

THE PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGY FOR MOTIVATING TEACHERS' SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AT SD IT RAUDHATUL JANNAH IN TALANG UBI DISTRICT, PALI REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the principal's strategies in motivating teachers' self-directed learning at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah, Talang Ubi District, PALI Regency. This research employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The research informants included the principal, teachers, the school committee, and educational staff. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the principal's strategies in motivating teachers' self-directed learning are implemented systematically based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The fulfillment of physiological needs is carried out by creating a comfortable and supportive working environment. Safety needs are addressed through a supportive psychological climate, open communication, and a family-oriented working relationship. Social needs are fulfilled through the development of a collaborative culture, teacher forums, and professional learning communities. Esteem needs are met through material and non-material appreciation, which enhances teachers' self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, self-actualization needs are reflected in teachers' increased awareness, initiative, innovation, and continuous reflection in self-directed learning. Supporting factors include supportive and visionary leadership, a conducive school culture, adequate facilities, and teachers' commitment to professionalism. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors consist of limited time due to administrative workload, differences in technological literacy, and the suboptimal follow-up of training outcomes.

Keywords: principal's strategy, motivation, teachers' self-directed learning

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kepala sekolah dalam memotivasi pembelajaran mandiri guru di SD IT Raudhatul Jannah Kecamatan Talang Ubi Kabupaten PALI. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi. Informan penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah, guru, komite sekolah, dan tenaga kependidikan. Analisis data dilakukan secara interaktif melalui tahap reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepala sekolah dalam memotivasi pembelajaran mandiri guru dilaksanakan secara sistematis berdasarkan hierarki kebutuhan Maslow. Pemenuhan kebutuhan fisiologis dilakukan melalui penciptaan lingkungan kerja yang nyaman dan kondusif. Kebutuhan rasa aman dipenuhi melalui iklim kerja yang suportif,

komunikasi terbuka, dan hubungan kekeluargaan. Kebutuhan sosial diwujudkan melalui penguatan budaya kolaborasi, forum guru, dan komunitas belajar. Kebutuhan penghargaan dipenuhi melalui pemberian apresiasi material dan nonmaterial yang meningkatkan rasa percaya diri dan motivasi intrinsik guru. Selanjutnya, pemenuhan kebutuhan aktualisasi diri tercermin dari meningkatnya inisiatif dan kesadaran guru untuk belajar secara mandiri, berinovasi, serta melakukan refleksi berkelanjutan. Faktor pendukung implementasi strategi meliputi kepemimpinan yang suportif dan visioner, budaya sekolah yang kondusif, ketersediaan sarana prasarana, serta komitmen guru. Adapun faktor penghambat meliputi keterbatasan waktu akibat beban administrasi, perbedaan tingkat literasi teknologi, serta belum optimalnya tindak lanjut penerapan hasil pelatihan.

Kata kunci: *strategi kepala sekolah, motivasi, pembelajaran mandiri guru*

INTRODUCTION

Background and the strategic role of school leadership have long been recognized as fundamental determinants in shaping the quality of education and, ultimately, the quality of human resources produced by educational institutions. In the context of contemporary education, school leaders particularly principals are not merely administrative figures but act as visionary leaders, organizational managers, and motivational agents who influence the direction and outcomes of the educational process. The principal's leadership capacity determines how effectively a school can translate its vision and mission into concrete educational practices that foster both academic excellence and character development among students. As emphasized by Ratnawulan et al. (2013), the success of a school is closely tied to the leader's ability to manage complex organizational structures while simultaneously inspiring and guiding teachers to perform optimally. This dual function requires a multidimensional leadership approach that integrates intellectual intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) to ensure that leadership practices are not only rational and efficient but also empathetic and value-driven (Ratnawulan et al., 2023).

The integration of IQ, EQ, and SQ in school leadership is particularly relevant in the modern educational landscape, where challenges are increasingly complex and multidimensional. Intellectual intelligence enables principals to design strategic plans, analyze institutional needs, and implement evidence-based decision-making. Emotional intelligence allows leaders to build strong interpersonal relationships, manage conflicts effectively, and foster a supportive work environment that enhances teacher morale. Meanwhile, spiritual intelligence provides a moral and ethical foundation that guides leadership practices toward integrity, sincerity, and a commitment to educational values. This holistic leadership approach aligns with the broader goals of education, which aim not only to develop cognitive competencies but also to cultivate ethical and socially responsible individuals (Goleman, 1995; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In this sense, the principal becomes a transformative leader who shapes not only institutional performance but also the culture and values embedded within the school community.

