



The Influence of Principal Leadership, Work Motivation, and School Culture on Teacher Performance at SMK Nasional Malang

Habib Nun Azizah, Ali Imron*, Desi Eri Kusumaningrum, Ahmad Yusuf Sobri
Program Studi Administrasi Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
habib.nun.2101316@students.um.ac.id, ali.imron.fip@um.ac.id, desi.er.fip@um.ac.id,
ahmad.yusuf.fip@um.ac.id

Abstract: This study examines the influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and school culture on teacher performance at SMK Nasional Malang. Using literature review and observation methods, this research analyzes data from various sources and the researchers' direct experiences during the MBKM program. The results show that the principal's transformational leadership significantly affects teacher performance. An inclusive school culture, including routine activities such as morning greetings, joint prayers, and congregational prayers, contributes to the formation of discipline and character. Policies such as the moving class system enhance teacher motivation. Collaboration among school members strengthens the sense of togetherness and creates a conducive working environment. The combination of effective leadership, high motivation, and a positive school culture has been proven to improve teacher performance, which in turn promotes the quality of education at SMK Nasional Malang.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Work Motivation, School Culture, Teacher Performance

Introduction

A school is an educational institution where the educational process takes place, such as teaching and learning, educating, orientation, and guidance, which are carried out by combining management elements that include planning to supervision of all activities in the school. According to Jaliah et al (2020), for the educational process to run smoothly and achieve educational goals, all components in the management system of educational institutions must carry out all tasks assigned by the principal as the leader. The role of the principal is crucial in determining the success of the educational institution they lead, including how the principal motivates and implements a good school culture to create good teacher performance.

Teacher performance is one of the key factors determining the success of the educational process in schools. Teachers with good performance are more capable of creating an effective learning environment, encouraging student achievement, and supporting the achievement of educational goals. Good teacher performance can create effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and can shape the discipline of students, the school, and the teachers themselves. High teacher performance is demonstrated by their professionalism, which includes mastery of four skills: professional, didactic, personal, and social skills (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Therefore, teacher performance plays an important role in achieving educational goals optimally. Teacher performance is a synergistic element that must be developed to produce professional teachers capable of delivering an educational process tailored to the needs of the situation, conditions, and the needs of the community using its graduates. A teacher cannot improve their performance suddenly as this certainly requires motivation to enhance performance.



Work motivation is something that can generate drive or enthusiasm in working. One effort that can be made to motivate employees in carrying out their professional duties, according to Ningsih & Rindaningsih (2024), is by providing compensation or rewards for their services. Besides that, the principal can provide several things that can benefit or attract the attention of teachers and staff to motivate them in carrying out their work, such as what the principal at SMK Nasional Malang does by providing refreshments after each activity and snacks during exams. Additionally, the principal at SMK Nasional motivates their employees by setting an example, as the principal states that everything we want starts from an example, so if we want an activity or behavior to be carried out, we as leaders must set an example.

School culture is closely related to school discipline and the formation of character or morals. If the school culture is good, it will create good discipline, without conflict, minimal disciplinary violations, and so on. School culture is characterized by established norms and practices. Although school culture is part of the broader community culture, it has distinctive features as a subculture. Schools are responsible for passing on culture to the next generation, so they must always pay attention to society and culture in general (Widiyanto et al., 2023). The culture implemented by the principal at SMK Nasional Malang includes teachers arriving no later than 6:45 AM, all teachers and students stopping all activities during the morning prayer, and all teachers and students performing congregational prayers during the noon prayer time.

Method

The research approach includes data collection, data sources, and data analysis methods. This study uses a literature review method that involves searching and analyzing data from various sources of information, such as books, journals, articles, and so on, related to the research topic. The purpose of this literature review is to create an article that discusses the topic or issue based on the understanding obtained from various sources (Kusumaningrum et al., 2024). In addition to referring to the literature review, the researcher also uses the observation method because the researcher has conducted MBKM, namely Teaching Assistance at SMK Nasional Malang from February to June 2024.

Results and Discussion

Result

The research results show that the leadership of the principal at SMK Nasional Malang significantly influences teacher performance. Principals who apply a transformational leadership style by providing clear direction, emotional support, and good examples can positively enhance teacher performance. Additionally, teacher work motivation also plays an important role. This aligns with what the principal has stated, that teachers play a crucial role in the success of a school institution because students will imitate the attitudes, behaviors, and culture practiced by teachers in their daily lives, especially when they are active in the school environment. The culture implemented in this school is very varied, including:

1. In the morning, students are directed to greet the teachers who are on duty for the morning greeting schedule. The teachers on duty vary from the principal to the vice-principal at the front gate, followed by staff and teachers inside the school gate, and then by intern teachers or students participating in the MBKM program.



