

THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF PPPK TEACHERS AT SDN 14 BENGKALIS

PERAN KEPEMIMPINAN KEPALA SEKOLAH DALAM MENINGKATKAN KINERJA GURU PPPK DI SDN 14 BENGKALIS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru PPPK. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yaitu studi kasus. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah kepala sekolah, dan 4 orang guru PPPK. Dengan teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan metode wawancara, observasi dan telaah dokumen, analisis data difokuskan dengan menggunakan model Miles & Huberman yaitu reduksi data, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Terdapat empat peran yang diperoleh, yang pertama adalah peran kepala sekolah sebagai pendidik yaitu peningkatan profesionalisme guru, yang kedua adalah peran kepala sekolah sebagai supervisor yaitu perencanaan supervisi, yang ketiga peran kepala sekolah sebagai inovator yaitu membangun hubungan yang positif dengan lingkungan, yang keempat peran kepala sekolah sebagai motivator yaitu memberikan penghargaan atas prestasi kinerja guru, memberdayakan guru melalui pelatihan dan pengembangan profesional, serta menciptakan komunikasi yang terbuka dan suportif.

Abstract

This study aims to describe how the role of principal leadership in improving the performance of PPPK teachers. This study uses a qualitative approach in the form of a case study. The data sources for this study are the principal and 4 PPPK teachers. The data collection technique uses interview methods, observation and document review, data analysis focuses on using the Miles & Huberman model, namely data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. There are four roles obtained, the first is the role of the principal as an educator, namely increasing teacher professionalism, the second is the role of the principal as a supervisor, namely planning supervision, the third is the role of the principal as an innovator, namely building positive relationships with the environment, the fourth is the role of the principal as a motivator, namely giving awards for achievements towards teacher performance, empowering teachers through training and professional development, and creating open and supportive communication.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of teaching and helping students achieve goals that result in positive change in them. In modern times, education is essential to produce competitive and superior human resources. In education, teachers have a strategic role as facilitators, motivators, and agents of change that determine the quality of meaningful learning outcomes and shape the character of students. The performance of teachers, especially Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK),

has a major impact on the quality of teaching in schools. In Indonesia, the existence of PPPK teachers is one of the efforts to overcome the shortage of qualified teaching staff, especially in remote areas. However, the performance of PPPK teachers is often not optimal due to various factors, such as lack of motivation, limited competence, and inadequate support.

According to (Lukito et al., 2023) To improve the performance of PPPK teachers through efficient optimization measures, the leadership of school principals plays an important role. Leadership is an individual's capacity to motivate, direct, and supervise others or organizations under his or her supervision to achieve a specific goal. Principals are essential to improving teacher effectiveness, which in turn affects the standards of instruction that schools provide. Effective leadership has been shown to have a huge impact on teacher motivation, dedication, and performance, especially in elementary school settings. According to (Safrizal et al., 2024), principals can create an atmosphere that encourages teachers to reach their full potential if they are skilled in recognizing problems, setting goals, and organizing programs with their staff.

According to (Niviana et al., 2021), it is important to recognize that the responsibilities of principals are more than just administrative supervision, they also play the role of leaders, assisting and directing teachers in their efforts to achieve the goals of the school. Effective leadership is essential for the principal because it directly affects the overall performance of the school. An effective leadership style can motivate teachers to improve the quality of their education, according to research by (Novita & Kale 2023).

Based on the results of the researcher's observations and initial interviews at SDN 14 Bengkalis on January 18, 2025. Of the total educators at SDN 14 Bengkalis, it consists of 1 principal, 6 civil servant teachers, 11 teachers with PPPK status and 1 honorary teacher. With this diverse number of educators, the role of the principal is important to realize an inclusive and empowering leadership strategy. Principals can provide needed assistance, encourage efficient communication, and foster a sense of ownership among teachers by involving teachers in the decision-making process. In addition, school principals also need to pay special attention to the development of professionalism of PPPK teachers, both through training, supervision, and appreciation for good performance. Principals can increase teachers' motivation in carrying out their duties by using the right strategies, which will ultimately directly affect students' teaching standards and academic achievement.

