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**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING TEACHER  
PERFORMANCE (A CASE STUDY AT SMKN 2 SEKOTONG, WEST  
LOMBOK REGENCY, WEST NUSA TENGGARA)**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to examine the quality of education at SMK Negeri 2 Sekotong and to understand how the school principal's leadership contributes to improving teacher performance at the same institution. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The subjects of this study include the school principal, teachers, and administrative staff. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and document review, while data analysis was conducted using triangulation techniques. The study was carried out at SMK Negeri 2 Sekotong, located in Sekotong Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The findings reveal that the school principal plays multiple roles in improving teacher performance as a leader, manager, supervisor, and motivator. These roles are realized through professional development initiatives, continuous academic supervision, the creation of a conducive work environment, as well as consistent motivation and personal example. Supporting factors in teacher performance improvement include strong leadership commitment from the principal and a collaborative relationship among school members, while the main obstacles include limited facilities and infrastructure, as well as the burden of administrative tasks placed on teachers. The study concludes that the interviews with the principal and other informants showed a strong degree of consistency. This consistency was further verified through source and technique triangulation, where data from interviews were cross-checked against observational findings and documentation. The research data, therefore, can be considered to have a sound level of credibility, in accordance with triangulation theory.

**Keywords:** School Principal, Teacher Performance



## INTRODUCTION

School principals play a central role in improving the quality of education within the communities they serve. As stipulated in Government Regulation No. 6 of 2018, the principal is responsible for overseeing all educational activities, school administration, the development of other educational staff, and the utilization and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure. Given this mandate, the principal functions as the driving force behind the institution and holds significant authority in shaping the direction of its policies and overall success. Principals are therefore expected to possess the character, competence, and expertise necessary to lead an educational institution effectively. Leadership in this position demands critical attention, as the principal is ultimately accountable for everything that takes place within the school. As Wahjosumidjo (2011:136) points out, success in an educational institution is not determined solely by leadership but also by the collective contribution of all educational personnel within it. It is for this reason that mutual trust must be built in accordance with each person's respective responsibilities.

Teachers are central to the success of education through their performance at both the institutional and instructional levels. This strategic role is recognized in Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, which positions teachers as professionals and, at the same time, as agents of learning. As agents of learning, teachers are expected to serve as facilitators, motivators, drivers, learning designers, and sources of inspiration for students. These roles require teachers to continuously improve their performance and professionalism in response to the evolving demands placed on the world of education.

In today's reality, teachers face a growing number of challenges. According to Unifah Rosyidi, Chairperson of PB PGRI, being a teacher in the current era requires mental resilience and a readiness to work under all kinds of limitations. She points out that the greatest pressures come from inadequate welfare, heavy administrative burdens, and the need to constantly adapt to shifting policy directions. Beyond that, many teachers struggle to understand and implement the new Merdeka Curriculum, particularly when it comes to project-based learning and formative assessment, largely due to insufficient training and mentoring. The administrative load is another significant factor affecting teacher performance, as teachers are required to handle so much paperwork that their time for creative and effective teaching is drastically reduced. Addressing all of this requires an active role from the principal, particularly in guiding and mentoring teachers so that their performance can genuinely improve.



Based on preliminary observations conducted at this school, it was found that the overall quality of teacher performance at SMKN 2 Sekotong had not yet reached its full potential. This was evident in a number of issues, including teachers who did not fully understand the duties and responsibilities expected of them as educators. More specifically, problems were observed in areas such as inconsistent work discipline, incomplete instructional preparation, limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, and a need for stronger collegiality and cooperation among the teaching staff.

These findings point to the need for serious attention toward teacher performance improvement at SMKN 2 Sekotong. Efforts in this direction must be comprehensive, addressing not only professional discipline and role clarity but also the availability of adequate teaching resources and the cultivation of a more collaborative school culture. When these elements come together, it is reasonable to expect that teacher performance will improve and, in turn, have a meaningful impact on the quality of learning at the school.

The same observations also revealed that the principal's role in guiding teachers, particularly in curriculum-related matters, had not been carried out optimally. Feedback and coaching on teacher discipline were also inconsistent, leaving some teachers without sufficient accountability in fulfilling their duties. Additionally, guidance on the preparation of instructional planning documents had not been implemented as effectively as needed. The situation was further complicated by recurring miscommunication between the principal and teachers at SMKN 2 Sekotong.