Within this leadership framework, teacher motivation emerges as a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of educational processes. Motivation, as conceptualized by Robbins and Coulter (2018), refers to the internal and external forces that drive individuals to act toward achieving specific goals. In the educational context, teacher motivation is essential for ensuring high-quality instruction, continuous professional development, and the successful implementation of innovative teaching practices. Motivated teachers are more likely to engage in reflective practices, adopt new pedagogical approaches, and contribute actively to school improvement initiatives. Conversely, low levels of motivation can lead to stagnation, reduced instructional quality, and limited student achievement outcomes.

To enhance teacher motivation, school principals must implement comprehensive and contextually relevant development strategies. Mangkunegara (2017) highlights that motivation can be strengthened through a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including recognition, rewards, career advancement opportunities, and a supportive work environment. In practice, this means that principals must go beyond formal supervision and create conditions that enable teachers to feel valued, empowered, and supported in their professional roles. Karoso (2024) further emphasizes the importance of providing access to learning resources, training opportunities, and professional development programs that align with teachers' needs and interests. Such initiatives not only enhance teachers' competencies but also reinforce their sense of professional identity and commitment to their work.

Moreover, the role of the principal as a manager and supervisor is crucial in creating a conducive work climate that fosters motivation and professional growth. Shofirah et al. (2024) argue that effective managerial and supervisory competencies enable principals to establish clear expectations, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate collaborative learning among teachers. This aligns with the concept of instructional leadership, which positions the principal as a key driver of teaching and learning quality through active involvement in curriculum development, classroom supervision, and teacher mentoring (Hallinger, 2011). By adopting an instructional leadership approach, principals can directly influence teacher performance and student outcomes, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the school.

Despite the theoretical clarity regarding the importance of leadership and motivation, practical challenges often arise in the implementation of teacher development strategies. This is evident in the case of SD IT Raudhatul Jannah, which has demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering both character development and academic excellence through innovative teacher development programs. The school has implemented various initiatives, such as providing book allowances and facilitating access to online training programs, as part of its effort to enhance teacher professionalism. These initiatives reflect a proactive approach to teacher development and align with best practices in educational management.

However, initial observations at the study site reveal a significant gap between leadership policies and their practical implementation. Although the school has invested in resources and training opportunities, the level of teacher motivation for self-directed learning remains uneven. Some teachers actively engage in professional development activities, while others show limited participation and initiative. This disparity indicates that the existing strategies have not been fully effective in fostering intrinsic motivation among all teachers. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivation is driven by internal factors such as interest, enjoyment, and a sense of autonomy, whereas extrinsic motivation relies on external rewards and pressures. The reliance on top-down strategies, such as mandatory training and resource provision, may not sufficiently address the psychological needs that underpin intrinsic motivation, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

In addition to motivational challenges, structural and organizational factors also contribute to the observed gap. Teachers at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah face a heavy administrative workload, which limits the time and energy available for professional development activities. Administrative tasks, while necessary for school operations, can become burdensome when not managed effectively, leading to stress and reduced job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Furthermore, the lack of a structured and sustained professional learning community (PLC) within the school hinders opportunities for collaborative learning and peer support. PLCs are widely recognized as effective mechanisms for enhancing teacher learning and improving instructional practices through shared experiences, reflective dialogue, and collective problem-solving (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The absence of such collaborative spaces means that teachers may feel isolated in their professional development efforts, reducing their motivation to engage in continuous learning.

The gap between leadership strategies and teacher motivation at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah highlights the limitations of a purely top-down approach to teacher development. While leadership policies and resource provision are important, they must be complemented by strategies that empower teachers and foster a sense of ownership over their professional growth. This requires a shift toward more participatory and collaborative approaches, where teachers are actively involved in decision-making processes and have opportunities to shape their own learning trajectories. Such an approach aligns with the principles of distributed leadership, which emphasize shared responsibility and collective leadership within the school community (Spillane, 2006).

Furthermore, the integration of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational strategies is essential for achieving sustainable improvements in teacher motivation. Extrinsic incentives, such as rewards and recognition, can provide initial motivation, but long-term engagement depends on the development of intrinsic motivation. Principals must therefore create an environment that supports autonomy, encourages innovation, and recognizes individual contributions. This can be achieved through strategies such as mentoring programs, peer

collaboration, reflective practices, and opportunities for professional growth that align with teachers' personal interests and career goals.

The identified gap also underscores the importance of aligning leadership practices with the specific context and needs of the school. Educational leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it must be responsive to the unique characteristics of the school environment, including its culture, resources, and challenges. In the case of SD IT Raudhatul Jannah, this means addressing the administrative burden faced by teachers, creating structured opportunities for collaboration, and designing professional development programs that are both relevant and engaging. By adopting a context-sensitive approach, school leaders can ensure that their strategies are more effective in enhancing teacher motivation and performance.