Based on the results of the interview with the principal of SDN 14 Bengkalis, it can be concluded that the performance of teachers, especially PPPK teachers, still faces several obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the learning process. These challenges include difficulties in implementing innovative learning methods, limitations in the use of technology, and reliance on package books as the main source of learning. In the administration, there was a delay in submitting the assessment sheet. In addition, the lack of active participation of teachers in professional development activities, such as webinars, shows that there is still a low level of teacher initiative in improving self-competence. The principal hopes that teachers can be more creative in designing learning. Based on the problems that have been described above, the researcher is interested in examining more deeply through research on how the role of the principal's leadership in improving the performance of teachers of PPPK SDN 14 Bengkalis.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the leadership role of school principals in improving the performance of PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis. According to Sugiyono (in

Safarudin et al., 2023), qualitative research is natural because it uses a naturalistic approach. Walidin (in Fadli, 2021) also emphasized that qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in a comprehensive and complex setting in a natural setting. The place where the research was conducted was at SDN 14 Bengkalis which is located on Jl. Utama, Pangkalan Batang Barat Village, Bengkalis District, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province.

The informants in this study were the principal and 4 PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis. Data collection techniques are carried out by interview, observation and document review techniques. In the interview technique, teachers and principals were interviewed for this study to learn more about how school leadership can increase the effectiveness of PPPK teachers. The form of questions is open so that teachers can give free answers. This study uses observations to collect data on the contribution of school principals in improving the performance of PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis. Then in the document review technique, the researcher uses a document review sheet which aims to collect and analyze documents that support the accuracy of research results.

After the data is collected, the data analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. At the data reduction stage, irrelevant or repetitive data is filtered and grouped according to the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding. Then the conclusion drawn, to confirm the correctness and validity of the research findings, the conclusion is drawn by comparing the initial findings with further data. Source triangulation and triangulation techniques are also applied to ensure the validity of the data, by comparing information from various sources, namely the principal and 4 PPPK teachers and using various data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews and document review. Data preparation is carried out by grouping and sorting relevant information, then compiled systematically to facilitate the drawing of clear and structured conclusions. The researcher presents the results of the research in detail based on the data that has been collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study examines the role of school principals' leadership in improving the performance of PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis with a focus on the role of educators, supervisors, innovators, and motivators. Data was collected through interviews with five resource persons (principal Mr. Rolas Wahyudi as the main informant, as well as four teachers: Mr. Rustam Afandi, Mr. Sukemi, Mrs. Surtini, and Mrs. Yusriana), observation for six days, and document review including supervision schedules, lists of technological facilities, RKAS, and teacher training certificates.

1. The Role of the Principal as an Educator

Based on the results of the interview with the principal on May 30, 2025, the principal has carried out his role as an educator in improving the performance of PPPK teachers through four main aspects:

a. Improving Teacher Professionalism

Based on the results of interviews with the principal, it shows the application of personal guidance strategies using the coaching method to explore the potential of teachers in completing learning and providing improvements to the weaknesses experienced. Improving teacher competence is carried out through workshops, training, webinars, and learning

communities at both the school and group levels with a focus on creating interesting, fun, and meaningful learning. Teachers have the opportunity to participate in online, offline, and in-house training in the learning community to improve teaching skills and teaching quality.

b. Ability to Guide Educators

Based on the results of the interview with the principal, it was revealed that the implementation of classroom supervision to identify learning obstacles, followed by direct guidance and discussions to find solutions to improve learning. Teacher interviews show the principal providing guidance through meetings and classroom supervision programs to monitor learning. Instructions are delivered routinely in WhatsApp meetings and communication. Although classroom visits are still limited because teachers are considered competent, the principal provides constructive input, including examples of teaching materials and varied learning strategies. The principal facilitates supporting facilities (infocus, computers, internet) and is open to helping to find solutions to learning problems.



