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Principal Management In Developing Teacher Professionalism In State Junior High School Pidie District

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A B S T R A C T

This qualitative study analyzes the role, strategies, and stages of principals in developing teacher professionalism in State Junior High Schools in Pidie Regency. The research focuses on three key aspects: The principal's role in fostering the integrity of teacher professionalism, The principal's strategy in cultivating teacher teaching competence, and The principal's stages in developing teacher communication soft skills. Using a case study design, data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation from principals and 14 certified teachers from State Junior High School 1 Muara Tiga and State Junior High School 3 Muara Tiga. The findings indicate that the principal's role involves value-based leadership, collecting accurate information, and effective communication. Implemented strategies include creating a conducive work environment, providing resources, building a collaborative culture, utilizing technology, and conducting periodic evaluations. The stages for developing communication soft skills involve planning, teacher professional development, supervision, evaluation, and data-driven decision-making.

1. Introduction

Management is managing resources in the form of people, money, materials, machines, methods, marketing, and minutes to achieve goals efficiently and effectively Wardani (2017). At the heart of any educational institution lies the effective management of its human and material resources, with the principal serving as the pivotal figure responsible for orchestrating all activities within the school environment Rios (2024). The principal is a school staff who is responsible for all school activities, has the authority and responsibility to organize all educational activities in the school environment that he leads based on Pancasila Pahlawanti et al. (2020). Principal management is more defined as the actions of a principal in managing everything with full responsibility in accordance with the tasks that have been assigned to achieve the goals that have been set Sunaengsih et al. (2019). Principal management is often defined as one of the factors that can encourage schools to realize their vision, mission, goals, and targets through

programs that are implemented in a planned and gradual manner (Mulyati, 2022; Nurrohmah, 2023; Widiyarso et al., 2022). This opinion means that the principal is required to have adequate management skills to guide the abilities of teachers in a school so that they are able to take the initiative to improve a school Sunaengsih et al. (2019). Their leadership directly impacts the school's culture, the quality of instruction, and ultimately, student outcomes (Husni et al., 2023; Kusumaningrum et al., 2020; Wahyudi et al., 2020). Effective principal management fosters an environment conducive to learning and professional growth, making it a critical element in the overall success of an educational institution He et al. (2024).

Teachers, as one of the components in teaching and learning activities, have a position that greatly determines the success of learning, because the main function as a teacher is to design, manage, and evaluate learning. Teachers have a very important role in the overall educational effort Maulansyah et al. (2023). The professionalism of a teacher is the estuary of basic skills and a deep understanding of children as learners, learning objects, and conducive situations for learning activities Lestari (2023). Professional teachers are the backbone of any quality education system, directly influencing the intellectual and personal development of students.

There are four indicators of teacher professionalism (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Basri & Akmaluddin, 2020), namely: a) Teaching competence. In this competence, teachers are required to master the subject matter in their own fields according to their academics and be able to convey learning materials clearly and effectively, and have high competence in teaching in class. This includes pedagogical knowledge, subject matter expertise, and the ability to adapt teaching methods to diverse learning styles. b) Motivation to continue learning and developing themselves. A professional teacher is always enthusiastic to learn more, such as taking courses or seminars held by the government or outside to develop the quality of their teaching. Continuous professional development is crucial for teachers to stay updated with new pedagogical approaches, technological advancements, and curriculum changes. c) Ability to communicate with students and parents. Professional teachers have good communication skills and can establish strong relationships with students and parents, with the aim of facilitating understanding and cooperation. Effective communication fosters a supportive learning environment and ensures that parents are actively involved in their children's education. d) Integrity in carrying out duties. Professional teachers act with high integrity and ethics and carry out their duties with full responsibility and honesty Naibaho & Pardede (2025). This involves upholding ethical standards, demonstrating fairness, and maintaining a high level of accountability in all professional interactions.

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of teacher professionalism, many schools, particularly in specific regions, continue to face challenges in ensuring that their teachers meet these professional standards. In the field that has been observed by researchers in 2024 at one of the junior high schools in Pidie Regency, precisely in Muara Tiga District, several persistent issues were identified. In that school, there are still many teachers who are not disciplined, neglect their responsibilities as a

teacher, and problems like this clearly do not meet the indicators of a teacher's integrity. Instances of tardiness, non-compliance with administrative tasks, and a general lack of accountability were observed, undermining the ethical foundation expected of professional educators. Observations revealed that many teachers at the school were lacking in mastering the class, exhibiting a lack of innovative learning methods. This often resulted in monotonous lessons that failed to engage students effectively. Even more concerning, some teachers had not fully mastered the material taught in class, leading to superficial explanations and missed learning opportunities for students. The mastery of essential administrative duties, such as preparing teaching devices, Curriculum Objectives (CP), and Learning Path Objectives (ATP), was not consistently demonstrated. Problems like this certainly do not meet the indicators of teaching competency, which are fundamental for delivering high-quality instruction Annisa & Anggoro (2025).