2. After the bell rings, all students and teachers are expected to stop all activities to perform a joint prayer led by the principal, followed by a short sermon containing advice for all school members.
3. When it is time for the noon prayer, there will be an automatic schedule announced by the system set by the school, making it easier for students and teachers to perform congregational prayers.
4. Teachers are given the freedom to implement the teaching and learning system. At SMK Nasional Malang, the principal enforces a moving class system, allowing teachers to stay in the classroom to conduct the teaching and learning process as usual.
5. On certain occasions, such as the halal bihalal after Ramadan, the principal, teachers, staff, and students hold a morning assembly followed by a handshake session starting from the teachers to the principal, then the students to the principal and teachers, followed by an intimate event where the principal and all teachers and staff conduct a deep halal bihalal followed by a communal meal.
6. During exam weeks, the vice-principal and principal create an exam supervision schedule involving permanent teachers and students participating in the MBKM program to foster camaraderie between them.

Discussion

The combination of effective leadership and a strong school culture has a positive impact on teacher performance. At the beginning of school activities, students are directed to greet the teachers on duty for the morning greeting schedule, starting from the principal to the students participating in the MBKM program at the school. This activity creates a familial and disciplined atmosphere in the school environment that supports a culture of mutual respect. Such routine interactions not only strengthen relationships among school members but also emphasize the principal's role in leading a school institution to form an inclusive school culture, as all elements at SMK Nasional Malang are actively involved.

When the bell rings, all activities in the school are temporarily halted to perform a joint prayer led by the principal, followed by a short sermon containing advice, demonstrating the principal's role as a spiritual and moral leader who can shape character and increase teacher motivation. By starting the day ceremonially and religiously, a positive work atmosphere is created, motivating teachers and staff to perform their duties with greater enthusiasm, discipline, and responsibility.

Furthermore, when the noon prayer time arrives, the school sets up an automatic system that announces the time for congregational prayers. This greatly helps school members fulfill their obligation to perform the second pillar of Islam without interruption, creating a balance between academic and spiritual obligations. This system demonstrates a religious school culture combined with technical support that can create a comfortable and conducive work environment. As a result, school members will be more at ease and focused on carrying out their duties and responsibilities at school, as everything has its own time.

In terms of learning, SMK Nasional gives teachers the freedom to apply teaching methods through the moving class system. The principal grants teachers the authority to manage classrooms and teaching methods according to the style and needs of the teachers using the class. Considering the number of classes, the classrooms in this



school have been divided based on subjects, so in practice, there are rooms occupied by 2 teachers because there are 2 teachers teaching the same subject but in different classes. Thus, the classroom is still occupied by 1 teacher with 1 group of students they teach. This flexibility encourages teachers' motivation in developing the learning process, making teachers feel empowered to improve the quality of learning, as they are given the freedom to design and conceptualize the classroom according to the subject taught in that class. This policy reflects the principal's trust in the professionalism of teachers, which plays a role in increasing teachers' motivation and performance.

In a series of halal bihalal activities, all school members are gathered to hold a ceremony and apologize to each other without exception. Then, the principal creates a new forum by gathering all teachers and staff to discuss more intense matters and provide lunch for all teachers and staff. Such activities can strengthen family relationships at school, create a strong sense of togetherness, and build a harmonious work culture, as in this forum, both teachers, staff, and MBKM students are involved, and indirectly, a sense of closeness is established there.

Lastly, regarding the exam supervision schedule involving teachers and MBKM students, this initiative aims to familiarize all elements at SMK Nasional Malang. This collaboration demonstrates the principal's leadership in providing space for teachers and MBKM students to interact and learn from each other, resulting in an exchange of experiences and knowledge beneficial for the overall performance of teachers. During the final exams, new teachers involved in exam supervision are eventually assisted and guided by MBKM students regarding the implementation and supervision mechanisms that must be carried out. After supervising the exams, all teachers and MBKM students also receive compensation as an effort to increase the motivation of teachers and students in carrying out their duties at school, especially in exam supervision.

From the various activities described, it is clear that the principal's leadership influences work motivation and school culture on the performance of teachers at SMK Nasional Malang. The principal's leadership, as explained, focuses on moral development, innovation in teaching, and strengthening an inclusive and religious school culture, which significantly impacts the motivation and performance of teachers. The principal not only acts as a formal leader but also as a facilitator, inspirer, and role model for all school members at SMK Nasional Malang.

Conclusion

The principal's inclusive, inspirational leadership, focused on moral development and spiritual balance, shapes a disciplined culture through routine activities such as morning greetings, joint prayers, and active participation in religious and social activities. The principal's leadership successfully creates a work environment that supports collaboration, emotional closeness, and spiritual and professional well-being for teachers. Additionally, teachers' work motivation can increase through policies that provide freedom in the learning process, such as moving classes and the freedom to arrange or organize classrooms as learning spaces, motivating teachers to be more creative and innovative. A school culture that supports collaboration among teachers, staff, students, and learners also strengthens the sense of togetherness towards educational goals. Effective principal leadership, high work motivation, and a positive school culture have proven to enhance teacher performance at SMK Nasional Malang. This also shows that creating a conducive work environment through good leadership



and a strong school culture is crucial in promoting optimal teacher performance, ultimately contributing to improving the quality of education.

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