Figure 1. The principal provides guidance to the teacher

This is also supported by the observation that the principal provides learning guidance that is well received by the teacher. Coaching is carried out through post-supervision feedback in joint evaluation meetings and casual discussion coaching sessions to evaluate teachers' progress.

c. IT Deployment

From the results of interviews with school principals, it can be concluded that some teachers have applied technology using infokus, laptops, Google Meet, Google Sheets, Google Classroom, Quizziz, and Canva. There are plans to install infocus in high classes (4, 5, 6) and encouragement to use AI to expand access to information. In line with the results of teacher interviews, the use of technology through PowerPoint, Worksheets, Quizziz for exams, infocus for material delivery, and YouTube as a learning resource. However, some teachers are still in the stage of adapting to the use of learning technology. Supported by the results of the study of documents conducted by the researcher, it shows that school IT facilities include 9 computers, 4 laptops, 3 printers, and 4 infocusts, indicating the availability of ICT learning support facilities although it is still limited in distribution per class.

d. Setting a Good Teaching Example



Figure 2. The principal and teacher had a discussion about Learning Activity Flow

The observation results showed that although the principal did not teach directly in the classroom, he played an active role in improving the quality of teacher learning. The principal provides examples of the application of varied learning methods, encourages the use of interactive methods rather than monotonous lectures, and encourages active student involvement. The principal gave a concrete example of the preparation of learning activity flows using effective teaching media by emphasizing the consistency of the application of active learning methods.

2. The Role of the Principal as a Supervisor

Based on the results of the research through an interview with the principal Mr. Rolas Wahyudi on April 30, 2025, direct observation, and document review, it was found that the principal of SDN 14 Bengkalis carried out his role as a supervisor well in an effort to improve the quality of education. The role of a principal supervisor includes four main aspects:

a. Supervision Program Planning

The principal prepares a systematic and directed supervision program plan to provide professional guidance to teachers, especially PPPK teachers. The results of interviews with the principal showed that academic supervision was carried out on a scheduled basis with a focus on the quality of fun and meaningful learning and the teacher's work behavior in the classroom. Interviews with teachers (Mr. Rustam Afandi, Mr. Sukemi, Mrs. Surtini, and Mrs. Yusriana) confirmed that the supervision program had been well structured. Teachers understand the procedures through documents in the GTK room, including indicators and supervision schedules. The purpose of supervision is not to find faults, but to identify weaknesses to provide more effective learning guidance. Supported by the results of the document review conducted by the researcher, it shows that there is a supervision schedule for April which is systematically arranged with guidelines for the preparation of supervision activities using the E-Performance application.

b. Classroom Visits and Learning Observations

The principal carries out class visits in a scheduled and systematic manner by paying attention to supervision ethics to create a conducive atmosphere.



Figure 3. School Principal Carries Out Supervision

The observation results showed that the principal made periodic visits to observe the learning process and assess teacher performance in accordance with the provisions of the performance assessment application from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Even though they do not observe directly after supervision, the principal still monitors through the review of teaching tools and the teacher's Daily Activity Plan (RHK) as a follow-up to coaching.

c. Coaching and Solution Search

The results of the interview with the principal revealed that the results of supervision were used to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses. The principal provides direct

guidance and recommendations through discussions for learning improvement. Follow-up in the form of personal feedback, suggestions, and praise is a reference for improving the quality of continuous learning. Teacher interviews show that the principal provides constructive feedback including suggestions for improving lesson planning, classroom management, teaching method variations, and the use of learning media. The principal also appreciated the creativity and discipline of the teachers.



Figure 4. The principal followed up with the teacher

Supported by the results of the researcher's observations, school principals and teachers were involved in discussions about learning obstacles, especially the use of teaching media. Coaching is carried out informally through casual discussions in the teacher's assembly room with advanced mentoring and a continuous monitoring system. However, there are still teachers who have not significantly improved the use of methods and student involvement.

d. Improving Teacher Competence

School principals have the main responsibility for supervising and coaching to improve teacher competence through systematic academic supervision. The results of the interview with the principal emphasized the importance of consistent teacher quality development through competency improvement programs, both the school learning community and the activities of the education office. The principal provides ample opportunities for teachers to participate in training according to their needs and potential. There is a plan to install infocus in each high school to support digital learning. Various development opportunities are available such as internal workshops, online training, and sharing of good practices between teachers. Competency improvement activities are focused on forming a true educator mindset according to Ki Hajar Dewantara's motto, so that teachers are able to provide examples, encouragement, and guidance to students. The program has a positive impact on better classroom management, more active students, increased teacher confidence, and a shift in methods from dominant lectures to the use of digital media. The program also helps teachers develop teaching tools and better understand students' needs.

