



Principal's Strategies in Improving Teachers' Pedagogical Competence (A Qualitative Descriptive Study at SMA Negeri 14, Mukomuko, Bengkulu, Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to describe the strategies employed by the principal to improve the pedagogical competence of teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko (Senior High School), Bengkulu, Indonesia. This research utilizes a qualitative approach with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The data management process involved data collection, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that: (1) the principal implements various strategies to enhance teachers' competence, including involving teachers in teacher education and training program, supervision, fostering teacher creativity, motivating teachers, conducting seminars and workshops, microteaching, improving facilities and infrastructure, and encouraging teacher participation in subject teacher forums; (2) supporting factors include the principal's active facilitation of training and motivation, while inhibiting factors consist of limited use of media and learning technology by some teachers and insufficient facilities such as technological devices; (3) the impact of these strategies includes optimal use of time, effort, and budget, as well as increased teacher knowledge. This study reveals the principal's locally based strategies at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, Bengkulu, Indonesia to improve pedagogical competence through transformational, reflective, and collaborative approaches. Furthermore, this research updates the literature by focusing on leadership strategy adaptation in relation to the Merdeka Belajar curriculum and the use of technology in rural school learning environments.

KEYWORDS: Improvement of Pedagogical Competence, Strategy, Teacher.

INTRODUCTION

The development and growth of the current globalization era have influenced various aspects of life. An improvement in the quality of life is often accompanied by the mastery of competencies, which assist individuals in supporting their activities for the continuity of life. One effort to prepare individuals with competencies is to optimize education as a program that shapes a person into someone possessing skills and agility (Aspi & Syahrani, 2022). This aligns with Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that the function of education is to develop abilities and intelligence to become individuals who possess spiritual, scientific, and noble personality competencies (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003).

Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers emphasizes the importance of pedagogical competence as one of the mandatory competencies that teachers must possess. Similarly, the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 13 of 2007 regarding School/Madrasah Principals states that principals are responsible for improving teacher professionalism, including mastery of pedagogical competence. In this context, principals do not only act as managers but also as learning leaders who encourage teachers to continuously develop their capabilities (Meilani, Ahyani, & Mulyadi, 2024).

Principals hold a strategic role in enhancing the quality of education, especially in terms of teachers' pedagogical competence, which is a key factor in the success of the learning process. Pedagogical competence encompasses a teacher's ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning tailored to the needs of students. At SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, challenges in improving teachers' pedagogical competence have become a primary focus to ensure the learning process runs optimally and produces competent graduates.

The quality of education will determine the future human resources of Indonesia. Efforts to maintain the quality of education involve innovations in educational management. According to Sasongko (2022), educational management includes curriculum, personnel, student affairs, finance, facilities and infrastructure, public relations, and special services. Therefore, educational management can



begin with innovations in learning as the implementation of the curriculum. The dynamic development of the learning process is one way to prepare a generation ready to face the challenges of globalization (Susianita & Riani, 2024).

A phenomenon arising from globalization is the increasing level of individualism among students. According to Pransiska et al. (2023), individualism among students is becoming more evident in the current educational context, especially with the advancement of information technology, which allows independent access to various learning resources. While individualism can encourage students to be more independent and responsible for their learning process, it may also negatively impact learning outcomes (Nabila et al., 2022).

When students prefer to work alone and avoid collaboration, they lose opportunities to learn from peers, which often enriches understanding and social skills (Helmi et al., 2023). This condition is observed at various educational levels, starting from primary to secondary education. Senior high school students today exhibit a relatively high degree of individualism in learning. Factors contributing to this include the learning strategies applied, the use of gadgets for social media, and family background (Sumiati, 2022).

Strategies that principals can apply include organizing training or workshops, ongoing academic supervision, and evaluation followed by follow-up actions to ensure program sustainability. Implementing these strategies requires support from all parties, including teachers, staff, and the school community. With effective strategy implementation, it is expected that teachers' pedagogical competence will improve, enabling innovative and student-centered learning.