Beyond pedagogical and administrative competencies, soft skills, particularly communication, are vital for teachers. In that school, there are still teachers who have not fully mastered soft skills or communication skills even though these skills are very important for a teacher to master, one of which is effective communication between teachers and students and parents. This ability is very important for teachers to convey information clearly and listen to students well Iskandar (2019).

Weak communication skills can lead to misunderstandings, strained relationships with students and parents, and an inability to effectively convey complex concepts or manage classroom dynamics Conus & Fahrni (2019). These challenges underscore a critical need for targeted interventions and robust principal management to cultivate a more professional teaching force in the region. The principal, as the primary leader and manager, plays a crucial role in identifying these gaps and implementing strategies to address them, thereby enhancing teacher professionalism and, by extension, the quality of education provided.

This qualitative study analyzes the role, strategies, and stages of principals in developing teacher professionalism in State Junior High Schools in Pidie Regency. By examining the actions taken by principals, this research aims to provide insights into effective leadership practices that foster teacher growth and development. The research focuses on three key aspects: The principal's role in fostering the integrity of teacher professionalism, the principal's strategy in cultivating teacher teaching competence, and the principal's stages in developing teacher communication soft skills. Understanding these aspects is crucial for developing targeted interventions and professional development programs that can elevate the standards of education in Pidie Regency and potentially in other similar contexts.

2. Methodology

In the research process, methods are used to produce systematic and scientific research results, where this study uses field research methods. Field research is a qualitative research based on post-positivism philosophy to study the natural conditions of objects. The type of research is a method used in scientific research

that has standards, is systematic and logical. This study uses qualitative methods to describe the problems and focus of the research. Qualitative methods are steps in social research to obtain descriptive data in the form of words and pictures. This is in accordance with what was expressed by Moelong (2018) that the data collected in qualitative research is in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers.

Place and Time of Research

The research location was conducted at State Junior High School 3 Muara Tiga and State Junior High School 1 Muara Tiga, Pidie Regency, located at Jalan Laweueng-Krueng Raya, Muara Tiga District, Postal Code 24153. The research was conducted from December 10 to February 10 in accordance with the research permit.

Research Subjects and Informants

The subject of this study is a person or the main actor studied by the researcher or the target of the study. The subjects of this study were the principals of State Junior High School 1 Muara Tiga and State Junior High School 3 Muara Tiga with 12 research informants, divided into 6 from State Junior High School 1 Muara Tiga and 6 from State Junior High School 3 Muara Tiga.

3. Results and Discussion

The data collection process for this study involved observations, interviews, and documentation. Researchers conducted direct observations in both State Junior High School 1 Muara Tiga and State Junior High School 3 Muara Tiga to understand the daily practices of principals and teachers. Interviews were conducted with principals and 14 certified teachers from the two schools. Documentation, such as school policies, teacher professional development records, and curriculum documents, was also reviewed. The following table 1 illustrates the types of questions asked during the interviews with the principals to understand their management approaches in developing teacher professionalism.

Table 1. Interview Questions for School Principals

No.	Category	Interview Questions
1.	Role in Fostering	How do you ensure that decisions made are based on the best interests of students and school values? How do you direct teachers to comply with school rules and ethical guidelines?
2.	Strategy for Teaching Competence	What strategies do you implement to encourage teachers to use innovative teaching methods and integrate technology in their lesson plans? How do you ensure optimal achievement of learning objectives, including curriculum evaluation and parental involvement?
3.	Stages for Communication Soft Skills	What structured programs or observations do you conduct to improve teachers' communication skills in delivering material? How do you foster positive relationships between teachers, students, and parents, and handle conflicts constructively?

The Role of the Principal in Fostering Teacher Professional Integrity

The role of the principal is very important in fostering the integrity of a teacher, the principal ensures that every decision taken is based on the best interests of students, teacher professionalism, and the values upheld by the school. The principal directs teachers to obey and comply with applicable rules. However, many teachers feel pressured, guilty, doubtful, and uncomfortable after making difficult ethical decisions. They often question their integrity and moral standing. Ethical dilemmas often involve conflicts between fairness, compassion, consistency, and the interests of students. Teachers must weigh various factors, including the background of the students, the impact on other students, and school rules. There is no easy or right solution in dealing with ethical dilemmas. Decisions made often have negative consequences, both for teachers and students. Teachers need support to deal with ethical dilemmas. They need to have the opportunity to discuss, share experiences, and find solutions together. Teachers often feel unsure about the best way to handle difficult situations. This indicates the need for clear ethical guidelines and adequate training to help them make better decisions.

The role of the principal in fostering teacher integrity at Pidie State Middle School has been carried out in accordance with efforts in a collaborative approach. A collaborative approach, objectivity and concrete descriptions, an emphasis on potential and positive things, a variety of communication media, a specific approach according to the subject, and a focus on solutions and support are some strategies that can improve teacher communication skills and make it easier for parents to understand the problems faced by students. Then the principal applies the principles of ethical leadership.