3. The Role of the Principal as an Innovator

Based on the results of the interview with the principal on April 30, 2025, the principal carries out his role as an innovator to create learning that is adaptive, creative, and responsive to changes in curriculum, technology, and the needs of students and society through four main aspects:

a. Building a Positive Relationship with the Environment

The results of interviews with school principals and teachers show that school principals build positive relationships with stakeholders through the implementation of good

duties, loyalty, and maintaining harmonious official relationships. The collaboration of parents, teachers, and the community is seen as important to support education and character formation of students. Differences of opinion are resolved through deliberation by prioritizing common intentions and goals. The principal leads the professional with friendly reprimands without embarrassment, often in casual and open dialogue to create a comfortable working atmosphere. Problems are resolved through deliberation with constructive criticism and suggestions. Conflicts between teachers are addressed individually by digging into the root of the problem and providing appropriate solutions in a closed manner to maintain privacy and dignity.



Figure 5. Principal, teachers and guardians attend the release of 6th grade students

As a result of the observations made by the researcher, the principal showed good interaction with all school residents in an atmosphere of conducive communication, mutual respect, and respect. The principal is active in building a harmonious, inclusive, and child-friendly school environment. Collaboration is manifested in joint activities such as the release of grade 6 students, with a culture of cooperation and collaborative learning that grows well even though teachers' participation in contributing ideas still varies.

b. Finding New Ideas and Integrating Activities

The school implements technology-based learning innovations using Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Quizizz, as well as natural media for engaging learning. In the P5 activity, students are involved in the topic of sustainable living culture such as planting to increase independence and cooperation. The principal encourages the use of technology and provides infocus facilities, as well as applying administrative technology using Google Form for new student registration. School principals strongly support innovation and the use of technology according to the needs of the times, encouraging teachers to take part in educational technology training. The school provides information facilities, laptops for each teacher, and adequate internet network. The socialization of innovation is carried out through group-level training with full support including travel costs.

The study of the documents obtained by the researcher is the RKAS which shows that school planning and budgeting tools contain programs and operational activities for one budget year that are directed to support teacher competency development and improve the quality of learning.

c. Discipline and Example



Figure 6. Picket teachers welcome students to school

The observation results showed that the principal and most of the teachers showed good discipline by being present on time and looking neat. Every morning the picket teacher welcomes the arrival of the students in a friendly manner, creating a warm and pleasant atmosphere. Principal-teacher communication reflects a healthy professional relationship with polite and ethical language. However, there are still some teachers who are late or leave class during lessons, and principals sometimes leave school during class hours due to certain matters that can affect the consistency of exemplary attendance.

d. Adaptive and Flexible

The results of the interviews showed that the principal accepted the teacher's ideas and input but did not immediately make his own decision, but discussed it according to the needs and conditions of the school. All relevant ideas for learning are absorbed and implemented based on mutual agreement in teacher meetings. The principal gives the teacher space to convey ideas and always listens to constructive input. Strategies for dealing with changes in curriculum and technology are carried out by conveying the latest information to teachers. Changes such as the Independent Curriculum and digital technology are positively welcomed to improve the quality of education. Teachers are encouraged to take part in digital learning training including coding, AI, and worksheets. Although some teachers are not familiar with technology, they are directed to learn independently with the support of the principal and Wi-Fi facilities. The use of AI is supervised so as not to create dependency and remain prudent in learning

4. The Role of the Principal as a Motivator

School principals have a strategic role as a motivator in improving teacher performance, especially PPPK teachers. This role includes fostering work morale, providing moral encouragement, and creating a work environment that supports the optimal professional development of teachers.

a. Awarding of Teacher Performance Achievements

The results of the Interview can be concluded that the school has implemented a comprehensive reward system for outstanding teachers. Awards are given in various forms, including certificates, prizes, and praise in person in front of peers at deliberation or apple activities. The principal gave appreciation in the form of gratitude and spontaneous motivation as a form of recognition for the hard work of teachers. On the commemoration of National Education Day and Teacher's Day, outstanding teachers receive official awards in the form of certificates and special recognition. In addition, outstanding teachers are given the opportunity to participate in training as a form of appreciation for their potential and achievements. The impact of awarding has a significant positive impact in increasing teachers' sense of appreciation and motivation. Teachers feel more enthusiastic and motivated to carry out their duties well and try to improve performance continuously.

