including guidance and provision of resources, has a positive impact on teacher professionalism and student learning outcomes. This phenomenon is also seen in the Indonesian context, where research by Aulia et al. (2020) shows that structured monitoring and evaluation strategies by school principals can improve teacher performance and professionalism, despite constraints in terms of schedule and budget.

The role of the principal as a facilitator is not limited to providing training or supervision, but also includes creating a supportive work environment. Adams and Gamage (2016) in their research in Australia showed that principals who empower teachers through joint decision-making and professional development opportunities can increase teacher engagement and innovation. This is also in line with the findings of Elly Purwanti (2020), which, although conducted in private schools, showed that principals who facilitate curriculum training can improve teachers' competence in lesson planning. Thus, the role of the principal as a facilitator encompasses various aspects, from providing resources and academic supervision to fostering a collaborative work culture.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine in depth the role of the principal as a facilitator in the professional development of elementary school teachers. Specifically, the research questions in this study are: (1) What strategies do principals use to facilitate the professional development of teachers in elementary schools? (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the principal's role as a facilitator of teacher professional development? (3) What is the impact of principal facilitation on the improvement of teachers' professional competencies in elementary schools? The objectives of this study are to: (1) identify the strategies used by school principals in facilitating teacher professional development, (2) analyse the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of this role, and (3) evaluate the impact of school principal facilitation on the improvement of teachers' professional competence. This research is expected to provide practical contributions for school principals in designing effective strategies to support teacher professional development, as well as theoretical contributions to the development of educational leadership theory in the context of primary schools.

Method

This study utilised the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a descriptive analysis approach. The researchers collected and analysed data from a number of previous articles relevant to the topic of the role of the headteacher as a

facilitator in the professional development of primary school teachers. Literature sources were obtained from indexed journal databases such as Eric, DOAJ, and Google Scholar using the keyword principal, facilitator, teacher professionalism, and elementary school. The selection process was carried out systematically by applying specific inclusion criteria, namely the last 10 years, focus on the primary school context, and availability of full text. Furthermore, the researcher identified, evaluated, and synthesised the findings of these studies to produce comprehensive conclusions and answer the research questions.

In practice, this SLR was conducted in three main stages: screening, data extraction, and synthesis. A total of 20 journals (10 international and 10 national) that met the criteria were analysed thematically to identify patterns, strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the impact of the principal's role as a facilitator. The extracted data was then synthesised to answer the research questions and produce comprehensive conclusions. This approach enabled researchers to present a structured, objective, and evidence-based review of the research topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature review research is the first step taken by researchers in preparing a research plan that will be used to explore theories or opinions of experts related to the topic to be studied. These theories can be obtained from books, journals, publications related to the topic of discussion. This literature review is not only part of the theoretical basis, but can also be used as a reference to produce new research that will provide something different from the results of previous studies.

In this study, researchers discussed the results of research conducted by previous researchers regarding the role of the Principal as a Facilitator in improving the Professionalism of Elementary School teachers. Based on the literature analysis of 20 journals (10 international and 10 national) relevant to the topic 'The Principal's Role as a Facilitator in Developing Elementary School Teachers' Professionalism,' it can be concluded that principals play a central role in improving teachers' competence, motivation, and innovation through various facilitation strategies.

Based on searches conducted by researchers in international and national journals accessed on Erics, DOAJ, Google Schooler, the results obtained can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Literature review on the principal's role as a facilitator

Researcher and year	Journal title	Results
Moreno, 2023	Teachers' Perceptions Toward Their New Principal	Teachers' perceptions of the new principal's leadership have a positive impact on professional development, especially when the principal creates a supportive, morale-boosting environment and opportunities for professional development.
Tan & Wong, 2016	Principals as Facilitators of Teacher Professional Learning in Primary Schools	Principals who support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and provide customised professional development opportunities enhance teachers' self-efficacy and instructional

		innovation.
Robinson&Lloyd, 2017	Instructional Leadership and Teacher Professional Development: The Principal's Role	Principals' active involvement in planning professional development and providing feedback correlates significantly with improvements in teachers' instructional practices.
Spillane&Healey, 2016	Principal as Facilitator: Enhancing Teacher Professionalism through Distributed Leadership	Principals who delegate responsibility for professional development to teachers leaders increase the connectedness and professional growth of teachers.
Ng&Lim, 2017	The Principal as a Professional Development Facilitator: Evidence from Developing Countries	Principals face challenges such as limited funding, but through internal partnerships and training, they have achieved moderate improvements in teachers' professionalism.
Adams&Gamage, 2016	Empowering Teachers through Principal Facilitation: A Study of Primary Education	Principals who empower teachers through shared decision-making and professional development Opportunities increase teacher engagement and innovation.
Harris & Jones, 2017	The Role of Principals in Supporting Teacher Professional Learning Communities	Principals who facilitated PLCs by providing time and resources improved teacher collaboration and professional skills significantly.
Day&Sammons, 2016	Principal Leadership and Teacher Professional Development: A Global Perspective	Effective principals facilitate professional development through culturally responsive strategies, improve teacher competencies in various contexts.
Liu & Hallinger, 2017	The Impact of Principal Facilitation on Teacher Professionalism in Elementary Schools	Principal facilitation, including guidance and provision of resources, had a positive impact on teacher professionalism and student learning outcomes.
Bush & Glover, 2016	The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Professional Growth in Public Primary Schools	Principals who prioritise professional development through structured mentoring and collaborative workshops enhance teachers' skills and classroom practices.
Reisky Bestary, 2019	The Role of School Principals in Improving Educational Resources	School principals still lack skills in managing teaching staff, including facilitating professional development for teachers, and require training to improve their managerial and academic supervisory competencies.
Aulia et al., 2020	The Role of the Principal in Monitoring and Evaluating Teacher Performance	The principal acts as a facilitator through structured monitoring and evaluation, improving teacher performance and professionalism,