These conditions suggest that optimizing the principal's role in guiding and developing teachers is a key factor in improving teacher performance at SMKN 2 Sekotong. The principal needs to strengthen academic supervision, build more effective lines of communication, and provide coaching that is both targeted and sustained, so that the school's educational goals can be achieved to the fullest extent.

Taken together, the patterns described above indicate that the principal's function as a leader at SMKN 2 Sekotong has not yet been carried out optimally. This is what motivated the present study, which examines the role of the school principal in improving teacher performance, with a case study focus at SMKN 2 Sekotong, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

The school principal is the highest leader within an educational unit, responsible for managing all aspects of the school, both academic and non-academic, in pursuit of educational goals. The principal does not merely function as an administrative manager but also as an instructional leader who drives improvements in learning quality, supports the professional development of teachers, and fosters a conducive school environment (Mulyasa, E., 2022). Furthermore, according to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2023) in its school principal training module, the principal is an agent of change within the school who is responsible for realizing the vision, mission, and goals of education through collaborative, participatory leadership oriented toward improving the quality of educational services. The principal is a crucial factor that profoundly influences a school's success in achieving its objectives (Samino, 2012). For this reason, principals are expected to consistently enhance the work effectiveness of their staff. Given how vital and strategic the principal's role is in achieving school goals, principals need to build strong relational skills with all members of the school community so that both educational and institutional objectives can be achieved to the greatest extent possible.

Under Ministerial Regulation No. 40 of 2021 on the Assignment of Teachers as School Principals, the functions of a school principal encompass three main areas: Managerial, Entrepreneurship Development, and Academic Supervision. Each of these functions is elaborated as follows.

### 1. The Principal as Manager

According to Muwahid Sulhan (2023), the principal in a managerial capacity carries out the following core functions:

#### a. Planning.

The principal develops the school's vision, mission, goals, and strategic plans based on an analysis of existing needs and potential, and designs annual or semester-based programs accordingly.

#### b. Organizing.

The principal structures the school organization, distributes tasks, assigns responsibilities to teachers and staff, and forms working teams to support program implementation.

#### c. Actuating.

The principal motivates, provides direction, and builds effective communication so that all elements of the school can work with enthusiasm and to the best of their ability.

#### d. Controlling.



The principal monitors and evaluates all school programs and activities, and provides feedback to support continuous improvement.

e. Decision-Making.

As a manager, the principal is also responsible for making key decisions that affect the quality of educational services.

Sound managerial leadership from the principal creates a conducive learning environment and a professional work culture, which in turn has a positive impact on educational quality and overall school performance.

2. The Principal as Supervisor

The principal needs to regularly carry out supervisory activities in order to assess how well teachers are implementing the learning process. This can be done through classroom visits to directly observe instruction as it unfolds. Through supervision, both the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers become visible. The principal can then work toward identifying solutions, providing guidance, and following up so that teachers are able to address their shortcomings while continuing to build on their strengths in delivering quality instruction.

3. The Principal as Entrepreneurship Developer

Mulyasa argues that school principals must possess an entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrated through creativity and innovation in managing school resources to create an effective and productive learning environment (Mulyasa, E., 2022). In this context, entrepreneurship extends well beyond the realm of business. It encompasses taking initiative to identify opportunities, crafting solutions to problems, making effective use of available resources, and being willing to take calculated risks for the advancement of the school.

Sagala further explains that the development of an entrepreneurial mindset by school principals aims to strengthen the school's competitiveness, drive positive change, and build a school that is both self-reliant and sustainable (Sagala, 2020).

4. Teacher Performance

According to Rivai and Sagala (2020:548), performance refers to the outcomes achieved by an individual in carrying out the tasks assigned to them, based on their skills, experience, dedication, and use of time. Improving performance, therefore, is closely tied to enhancing both individual capability and commitment to one's work.

Supardi identifies several dimensions through which teacher performance in carrying out professional duties can be assessed:

a. Skills in designing lesson plans.