Appreciation, even if it is in the form of congratulations or certificates, reinforces the teacher's sense of responsibility and dedication. Awards also help teachers feel better known and valued in the school environment and the wider education community.

b. Teacher Empowerment through Professional Training and Development

The results of the interview with the principal can be concluded that the teacher professional development program includes workshops, training, in-house training, training, and webinars aimed at improving teaching competence and adaptation to educational development. Around 80% of PPPK teachers have participated in the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) to obtain an educator certificate, which has a positive impact on improving pedagogic competence and professionalism. Innovative programs such as coding-based learning and the use of AI are introduced to develop the digital skills of teachers and students. Principals value teachers' involvement in decision-making and encourage active participation in training. Teachers actively participate in online training, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), learning communities, and digital platform training. In deliberations and meetings, the principal provides space for teachers to convey suggestions and opinions for the progress of the school, with an open and participatory decision-making process. Supported by the results of the document review conducted by the researcher, the training certificate followed by the teacher supports efforts to improve teaching quality and pedagogical competence. However, follow-up is needed in the form of reflection and implementation of training results in teaching and learning activities to maximize its impact.

c. Creating Open and Supportive Communication

The results of the interview can be concluded that the principal communicates with the teacher formally through meetings and informally during breaks, providing a safe space for the teacher to convey ideas, complaints, or suggestions. The communication pattern applied is open, friendly, and polite using various media: face-to-face, meetings, and WhatsApp groups. The principal actively asks about the condition of the teacher and provides solutions when needed. The principal is very open to receiving criticism and suggestions with an open-minded attitude, considering input as a form of concern for the progress of the school. A comfortable atmosphere and two-way communication are created so that teachers feel safe expressing their opinions. Constructive criticism becomes the material for the evaluation and improvement of the program, with the final decision through meetings and considering the readiness of the school.



Figure 7. The principal and teacher held a meeting

Supported by observation results that show that school principals create open and informal communication but still use polite language and support each other. Teachers feel comfortable conveying obstacles and discussing, especially in a meeting atmosphere in the teacher's assembly room. The two-way discussion went well, creating an atmosphere of

friendship, openness, and mutual respect. This communication relationship reflects healthy professionalism and a culture of positive communication between principals and teachers

Discussion

The principal's leadership in improving the performance of PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis. Through their roles as educators, supervisors, innovators, and motivators, school principals can create an environment that supports the development of teacher professionalism and improves the overall quality of education. Effective leadership not only directs and supervises, but also guides and motivates teachers to be able to carry out their duties. The principal as an education leader must be able to recognize and understand various positions, circumstances, and what is desired, both by teachers, administrative staff employees and other subordinates. So that with good cooperation, it can produce harmonious thoughts in improving schools. In line with opinion (Sutisna et al., 2023) that the success of the school is influenced and determined by many factors, one of which is the role of the principal in improving the performance of teachers to achieve educational goals in the school for which he is responsible.

Based on the results of the research that has been obtained through interviews, observations, and document reviews on the leadership role of the principal in improving the performance of PPPK teachers at SDN 14 Bengkalis, the researcher discusses and describes the role of the principal as an educator, the role of the principal as a supervisor, the role of the principal as an innovator, and the role of the principal as a motivator.

1. The role of the principal as an educator

The role of school principals as educators has a strategic contribution in improving the quality of performance of PPPK teachers who are still in the adaptation period. The principal not only performs a managerial function, but also becomes an academic advisor who actively fosters and develops the professionalism of teachers. Sirojuddin et al. (2022) emphasized that teacher professionalism will not run effectively without the intervention of the principal in improving the quality of teachers. Development is carried out through a personal approach such as coaching and guidance on supervision results, as well as strengthening competencies through training, webinars, and collaboration with external resource persons. This is in line with Juhadira et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of a carefree, critical learning process, and building students' potential to the maximum. School principals also encourage teachers to participate in various trainings at both the school, regional, and national levels, as an effort to increase professional capacity in a sustainable manner (Zayrin et al., 2024).