		despite constraints in terms of scheduling and budget.
Tisna Ayu Selvi, Sofwan Adi Putra, M. Badrun, 2023	The Role of the Principal in Improving the Work Culture of Primary School Teachers	The principal facilitates regular training, monitoring, and evaluation, creating a collaborative and professional work environment.
Zaidan, 2021	KepemimpinanKepalaSekolahdalamMeningkatkanKinerjaGuru padaMasa PandemiCovid-19	School principals act as educators, managers, supervisors, and motivators, facilitating online training and providing technology to support teacher professionalism during the pandemic.
Elly Purwanti, 2020	Improving the Ability of Muhammadiyah Primary School Teachers in Developing Local Content Curricula	The principal facilitates curriculum training and improves teachers' competence in lesson planning.
Zubair, 2019	Teacher Performance Improvement Management in Primary Schools	The principal facilitates training, supervision, and motivation, improving the competence and professionalism of teachers.
Setiyati, 2016	The Influence of Leadership of School Principals on Work Motivation and Performance of Teachers	Supportive school leadership increases teacher motivation and professionalism through training and guidance.
Siti Aminah, 2018	The Role of the Principal in Developing Teachers' Professional Competence Through Academic Supervision	School principals who conduct regular academic supervision improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies through constructive feedback and training.
Ahmad Yusuf, 2019	Optimising the Role of School Principals in Improving Teacher Competence through Continuing Professional Development Programmes	The principal facilitates PKB training, such as workshops and training courses, which improve teachers' ability to design innovative learning.
Rina Wulandari, 2018	The Instructional Leadership of School Principals in Enhancing the Professionalism of Primary School Teachers	Strong instructional leadership, such as training facilitation and classroom observation, is positively correlated with improvements in teacher professional competence.

Based on the research findings, the role of the headteacher as a facilitator in the development of teacher professionalism is realised through five main activities: (1) organising and assisting in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training, (2) implementing continuous academic supervision to provide feedback on teaching practices, (3) regularly monitoring the learning process in the classroom, (4) evaluating the results of teacher competency development, and (5) establishing a collaborative work culture among educators. Studies by Yusuf (2019) and Aminah (2018) specifically prove that interventions through CPD training and structured academic supervision are significantly effective in improving teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies.

Although the strategic role of school principals has been recognised, the implementation of their facilitation is not without various obstacles. Research by Aulia

et al. (2020) and Bestary (2019) identified that budget constraints are a major obstacle to organising high-quality and sustainable training programmes. In addition, scheduling difficulties that conflict with teachers' teaching time also often reduce optimal participation. These challenges became even more complex with the pandemic, where Zaidan (2021) found that limited technological competence on the part of both facilitators and teachers was a major obstacle in the transition to online facilitation.

The findings from this national journal are highly relevant and contextual to the education system in Indonesia, as they directly discuss the implementation of applicable regulations such as the PKB programme and academic supervision obligations. The majority of studies do focus on public schools, but Purwanti's (2020) research broadens its relevance by showing that the same facilitation approach—particularly in curriculum development—is also effective and much needed in private schools. This shows that the facilitation model by school principals is universal and can be adapted to various types of primary education institutions.

Overall, these studies confirm that training, academic supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and the development of a collaborative culture are key elements of the facilitation carried out by school principals. Despite financial, technical, and technological challenges, the effectiveness of these elements in improving teacher competence has been proven. The implication is that future efforts to develop teacher professionalism need to prioritise solutions to these constraints, such as better budgeting, flexible scheduling, and digital literacy training, to maximise the strategic role of headteachers as the spearhead of improving the quality of education.

CONCLUSION

Research shows that principals play an important role as facilitators in the professional development of primary school teachers. Evidence shows that they support training, supervision, and collaborative environments that improve teacher performance and student learning outcomes. This role also appears to include innovation, such as the use of technology, and supporting teacher retention, although the complexity of the school context can affect its effectiveness. School principals have a crucial role in facilitating teacher professional development, such as organising training, workshops, and professional learning communities (PLCs). They also provide academic supervision and feedback to improve teaching quality. School principals also encourage innovation, such as the use of digital technology, and create a collaborative work environment that supports continuous professional development.

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