

The Principal's Leadership Style in Enhancing Teacher Professionalism at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme guru di SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. Kepemimpinan sekolah memegang peran penting dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kondusif serta mendorong guru untuk mengembangkan kompetensinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian adalah kepala sekolah dan para guru di SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah menerapkan gaya kepemimpinan transformasional dan partisipatif, yang ditandai dengan kemampuan memotivasi guru, memberikan arahan yang jelas, serta melibatkan guru dalam pengambilan keputusan. Gaya kepemimpinan ini memberikan dampak positif terhadap profesionalisme guru, yang tercermin pada peningkatan kompetensi pedagogik, keterampilan manajerial, dan etika profesional. Guru menjadi lebih kreatif, disiplin, dan proaktif dalam menjalankan tugasnya. Kesimpulannya, kepemimpinan kepala sekolah merupakan faktor kunci dalam pengembangan profesionalisme guru, dan peningkatan berkelanjutan melalui pelatihan serta evaluasi rutin sangat diperlukan. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan bagi sekolah lain dalam menciptakan iklim profesional yang mendukung peningkatan kualitas pendidikan.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, profesionalisme guru, SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, kepemimpinan transformasional, kepemimpinan partisipatif

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the leadership style of the principal in enhancing teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. School leadership plays a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment and encouraging teachers to develop their competencies. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The subjects of the study were the principal and teachers at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. The findings indicate that the principal applies a transformational and participative leadership style, characterized by the ability to motivate teachers, provide clear guidance, and involve teachers in decision-making. This leadership style positively impacts teacher professionalism, reflected in improvements in pedagogical competence, managerial skills, and professional ethics. Teachers become more creative, disciplined, and proactive in carrying out their duties. The study concludes that the principal's leadership is a key factor in developing teacher professionalism, and continuous improvement through training and regular evaluation is necessary. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for other schools in creating a professional climate that supports the enhancement of education quality.

Keywords: school principal leadership, teacher professionalism, SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, transformational leadership, participative leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in enhancing teacher professionalism and overall school performance. Principals who adopt transformational, democratic, or instructional leadership approaches can significantly inspire teachers, improve their pedagogical skills, and foster a positive, collaborative school culture. Research has consistently shown that leadership plays a central role in influencing teacher satisfaction,

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commitment, and professional development, which ultimately impacts student learning outcomes (Purwantiningsih & Suharso, 2019). These leadership styles go beyond mere administrative functions; they actively engage teachers in continuous professional development, mentorship, and participatory decision-making processes, thus improving the overall educational experience.

However, despite the wealth of studies on leadership and teacher professionalism, there is a notable gap in research focusing specifically on the leadership styles of principals in primary schools in Indonesia, particularly at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. While much research has explored the broader effects of leadership in educational settings, empirical evidence remains insufficient in identifying which specific leadership approaches are most effective in fostering teacher professionalism in this particular context. As a result, there is a need for deeper exploration into how leadership styles influence teacher development in localized settings like this rural primary school.

Recent scholarship suggests that principal leadership goes beyond traditional administrative responsibilities and includes promoting continuous professional development, mentoring, and fostering participatory decision-making. Advanced studies have emphasized the importance of adaptive leadership, which involves providing individualized guidance to teachers, thereby enhancing their engagement and competencies. However, much of this research has been conducted in urban or secondary school environments, leaving a significant gap in understanding how leadership effectiveness plays out in rural primary schools (Kartini et al., 2020). This gap is particularly evident in Indonesia, where rural schools like SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III face unique challenges that may require different leadership strategies compared to urban schools.

This study, therefore, offers novel insights into the impact of various principal leadership styles on teacher professionalism within a specific local context. By focusing on SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, the research examines important contextual factors such as school culture, community involvement, and resource availability—elements that have been largely underexplored in prior studies. These factors can significantly shape the effectiveness of leadership strategies in rural schools, where conditions may differ greatly from urban settings (Malik et al., 2020). Understanding these contextual elements is crucial for developing leadership approaches that are not only effective but also relevant to the unique challenges faced by rural schools.