In addition, the formation of learning communities such as KKG and in-house training is a collaborative forum between teachers in sharing good practices and improving pedagogic competence. Even though class supervision has not been carried out regularly, it is still carried out in the form of constructive input directly or through online forums such as WhatsApp. The use of learning technology is also a concern. The principal facilitates ICT integration through the use of devices such as laptops, projectors, and internet access. Teachers are starting to adopt digital media such as Google Classroom, Quizziz, and YouTube in learning. Saputri & Nukman (2024) emphasized that with continuous training and adequate facilities, teachers are able to optimize technology in the teaching and learning process. Overall, the principal succeeded in creating a supportive, collaborative, and learning-oriented work environment. This is in line with the findings of Lukito et al. (2023), that the role of school principals as educators contributes

significantly to improving the performance of PPPK teachers through training, guidance, and continuous support.

2. The role of the principal as a supervisor

The principal of SDN 14 Bengkalis carries out the role of supervisor in an active and structured manner in order to improve the performance of PPPK teachers through program planning, classroom observation, post-supervision coaching, and strengthening teacher competence. The supervision carried out includes learning observation, providing constructive feedback, and reflective discussions to identify learning strengths and improvements (Sari et al., 2024). Indriyani & Hasanah (2021) stated that school principals are leaders who foster, guide, and assess and evaluate the learning process to improve the quality of teachers and student achievements. The academic supervision carried out is not purely administrative, but is designed as a strategy to develop teacher professionalism. This activity is systematically prepared using the E-Performance application, including schedules, indicators, and follow-up mechanisms. Before implementation, the principal provides socialization and initial assistance so that teachers understand the purpose of supervision. This is in line with Faradila et al. (2023) who mentioned the importance of the supervision stages, starting from planning to follow-up in the form of coaching and evaluation.

The focus of supervision is not to find faults, but to identify areas that need improvement and provide advice in classroom management, learning planning, and a variety of teaching methods and media. Feedback is delivered in a personal and solutional manner, with an approach that builds a dialogical and non-authoritative atmosphere (Sari et al., 2024). The principal also appreciated the success of teachers as a form of positive motivation. Although follow-up observation has not been optimal, monitoring is still carried out through teaching documents, exam results, and RHK.

The findings of this study also show that the aspect of supervision follow-up still needs to be strengthened. Therefore, direct post-supervision assistance needs to be improved so that the impact of supervision is more felt in classroom practice. The principal also encourages teachers to take part in external training as a form of continuous strengthening (Zulhijjah, 2024). This approach shows that supervision is carried out as a strategy for the formation of a progressive learning culture.

The main focus of the supervision role carried out by the principal also touches on the aspect of forming the teacher's mindset as a true educator. This is in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy which emphasizes example, mentoring, and empowerment. Changes are starting to be seen in increasing teacher confidence, classroom management skills, and the use of technology-based interactive approaches. To support this transformation, the principal designed the procurement of digital learning facilities and provided informal discussion spaces as part of flexible but meaningful mentoring. By prioritizing the principles of guidance and empowerment, school principals create a conducive work environment for teachers' professional growth. Supervision functions as a vehicle for reflection, evaluation, and strengthening the quality of education as a whole, not just administrative supervision (Sari et al., 2024).

3. The Role of the Principal as an Innovator

The role of the principal as an innovator at SDN 14 Bengkalis is reflected in the strategic efforts to create a learning environment that is adaptive, creative, and responsive to the times. As a driving force for change, school principals not only generate new ideas, but also facilitate their

implementation in school learning and management practices. Warman et al. (2020) emphasized that innovative skills are an essential skill of school principals to meet the demands of improving the quality of education.

The use of information and communication technology is an integral part of learning and school administration. Applications such as *Google Classroom*, *Google Meet*, *Quizizz*, and *Google Form* for online PPDB are actively utilized. Supporting facilities such as infokus, teachers' laptops, and internet networks are provided as a commitment to digital transformation. School principals also encourage teachers to participate in training, workshops, and socialization in improving their digital literacy, in line with Huriaty et al. (2022) who stated that principals and teachers must continue to improve their technological competence to remain relevant to the changing times. Other innovations are realized through the implementation of project-based learning such as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) with the theme of sustainable living culture. This approach aims to form the character of students who are independent, collaborative, and environmentally caring, while enriching learning through natural media and contextual creative strategies.