Based on the analysis above, it becomes evident that the gap between leadership strategies and teacher motivation at the study site is not merely a technical issue but reflects deeper challenges related to organizational culture, leadership practices, and motivational dynamics. This gap provides a strong rationale for conducting further research to explore how leadership strategies can be optimized to enhance teacher motivation in a sustainable manner. Specifically, the research aims to examine the effectiveness of existing strategies, identify factors that influence teacher motivation, and develop recommendations for improving leadership practices in the context of SD IT Raudhatul Jannah.

In conclusion, school leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher motivation and, consequently, the quality of education. While theoretical frameworks emphasize the importance of integrated leadership approaches and comprehensive motivational strategies, practical implementation often faces significant challenges. The case of SD IT Raudhatul Jannah illustrates the complexity of translating leadership policies into effective practices that foster intrinsic motivation and professional growth among teachers. Addressing this gap requires a holistic and context-sensitive approach that integrates leadership, motivation, and organizational development to create a sustainable and conducive learning environment for both teachers and students.

METHOD

This study employs a naturalistic qualitative approach to examine phenomena in their natural setting without manipulating variables, thereby enabling the researcher to gain a deep and contextual understanding of the reality under study. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly interacting with the research subjects to capture the meanings, perceptions, and experiences that emerge in the field (Abubakar, 2021). The research method employed is a case study with an explanatory design, aimed at comprehensively investigating the strategies of the school principal in motivating teachers' self-directed learning at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah, Pali Regency. The explanatory design was chosen because it provides a deep explanation of the relationship between leadership policies and the dynamics of teacher motivation in a real-world context (Yin, 2018).

The research procedures were carried out systematically through several interrelated stages. The initial stage was preparation, which included determining the research location, selecting informants using purposive sampling based on their relevance and involvement in the phenomenon under study, and developing research instruments in the form of interview guidelines and observation sheets. The next stage was data collection, conducted through in-depth interviews to explore informants' perspectives in detail, participatory observation to directly observe activities and interactions within the school environment, and documentary analysis to supplement the data using various archives and supporting documents. The data obtained was then analyzed inductively using thematic analysis, which includes the processes of coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns and meanings relevant to the research focus. To ensure data validity, the researcher applied source, method, and temporal triangulation techniques, ensuring that the findings possess a high level of validity and reliability before being compiled into the research report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal's strategy at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah for motivating teachers' self-directed learning is a systematic, holistic approach oriented toward the holistic development of the individual. This strategy not only focuses on improving teachers' technical professional competencies but also integrates psychological, social, and spiritual aspects as the primary foundation for building intrinsic motivation. Research findings indicate that the principal adopts an approach aligned with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and McClelland's Achievement Motivation theory in designing leadership policies and practices. From Maslow's perspective (1943), individual motivation develops gradually through the fulfillment of basic needs until reaching self-actualization. Meanwhile, McClelland (1961) emphasizes the importance of the need for achievement as the primary driver for individuals to strive for excellence. The integration of these two theories provides a strong conceptual foundation for understanding how school principals' leadership strategies can encourage teachers to engage in sustained self-directed learning.

Research findings indicate that teachers' motivation for self-directed learning does not emerge instantly but through a gradual process influenced by the fulfillment of needs strategically managed by the school principal. In the initial stage, the principal focuses on fulfilling teachers' physiological needs and sense of security. This is achieved by creating a comfortable, safe, and supportive work environment—both physically and psychologically. An ergonomic work environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and non-repressive policies regarding mistakes are key factors in fostering a sense of security for teachers. When teachers feel safe and unthreatened by the risk of failure, they tend to be more open to innovation and willing to try new approaches in teaching. This aligns with the findings of Mayasari and Alimuddin (2023), who state that psychological stability is a primary prerequisite for fostering intrinsic motivation and creativity in educational practice.

Furthermore, the school principal also strives to build a humanistic and supportive organizational climate, where every teacher is treated as an individual with the potential to grow. This approach reflects a transformational leadership style that emphasizes the importance of emotional bonds between leaders and organizational members (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In this context, the principal acts not only as a policy-maker but also as a mentor and facilitator who provides moral support to teachers. This support is a crucial factor in boosting teachers' self-confidence, which ultimately leads to increased motivation for independent learning.

In the next phase, the principal's strategy focuses on meeting teachers' social needs through the formation and strengthening of a learning community (Learning Community/Kombel). The presence of the Learning Community serves as a strategic tool in transforming a learning culture that was originally individualistic into a collaborative one. Within this community, teachers have the opportunity to share experiences, discuss, and provide mutual feedback on their teaching practices. The social interactions occurring within Kombel not only enrich teachers' knowledge but also provide the social recognition crucial for the development of their motivation. Knowles (1975), in his concept of self-directed learning, emphasizes that a supportive social environment is one of the primary factors influencing the success of self-directed learning. Thus, the principal's establishment of Kombel can be understood as a strategic effort to create a conducive learning ecosystem.