A teacher's ability to design instructional plans can be evaluated through the following indicators: (1) developing a plan for managing the learning process, (2) organizing the subject matter to be taught, (3) planning classroom management, and (4) designing an assessment plan for learning outcomes.

b. Skills in implementing instruction.

A teacher's proficiency in delivering instruction can be assessed through: (1) the ability to open a lesson effectively, (2) the ability to manage the learning process, (3) the ability to organize instruction and evaluate both the process and outcomes of learning, and (4) the ability to close a lesson appropriately.

c. Skills in conducting learning assessments.

A teacher's competence in assessing student learning outcomes can be evaluated through: (1) planning the assessment, (2) carrying out the assessment, (3) processing and reviewing the results, and (4) communicating the findings.

d. Skills in building interpersonal relationships.

A teacher's ability to foster positive relationships can be assessed through: (1) nurturing positive attitudes among students, (2) building motivation throughout the learning process, and (3) managing classroom interaction effectively.

e. Skills in implementing enrichment programs.

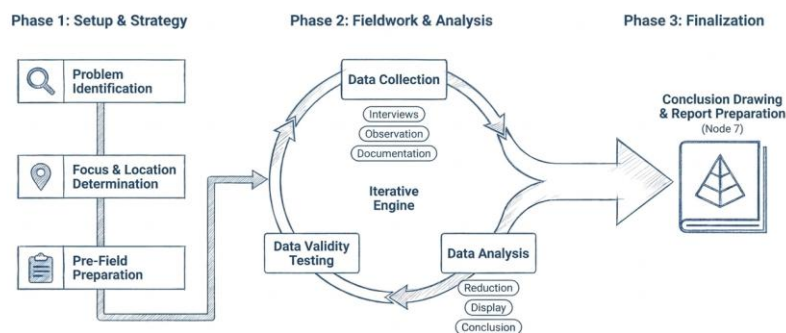
A teacher's competence in running enrichment activities can be seen through: (1) assigning homework and exercises, and (2) providing additional learning materials (Supardi, 2015).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. This study is categorized as descriptive qualitative because the problems raised by the researcher tend to develop and deepen after the researcher conducts the research in the field, so not too many things change, and it is sufficient to simply refine them. The procedures carried out in this research are as follows:

### Qualitative Research Execution Pathway

A systematic, phased approach from initial problem identification to final structural synthesis.





In determining the data, there are 2 (two) types of data collected by the author, namely: Primary data, the primary data sources in this study are the school principal, vice principal, teachers, and head of administration at SMKN 2 Sekotong. Secondary data, this secondary data will be taken from school administration and supervision which includes the school profile, school history, and teacher conditions.

In this study, the author applied several techniques to collect data, namely through interviews, observation, and documentation. The interview method was used to collect data from the school principal as the actual key informant regarding the role of the school principal in improving teacher performance. Interviews with teachers were conducted regarding the implementation of teacher performance improvement (as a response from the school principal regarding teacher performance at SMKN 2 Sekotong). In this observation, the focus was on the performance of teachers at SMKN 2 Sekotong, and the documentation method was needed as a supplementary method to obtain data, because through this documentation method, historical data and other documents related to this research could be obtained. This method was applied by the author to collect information regarding documentation such as: the principal's agenda, records of principal and teacher activities, school profile, student conditions, location maps, and others.

The data validity test for this qualitative research was carried out through a credibility test, which includes: Extended observation, Increasing persistence, Triangulation. Triangulation in this credibility verification is interpreted as checking information from various sources using different methods and times. Data analysis in this study applies the Miles and Huberman model which consists of: Data Reduction Stage, Data Display, Conclusion Drawing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the researcher's interviews with the school principal regarding efforts to advance the school, as manifested through his roles as educator, supervisor, innovator, and motivator, showed predominantly positive responses. For instance, regarding his role as an educator, the school principal has, is currently, and will continue to provide guidance and direction to teachers, staff, and students in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, while consistently striving to improve the professionalism of educators and serving as a good example in various aspects.