The principal also opens a space for dialogue and joint decision-making, encouraging the participation of teachers in conveying innovative ideas. The commitment to renewal is accompanied by examples in work discipline, professional communication, and the spirit of learning shown by the principal, as emphasized by Thamrin (2020) that the example of the principal has a positive impact on teacher discipline. Despite challenges such as limited attendance time at school, the principal still maintains a productive work rhythm and encourages a disciplined work culture. The innovations developed not only touch the technical aspect, but also foster harmonious and comfortable social relationships. According to Haris (in Sari et al., 2024), innovative school principals can help teachers become more adaptive and responsive to student needs.

Overall, the principal at SDN 14 Bengkalis showed strong innovative leadership through the use of technology, openness to ideas, exemplary, and strengthening social relations. In line with Rohmah et al. (2023), strategic innovations carried out by school principals have been proven to contribute to improving the quality of education that is more meaningful, relevant, and contextual to the needs of today's students.

4. The role of the principal as a motivator

The Principal of SDN 14 Bengkalis shows a strong role as a motivator in creating a positive work climate and supporting the continuous improvement of teacher performance. One of the concrete forms of this role is the provision of varied appreciation, both in formal and non-formal forms. Awards in the form of certificates, gifts, praise, and verbal motivation are delivered in person, even at routine moments such as flag ceremonies. This form of appreciation is considered effective in fostering a sense of appreciation, increasing work morale, and strengthening teachers' sense of responsibility and loyalty to the school (Rizal & Bakhri, 2023). In addition to being a form of appreciation for achievements, awards also function as a source of motivation that provides a positive psychological influence in improving the quality of teaching. This is in line with Warna et al. (in Husnunnadia & Masyitoh, 2024) that the principle of fairness in awarding is able to strengthen teachers' intrinsic motivation and encourage performance improvement. The appreciation given is not only a form of recognition for achievements, but also a source of psychological motivation that has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

In addition to the award system, school principals actively drive teacher professional development programs through workshops, in-house training, webinars, and educational technology training. Around 80% of PPPK teachers have participated in PPG and obtained educator certificates, indicating a high commitment to improving pedagogic competence. The principal also encourages the use of cutting-edge technology such as coding and artificial intelligence (AI) in the learning process. Nikmah et al. (2020) stated that the facilitation of training by school principals can significantly improve the professionalism and performance of teachers. Not only facilitating training, the principal also guides teachers in implementing the training results into learning practices. Reflection, follow-up, and consistency of implementation are important parts so that training is not only administrative. In terms of communication, the principal builds effective interpersonal relationships through formal and informal channels, such as meetings, casual discussions, and digital communication groups. This open and supportive work environment allows teachers to convey ideas, criticisms, and suggestions without fear. Syahrin et al. (2025) emphasized that effective interpersonal communication from school principals can increase teachers' work motivation and create a conducive work atmosphere.

Principals' empathetic attitudes, openness to input, and involving teachers in decision-making reflect thoughtful participatory leadership. A comfortable and harmonious working atmosphere strengthens the collective spirit, encourages innovation, and fosters a sense of belonging among teachers. In line with Karwati (in Rasyid, 2024), school principals who are able to create a safe, comfortable, and rewarding work environment will increase the motivation of all school residents.

Overall, the role of school principals as motivators has had a positive impact on improving teacher performance through appreciation, professional development, supportive communication, and participatory leadership that is oriented towards collective growth.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the leadership of the principal of SDN 14 Bengkalis plays a strategic role in improving the performance of PPPK teachers through four main roles: educator, supervisor, innovator, and motivator. Principals guide teachers through training and learning communities, conduct ongoing academic supervision, encourage technology-based innovation, and create a supportive work climate through awards and open communication. These four roles complement each other and have a significant impact on improving the competence, professionalism, and work motivation of PPPK teachers, thereby supporting the quality of education at the school.

The recommendation is that school principals consistently carry out their roles as educators, supervisors, innovators, and motivators through directed coaching, continuous supervision, training, performance appreciation, and open and collaborative communication. Teachers are expected to be active in developing professionalism and innovating in learning. Then for further research, it can further develop this research to be able to research the role of other school principals which aims to improve teacher performance in order to produce better research results.

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