This cultural transformation through social collaboration also impacts the formation of new norms within the school environment, where self-directed learning becomes part of the organizational culture. Teachers no longer view learning as a formal obligation but as a professional need that must be continuously fulfilled. This aligns with the concept of organizational learning, which emphasizes the importance of collective learning in enhancing organizational performance (Senge, 1990). With Kombel, teachers learn not only from external sources but also from the experiences and best practices of their peers, making the learning process more contextual and relevant.

At a higher level, the principal's strategy focuses on fulfilling teachers' needs for self-actualization. In this phase, the principal grants teachers trust and autonomy to develop themselves in accordance with their professional interests and needs. This granting of trust is a form of empowerment that enables teachers to take the initiative in setting their own learning objectives. Additionally, the principal provides non-material rewards, such as recognition in official school forums, which have been shown to significantly impact the improvement of teacher motivation. Herzberg (1966), in his two-factor theory, states that motivator factors—such as recognition and achievement—play a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction and individual motivation.

This phenomenon can also be explained through McClelland's (1961) Achievement Motivation Theory, which emphasizes that individuals with a high need for achievement tend to set high standards and possess an internal drive to achieve excellence. In the

context of this study, teachers who have reached the self-actualization stage exhibit these characteristics, actively seeking opportunities to learn and improve the quality of instruction without needing to be prompted by instructions from superiors. The principal successfully created conditions that fostered the internalization of motivation, where teachers learn not out of obligation but out of an awareness of the importance of self-development. This aligns with Bunyamin's (2021) findings, which state that effective leadership can align organizational goals with individual needs, thereby creating sustainable motivation.

Nevertheless, this study also reveals the dynamics of supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of this strategy. Key supporting factors include visionary leadership, the principal's commitment to teacher development, and the availability of adequate technological resources. Technology serves as a vital tool in supporting self-directed learning, particularly in the digital age where access to information has become increasingly widespread and accessible. However, on the other hand, there are several challenges that need to be addressed, such as a high administrative workload and a digital literacy gap among teachers.

An excessive administrative workload often becomes a major obstacle for teachers in their professional development. Time that should be used for reflection and learning is instead consumed by completing administrative tasks. This aligns with the findings of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017), who state that a high workload can reduce teachers' motivation and well-being. Additionally, the digital literacy gap poses a distinct challenge, particularly for teachers who are less familiar with technology. This situation hinders their access to digital-based self-directed learning resources. To address these challenges, more adaptive and differentiated strategies are needed. School principals must develop a clinical supervision approach capable of providing support tailored to each teacher's specific needs. Clinical supervision enables principals to offer more personalized and context-specific guidance, allowing each teacher to grow in alignment with their potential and circumstances (Glickman et al., 2014). Additionally, digital literacy training must be enhanced to ensure all teachers possess adequate skills in utilizing technology as a learning resource.

Overall, the principal's strategies at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah have successfully created a sustainable cycle of motivation. By integrating the fulfillment of basic needs through self-actualization, the principal not only enhances teachers' technical competencies but also fosters a culture of lifelong learning. This culture is crucial in addressing educational challenges in the era of globalization and digitalization, where changes occur rapidly and demand continuous adaptation. Senge (1990) emphasizes that organizations capable of surviving and thriving are those with the ability to continuously learn and innovate. Thus, the strategies implemented by the principal at SD IT Raudhatul Jannah can serve as a model of best practice in fostering teachers' motivation for self-directed learning. An approach that integrates psychological, social, and professional aspects has proven effective in creating a conducive and sustainable learning environment. Moving forward,

strengthening this strategy must continue through policy innovation, teacher capacity building, and the development of a more comprehensive support system. Thus, the educational goal of producing teachers who are professional, adaptable, and committed to lifelong learning can be optimally achieved.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the principal of SD IT Raudhatul Jannah employs a humanistic and transformative leadership approach to motivate teachers' independent learning. This strategy focuses on meeting teachers' needs in a tiered manner, ranging from creating a psychologically safe work environment to providing ample opportunities for self-actualization. The principal successfully shifted the paradigm of professional development from merely fulfilling workload requirements to fostering intrinsic motivation through the strengthening of a collaborative culture within the learning community. Descriptively, the success of this strategy is evident in the growing initiative among teachers to explore learning media and pursue independent training to enhance the quality of educational services for students. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this strategy is significantly influenced by the dynamics of internal school factors. Supportive infrastructure and a supportive leadership vision serve as the main pillars of success. However, real challenges still exist in the form of high administrative burdens on teachers and varying levels of digital literacy, which hinder the pace of self-directed learning. Additionally, post-training monitoring still requires strengthening so that innovations independently acquired by teachers can be consistently implemented in the classroom.

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