Ethical leadership as a demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. Another role is as a value-based decision maker. Decision-making based on values emphasizes the importance of personal and organizational values in guiding decisions. In this context, enforcing a code of ethics reflects a commitment to values such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility. The principal strives to be firm with the teacher's professional rules. The rational decision-making model assumes that decision makers will identify problems, seek information, consider alternatives, and choose the best solution. Before making a decision, the principal must collect complete, complete, and bias-free information. This process includes gathering evidence (documents, records), interviews with relevant parties (teachers, students, parents), and understanding relevant regulations and codes of conduct (teacher code of ethics, school policies).

Principal's Strategy in Developing Teacher Professionalism Teaching Competence

The results obtained are that the principal asked teachers to build students' speaking skills through the use of fun and interactive learning methods, integrating learning technology in preparing learning plans. By using learning technology, teachers can

create learning plans that are more interactive, fun, and easily accessible to students, conduct evaluations and reflections on the learning plans that have been made. In this way, teachers can find out the success or failure of the learning that has been made and can make the necessary changes to improve the quality of learning.

The principal also provided an overview of the efforts made by the school to ensure that learning objectives are achieved optimally, namely emphasizing the importance of periodic curriculum evaluation and mature learning planning, providing input to teachers through classroom observations, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in the learning process, and conducting program evaluations at the end of the semester to see the progress of each class.

Principals who have a clear vision, because it reflects a deep commitment to improving the quality of learning. Principals recognize that the central role in ensuring the success of learning lies in the effectiveness of the lesson plans prepared by teachers. This statement not only emphasizes the importance, but also summarizes the holistic strategy that needs to be implemented to achieve this goal. A conducive work environment is the main foundation for teachers to develop. This includes psychological, social, and physical aspects. Teachers who feel safe, valued, and supported will be more motivated to innovate and improve the quality of learning.

Principals need to adopt a transformational leadership style, which focuses on inspiring, motivating, and empowering teachers. This involves effective communication, setting clear expectations, and recognizing achievement. Principals establish mentoring and coaching programs, where more experienced teachers guide newer teachers or teachers who need additional support. Facilitate the formation of a community of practice where teachers can share experiences, learn from each other, and collaborate in developing. Collaboration among teachers is essential to improving the quality of learning.

Through collaboration, teachers can share ideas, strategies, and resources, and provide constructive feedback to each other. Collaboration also encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and continually improve. Facilitate reciprocal classroom observations, where teachers observe each other and provide feedback on their instructional practices. Provide online or offline platforms where teachers can share lesson plans, materials, and other resources. Evaluation and feedback are crucial processes to ensure effectiveness and learning.

Principal Stages in Developing Soft Skills of Teacher Professionalism Communication

The stages of the principal in ensuring the effectiveness of the delivery of material by teachers are by providing structured programs, conducting direct observations, providing concrete solutions, providing intensive training, building a culture of collaboration such as encouraging sharing sessions between teachers, building a culture of mutual learning and support in the school environment, and utilizing technology to support the learning process, such as the use of power points and

online learning resources. The principal in trying positive relationships with students and parents, namely, first, emphasizing the importance of curriculum, delivery of materials, and student learning outcomes, Handling conflicts or problems relies more on existing rules and procedures.

The next stage is to make efforts in programs or activities that aim to strengthen the relationship between teachers, students, and parents. The next stage that the principal does is keep the relationship good and constructive, first open up communication space, both in delivering information and in listening to teacher aspirations. This causes miscommunication, ambiguity, and potential misunderstanding. Involving teacher participation in training and workshops, handling conflicts constructively such as mediation to resolve differences of opinion and communicating and working together to solve problems.

The stages used by the principal are to create a clear and structured program for teacher supervision and professional development. This program includes clear objectives, planned activities, consistent schedules, and periodic evaluations. The stage of increasing the frequency of classroom observations by significantly increasing the frequency of classroom observations using various observation models and providing constructive and specific feedback based on evidence obtained from observations. The stage of analyzing needs and providing concrete solutions is to analyze the needs to identify the challenges faced by teachers in delivering material. After being identified, there were several major weaknesses in dealing with conflict, namely the lack of sensitivity and awareness of teachers to the early signs of conflict. In this context, it shows that the ability of teachers to recognize early signals of conflict is very important for prevention.

Teachers who are not sensitive to social dynamics in the classroom tend to have difficulty resolving conflicts before problems become big. The next weakness is the lack of skills and strategies in dealing with conflict. Many teachers do not have adequate knowledge or training regarding conflict resolution techniques. The principal uses planned strategies, such as mediation and open dialogue, which are important for dealing with conflict effectively. Without these skills, teachers often feel confused and unprepared in dealing with complex conflict situations.

4. Conclusion

The role of the principal in fostering the integrity of teacher professionalism at Pidie State Middle School is leading with values, gathering accurate and objective information, conducting effective dialogue and communication, considering the impact on students, providing fair and constructive solutions, and practicing transparency and accountability. The principal's strategy in developing professional teaching competencies for teachers at Pidie State Middle School is: creating a conducive working environment, facilitating teachers with resources and support, building a culture of collaboration, ensuring relevant devices, providing technology and informatics facilities. Conducting periodic evaluations and feedback. The principal's stages in developing soft skills in professional communication of

teachers at Pidie State Middle School are planning, teacher professional development, supervision and evaluation, data-based decision making.

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