The practical implications of this study are far-reaching. The results can guide school administrators and policymakers in adopting leadership strategies that effectively enhance teacher professionalism and improve overall school performance. For principals, the findings offer practical advice on how to create a supportive, professional environment that nurtures teacher development. By identifying the leadership practices that are most conducive to fostering teacher professionalism, the study provides valuable insights that can help principals establish a positive and growth-oriented teaching culture within their schools (Borotoding et al., 2021).

In terms of academic contribution, this research fills an important gap in the existing literature on educational leadership. It specifically addresses the influence of principal leadership on teacher professionalism in rural Indonesian primary schools, an area that has been largely overlooked in previous studies. By providing empirical evidence, this study contributes to both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in educational

leadership. It offers new perspectives on how leadership styles can be tailored to the specific needs and conditions of rural schools, ultimately providing a deeper understanding of how leadership can drive educational improvement (Roja & Salim, 2023).

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Type

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. Its primary objective was to investigate the effect of the principal's leadership style on teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III.

2.2 Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, located in Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra.

2.3 Population and Sample

The population comprised all 30 permanent teachers at the school. Given the relatively small population size, the study utilized total sampling, including all teachers as research respondents.

2.4 Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two primary sections:

1. Principal's Leadership Style – assessed through indicators of transformational, democratic, and instructional leadership.
2. Teacher Professionalism – evaluated using indicators such as pedagogical competence, professional competence, and self-development.

Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to deployment, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure accuracy and consistency of measurement.

2.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered by directly distributing questionnaires to all teachers. This was complemented by observational data to corroborate and enrich the questionnaire responses.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of both descriptive statistics and inferential testing using simple linear regression to examine the influence of leadership style on teacher professionalism. The analytical procedures included:

1. Validity and reliability testing of the questionnaire.
2. Descriptive statistical analysis to explore the distribution of responses.
3. Classical assumption testing, including assessments of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.
4. Simple linear regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable (principal's leadership style) and the dependent variable (teacher professionalism).

2.7 Research Ethics

The study adhered to ethical principles in educational research, including obtaining formal permission from the school, maintaining the confidentiality of respondents, and ensuring that all data were used exclusively for academic purposes.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The research findings, based on quantitative analysis using simple linear regression with a sample of 30 permanent teachers at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, indicate a significant relationship between the principal's leadership style and teacher professionalism. The regression coefficient of 0.56, with a significance level of $p < 0.01$, shows a positive and statistically significant effect of leadership style on teacher professionalism. This suggests that the leadership style of the principal plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' professionalism. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.31, meaning that approximately 31% of the variance in teacher professionalism can be explained by the principal's leadership style, while the remaining 69% is influenced by other factors not considered in this model.

Descriptive statistics showed a mean score of 3.82 for leadership style and 3.74 for teacher professionalism on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating a moderately high perception of both leadership effectiveness and teacher professionalism. Classical assumption tests, which included normality, linearity, and homoskedasticity tests, confirmed that the data met the requirements for linear regression analysis. The normality test ($p = 0.128$) confirmed that the data followed a normal distribution, while the linearity test (F calculated $<$ F table) showed a linear relationship between the variables, and the homoskedasticity test ($p = 0.342$) demonstrated that the variance of errors was consistent across the data.

Overall, the research conclusively answers the question, "How does the principal's leadership style influence teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III?" The results affirm that the principal's leadership style significantly and positively influences teacher professionalism, although the magnitude of this effect is moderate (Liu et al., 2020).

Discussion

The moderate effect size ($R^2 = 0.31$) observed in the study indicates that while principal leadership plays a significant role in influencing teacher professionalism, it is not the only factor at play. At SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III, the principal's leadership style, characterized by participatory, supportive, and development-focused approaches, likely contributed to fostering a higher level of professionalism among teachers. When teachers feel empowered and supported, they are more likely to engage actively in professional growth initiatives, which in turn enhances their pedagogical skills and overall performance (Goos et al., 2023). This finding underscores the importance of a leadership approach that encourages collaboration and continuous development within the school.