All of this reflects the role of the school principal, which can be seen from the way the principal influences decisions and policies, as well as the steps taken to improve the competence of teachers at SMKN 2 Sekotong. In addition, the principal also plays an important role in leading efforts to advance the quality of teacher performance at SMKN 2 Sekotong, one of which is through improving teacher competence. Therefore, in applying his leadership, these roles emerge based on the situation. However, the majority of respondents stated that the principal's leadership at SMKN 2 Sekotong has become increasingly disciplined and more effective in improving educational quality, carrying out the following roles:

1. The Principal as Educator

The principal's role as educator is reflected in efforts to provide direction, guidance, and coaching to teachers so that they consistently work collaboratively, strengthen their work commitment, and carry out their duties in accordance with the applicable technical guidelines. In addition, the principal also serves as a role model for teachers and staff in carrying out academic duties and obligations. This role is in line with Daryanto's (2015) view that the principal as educator is responsible for creating a conducive work climate and providing coaching oriented toward improving teacher competence and professionalism. Research by Rusman (2017) also shows that principal leadership that is educative and exemplary has a positive influence on teacher discipline and performance.

2. The Principal as Supervisor

The principal's role as internal supervisor in the academic field is realized through the implementation of regular and continuous teaching supervision. Supervision carried out on an ongoing basis enables the principal to monitor the learning process, provide constructive feedback, and assist teachers in overcoming obstacles encountered during the learning process. This is in line with Mulyasa's (2018) view that effective academic supervision can improve teacher professionalism because teachers receive direct guidance related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning.

3. The Principal as Evaluator

As evaluator, the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong carries out supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of the performance of teachers and staff on a scheduled and continuous basis. This performance evaluation is important for assessing the level of achievement of teacher duties and serves as a basis for decision-making related to teacher coaching and professional development.

This is in line with Wahjosumidjo's (2019) view that the principal has a strategic role in assessing and evaluating teacher performance to ensure



educational quality in schools. Research by Supardi (2016) also found that teacher performance evaluation conducted objectively and continuously can increase teacher work motivation and encourage them to work more optimally.

These strategies are carried out in an integrated manner to create a conducive work climate and encourage continuous improvement of teacher performance.

a. Motivating and Inspiring Teacher Work Spirit

One of the main strategies carried out by the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong is motivating and inspiring the work spirit of teachers. Continuous motivation can encourage teachers to work harder, have a high sense of responsibility, and remain committed in carrying out their instructional duties. This is in line with Uno's (2016) view that work motivation is an important factor that influences teacher performance in carrying out their professional duties.

b. Cooperation with Other Institutions and Participation in Workshops

Another strategy implemented is establishing cooperation with other institutions to involve teachers in workshop or training activities. These activities aim to improve teacher competence and broaden their knowledge in accordance with developments in science and technology as well as the demands of the world of education. This is in line with Sudjana's (2018) view that teacher professional training and development through workshops can improve teachers' pedagogical and professional abilities.

c. Development, Mentoring, and Persuasive Communication

The principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong also conducts development and mentoring of teachers and establishes persuasive communication. Intensive mentoring helps teachers in overcoming learning problems, while persuasive communication creates a harmonious working relationship between the principal and teachers. According to Mulyasa (2018), effective and persuasive communication between leadership and teachers can increase teacher trust, loyalty, and performance.

d. Giving Awards to Outstanding Teachers

The strategy of giving awards to outstanding teachers is a form of appreciation for the performance that has been achieved. These awards can increase motivation and serve as encouragement for other teachers to improve their performance. This is in line with the reward theory put forward by Mangkunegara (2017) which states that rewards can increase employee job satisfaction and performance.



Factors that hinder the principal's efforts to improve teacher quality include obstacles related to information and technology (IT), low discipline, as well as problems with facilities, infrastructure, and funding.

The impact is seen in the low effectiveness of teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. This represents teacher competence that still clings to old traditions. Therefore, this will affect the improvement of productivity and educational quality at SMKN 2 Sekotong, as indicated by the limited scholarship opportunities for teachers and the absence of teacher competence improvement programs, such as allowances for reference books and regular training.