Based on observations, SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, as one of the educational institutions in Mukomuko Regency, faces unique challenges in improving education quality. Considering the rapid dynamics of educational development, principals are expected to formulate appropriate strategies to address these challenges. Principals are not only responsible for administrative management but must also act as visionary educational leaders. One step taken is to enhance pedagogical competence within the school environment. This study focuses on the strategies employed by the principal at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, an area that has not been extensively researched. The geographical and sociocultural context of Mukomuko provides uniqueness in strategy implementation, especially in addressing local challenges such as limited access to external training, facility support, and utilization of school resources. This research investigates not only the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the principal's strategies but also explores their impact on improving teachers' pedagogical competence. This approach offers a comprehensive overview of how the principal fulfills the role of a learning leader.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the principal's strategies in enhancing the pedagogical competence of teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, highlighting the principal's role as a manager and pioneer of change from the school's inception until now.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method. According to Safrudin et al. (2023), qualitative research methods are applied to examine phenomena in their natural settings, as opposed to experimental methods. Qualitative descriptive research aims to present data authentically without manipulation. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive depiction of an event as well as to reveal and explain the phenomena in full detail (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021).

The subjects of this study are informants who have a direct relationship with the principal's strategies in improving teachers' pedagogical competence at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. These include the principal, vice principal, teachers, and students. These subjects were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and the principal's strategies for enhancing teacher pedagogical competence.

Data collection was carried out using three techniques: interviews, observations, and document studies. This approach allows the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' views, experiences, and perceptions (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Interviews were conducted by directly questioning teachers to gather in-depth data about their pedagogical activities. Observations were performed to monitor teachers' activities during the teaching and learning process. Document studies were used to collect data and information related to the improvement of teachers' pedagogical competence.

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2022). After data and information were collected, irrelevant data were reduced, then the remaining data were presented to answer the research questions. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the analyzed data (Sugiyono, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study presents findings on the strategies employed by the principal of SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko to enhance teachers’ pedagogical competence. These strategies reflect the role of the principal as a manager who undertakes various activities aimed at improving teacher competence. The key initiatives can be summarized as illustrated below:



Figure 1. Research Results: Principal’s Strategy to Improve Teachers’ Pedagogical Competence

The primary strategy at SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko to improve teachers’ pedagogical competence involves training, workshops, periodic academic supervision, and fostering a collaborative culture through subject teacher forums (MGMP) and teacher discussions. This approach aligns with Sudrajat (2022), who emphasized that ongoing training enhances teacher professionalism, and Glickman et al. (2024), who highlight supervision as a form of professional development. The use of digital platforms and encouragement for professional certification prepare teachers to face the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, with self-reflection as a key component of professional growth. This strategy strengthens teachers’ understanding of the curriculum, learning innovation, and the sustainable use of technology (Suharyati & Laihad, 2020).

A core element of the principal’s strategy is planned and continuous academic supervision. The principal conducts direct classroom observations to identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses in implementing pedagogical strategies. The supervision results are followed up with reflective discussions and constructive feedback. This process helps teachers identify areas for improvement, such as selecting appropriate methods, classroom management, and designing indicators of learning success. This academic supervision strategy effectively encourages teachers to introspect and improve their teaching practices.

The periodic academic supervision corresponds with Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon’s (2024) view that supervision functions not only as control but as professional development emphasizing quality teaching through constructive feedback. The collaborative culture fostered through teacher discussion forums and participation in MGMP resonates with Wenger’s (1998) concept of a "community of practice," where effective professional learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration among practitioners.

The second strategy involves organizing internal training and workshops at the school level. The principal collaborates with education supervisors and professional resource persons to deliver training relevant to teachers’ needs. Training topics typically include developing lesson plans (RPP) based on the latest curriculum, using digital learning media, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS)-based learning, and authentic assessment. These activities are conducted regularly, both face-to-face and online, equipping teachers with contemporary pedagogical skills. The training also provides opportunities for teachers to share experiences and best practices (Prastiko, Supriyanto, & Rochmawati, 2024).

The success of these strategies is supported by several enabling factors. A major factor is the principal’s active role in facilitating training and providing motivation. According to Mulyasa (2023), principals acting as instructional leaders must encourage teachers to continuously develop their abilities through training, supervision, and ongoing motivation. Additionally, students’ strong



curiosity stimulates teachers' enthusiasm to learn and innovate in teaching. This aligns with Sartika's (2023) view that a challenging learning environment increases teachers' motivation to design more effective learning experiences. The availability of diverse learning media also plays a crucial role, supporting active learning principles emphasized by Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2021), where varied media enrich content delivery and increase student engagement.