The mean scores of 3.82 for leadership style and 3.74 for teacher professionalism suggest a generally positive school climate. However, the presence of unexplained variance (~69%) signals that other factors are also influencing teacher professionalism. These factors may include the overall school culture, teachers' intrinsic motivation, access to professional development opportunities, workload, community involvement, resource availability, and the

quality of external supervision. As such, while principal leadership is undoubtedly an essential component, it cannot account for the entire picture of teacher professionalism (Purwantiningsih & Suharso, 2019). This highlights the multifaceted nature of teaching quality, where leadership is only one of many interrelated factors that contribute to teacher performance and school effectiveness.

The literature also presents contrasting findings that emphasize the contextual nature of leadership effectiveness. For instance, a study conducted in Mataram City, as reported in the *Berajah Journal*, found no significant effect of school leadership on teacher professionalism. This suggests that leadership alone may not universally drive professional outcomes and that other contextual factors must be taken into account. Similarly, research on transformational leadership published in the *E-Journal UNUJA* revealed that while most dimensions of transformational leadership positively influenced teachers' pedagogical competence, the dimension of inspirational motivation actually had a negative effect (Arii, 2024). This finding highlights that certain leadership behaviors, if misapplied, can have unintended consequences. It underscores the fact that the impact of leadership on teacher professionalism is not a one-size-fits-all approach and is heavily mediated by contextual factors such as the school setting (urban vs. rural), school size, school culture, and available resources.

From a practical standpoint, several recommendations emerge from the study's findings. First, school leaders should focus on transformational leadership practices that prioritize participatory decision-making, support for professional development, and intellectual engagement (Alrowwad et al., 2020). This approach empowers teachers and fosters a culture of collaboration. Second, leadership development programs at the district or provincial levels should incorporate strategies that help principals adapt their leadership styles to local contexts, ensuring they are better equipped to promote teacher professionalism in their specific school environments. Third, since leadership alone explains only part of the variance in teacher professionalism, schools must also focus on complementary strategies such as improving school culture, providing mentorship and coaching, enhancing resources, and strengthening external supervision systems. Finally, teachers should be encouraged to take greater agency in their professional development. While leadership can create a conducive environment, individual initiative and commitment to professional growth remain crucial for fostering teacher professionalism (Vargas et al., 2020).

In terms of contribution to theory and practice, this study provides valuable empirical evidence from a rural primary school in Indonesia, contributing to the existing body of knowledge on educational leadership. The findings show that principal leadership significantly influences teacher professionalism, accounting for approximately 31% of the variance in this context (Paludo & Montresor, 2024). However, the study also emphasizes that leadership alone is not sufficient to enhance teacher professionalism and overall school performance. Policymakers and school leaders must consider a variety of interacting factors such as school culture, teacher motivation, and available resources when designing interventions aimed at improving teacher effectiveness (Firmansyah, 2025). This research, therefore, provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of leadership in the context of Indonesian rural schools, offering practical recommendations for enhancing teacher professionalism and school performance through a comprehensive approach.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of the principal's leadership style on teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 6 Banyuasin III. The findings indicate that the principal's leadership style exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher professionalism, with a moderate effect size accounting for approximately 31% of the variance. Teachers perceived transformational and participative leadership behaviors including involvement in decision-making, supportive supervision, and encouragement of professional development as particularly effective in enhancing both pedagogical and professional competencies.

The practical implications of these results suggest that school leaders should adopt leadership approaches emphasizing collaboration, motivation, and guidance, while fostering a supportive school culture that enables teachers to actively engage in their own professional growth. For policymakers and education administrators, structured training programs on adaptive and transformational leadership strategies tailored to the unique conditions of rural primary schools could maximize the positive impact of leadership on teacher professionalism.

Given that leadership accounts for only a portion of the factors influencing teacher professionalism, schools should also focus on complementary measures, such as improving resource availability, managing teacher workloads, providing mentorship and coaching, and establishing professional learning communities.

For future research, it is recommended to investigate the interaction between leadership style and other contextual variables, such as school culture, community engagement, and teacher intrinsic motivation, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of teacher professionalism in rural educational contexts. Longitudinal studies could further explore how changes in leadership practices over time affect the sustained professional development of teachers.

Overall, this study confirms that effective principal leadership is a critical, though not exclusive, factor in fostering teacher professionalism, underscoring both the practical relevance for school management and the theoretical contribution to the field of educational leadership.

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