Table 1: Interview Findings

No	Focus of Finding	Results of Principal Interview	Results of Informant Interview (Teachers/Educational Staff)	Validation Results (Triangulation)	Conclusion
1	Teacher work motivation	Principal emphasizes the value of dedication, gives rewards and reprimands	Teachers state the existence of rewards, harmonious relationships, and increased work motivation	Confirmed through consistency of answers among informants and observation of the conducive school environment	Teacher work motivation increases through reward and role-modeling approaches
2	Learning supervision	Supervision is conducted directly in the classroom and periodically	Teachers state that supervision is carried out routinely, both formally and informally	Consistent with observation results and documentation of supervision activities	Supervision runs effectively and continuously



3	Coaching and direction	Principal provides direction through meetings and direct communication	Informants state the existence of persuasive communication and continuous coaching	Consistent between interviews and field practice	Coaching is carried out communicatively and effectively
4	Delegation of authority	Principal assigns tasks with control and monitoring	Teachers state the existence of task delegation accompanied by mentoring	Confirmed with task distribution documentation	Delegation runs on the principles of responsibility and oversight
5	Competence development	Organizing workshops and training	Teachers state they frequently participate in internal and external training	Evidenced by training activities and teacher participation	Competence development runs actively
6	Performance monitoring	Monitoring is carried out daily, weekly, and monthly	Informants confirm the existence of routine monitoring	Consistent with observation results and administrative records	Monitoring runs systematically
7	Performance improvement strategy	Strategy: motivation, role-modeling, rewards, communication	Teachers acknowledge the existence of these strategies and their positive impact	Consistent across sources and theory	Principal's strategy is effective in improving performance
8	Supporting factors	Government support, training, working relationships	Teachers mention training and a conducive work environment	Confirmed with field data	Supporting factors are sufficiently adequate



9	Inhibiting factors	Limited facilities and infrastructure, discipline, IT	Teachers also mention limited facilities and the motivation of some teachers	Consistent among informants	Main obstacles are in facilities and discipline
10	Teacher commitment and professionalism	Commitment varies	Teachers state that most have commitment, but some have low commitment	Confirmed through interviews and observation	Teacher commitment requires continuous coaching

**Policy Synthesis**

The principal's role carried out optimally as supervisor, evaluator, and educator is capable of improving teacher performance on a sustained basis. Continuous supervision, planned performance evaluation, and consistent coaching and role-modeling are important factors in improving the quality of learning and educational quality at SMKN 2 Sekotong.

The strategy of the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong in improving teacher performance is carried out through motivational approaches, professional development, effective communication, and the giving of awards. These strategies complement each other and play an important role in creating teachers who are professional, competent, and performing optimally.

Based on the summary table of results and discussion, it can be concluded that the interviews between the principal and informants show a strong degree of consistency. This is further confirmed through source and technique triangulation, where data obtained from interviews were validated through observation and documentation. Thus, the data of this study can be stated to have a good level of credibility in accordance with the triangulation theory put forward by Sugiyono.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the classroom action research and the discussion that has been presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Role of the School Principal in Improving Teacher Performance at SMKN 2 Sekotong

The role of the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong as internal supervisor in the academic field is realized through the implementation of regular and continuous



teaching supervision. The role of the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong as evaluator is realized through carrying out supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of the performance of teachers and staff on a scheduled and continuous basis. The role of the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong as educator is realized through providing direction, guidance, and coaching to teachers so that they consistently work collaboratively, strengthen their work commitment, as well as matters related to the duties that must be carried out by teachers in accordance with the applicable technical guidelines, and the principal serves as a role model who always sets an example for teachers and staff in carrying out academic duties and obligations at school.

## 2. The Strategy of the Principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong in Improving Teacher Performance

The strategies carried out include motivating and inspiring the work spirit of teachers, establishing cooperation with other institutions to involve teachers in workshops, providing motivation to teachers to work harder, conducting development and mentoring of teachers, carrying out persuasive communication with teachers, and giving awards to outstanding teachers.

## 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong in Improving Teacher Performance

The supporting factors include various training programs for teachers and the existence of teacher gathering forums such as KKG. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors for the principal of SMKN 2 Sekotong in improving teacher performance include limited facilities and infrastructure, poor teacher commitment, teachers engaging in other work activities that sometimes interfere with their official duties, insufficient mastery of subject matter by some teachers, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, low work productivity, and challenges in improving teacher welfare.

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