However, some inhibiting factors must be addressed. Limited use of media and technology by some teachers presents a serious challenge in the digital era. As Fullan (2021) pointed out, educational change demands teachers adapt to technology to make learning relevant and engaging. Insufficient facilities and infrastructure, including limited technological devices, exacerbate this gap. Moreover, financial constraints limit schools' capacity to implement quality improvement programs. The success of educational quality enhancement programs heavily depends on adequate financial support (UNESCO, 2022). Communication barriers, such as ineffective, unempathetic, or discourteous interactions with students, also hinder progress. Goleman (2023) emphasizes emotional intelligence, including empathetic communication skills, as vital for building positive educational relationships.

This situation is worsened by the lack of supporting infrastructure, especially digital devices such as laptops, projectors, stable internet networks, and online learning platforms. The technology access gap between schools in developed and underdeveloped areas further widens educational disparities. Limited budgetary and funding support from government and related institutions also critically hamper quality improvement efforts. UNESCO (2022) stresses that sustainable financial backing is essential for teacher capacity building, provision of learning facilities, and technology-based training implementation.

Third, the principal's strategies have demonstrated a significant positive impact on teachers' professional development. Training, supervision, workshops, and technological facilitation help teachers understand various adaptive learning methods tailored to student needs. This supports Sudjana's (2022) assertion that enhancing pedagogical competence closely relates to teachers' ability to effectively manage learning, including selecting appropriate methods, media, and approaches. The integration of technology in learning is an important outcome of these strategies. Information and communication technology use in teaching not only improves content delivery effectiveness but also encourages students to be more active and creative (Warista, 2022). Teachers actively involved in training programs show increased skills in evaluating student learning outcomes and continuously improving teaching practices. Consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2021), the impact level of these strategies depends heavily on teachers' active participation, program continuity, and institutional support (Munawwarah & Efendi, 2023).

The principal holds a strategic and progressive view toward improving teachers' pedagogical competence, emphasizing that educational quality is largely determined by teacher quality. Therefore, various teacher capacity-building programs are prioritized in leadership. A concrete step is the routine organization of quarterly training sessions. These programs not only invite external resource persons but also empower internal teachers with strong competencies as trainers. This strategy reflects an empowering approach that fosters a collaborative and respectful working environment among teachers (Warista, 2022).

CONCLUSION

First, the principal of SMA Negeri 14 Mukomuko employs various strategies to improve teachers' pedagogical competence, including training and workshops, periodic academic supervision, and fostering a collaborative culture and discussion among teachers. Additionally, the principal utilizes digital platforms as learning media, encourages teachers to pursue professional certification, and involves teachers in Subject Teacher Deliberations (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran, MGMP) to promote continuous competence development. This approach aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the curriculum, innovative teaching methods, technology integration in learning, and to cultivate a reflective mindset among teachers.

Second, the success of the principal's strategies is supported by several key factors, including the principal's active role in facilitating training and providing motivation, students' high curiosity that inspires teachers to keep learning, and the availability of diverse learning media to support effective teaching. However, some inhibiting factors remain, such as limited use of learning media and technology by some teachers, insufficient facilities and infrastructure like technological devices, financial constraints that limit educational program funding, and challenges in establishing effective, empathetic, and respectful communication with students. Therefore, sustained and collaborative efforts among the principal, teachers, and all school stakeholders are essential to overcome these barriers and achieve optimal improvement in pedagogical competence.



Third, the strategies implemented have positively impacted teachers' pedagogical competence. Teachers have gained a better understanding of diverse teaching methods tailored to student needs, improved their ability to integrate technology into learning, and enhanced skills in evaluating student learning outcomes. Teachers have also become more confident in developing innovative learning media and analyzing student results for continuous instructional improvement. However, the impact varies depending on teachers' level of participation, ongoing institutional support, and continuity of training programs. Teachers actively involved in training demonstrate significant progress in classroom management, while those less engaged tend to experience stagnation in professional growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the principal should expand and deepen training programs by updating materials to align with the latest developments in education and technology. Moreover, strengthening the culture of collaboration among teachers should be intensified to ensure more innovative and relevant learning that meets student needs.

The principal must continue to serve as a learning leader by emphasizing the importance of integrating technology into the learning process. Additionally, efforts should be made to increase the provision of more varied and relevant learning media to boost student motivation and support more interactive teaching and learning.

To maximize the positive impact of these strategies, it is important to reinforce the sustainability of training programs and provide more consistent institutional support. Furthermore, the effective and sustainable use of technology should be prioritized, taking into account limitations in access and technological skills among some teachers.

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