

The Role of Managerial and Entrepreneurial Competence of School Principals in Improving School Quality at State Vocational High Schools in South Aceh Regency

Asmawi¹, Murniati^{2*}, Bahrun³

¹ Master of Educational Administration Program, Postgraduate School, Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh.

^{2,3} Educational Administration Master's Program, Syiah Kuala University, Darussalam, Banda Aceh 23111, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Murniati murniati@usk.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The managerial and entrepreneurial competencies of school principals are essential for effective school leadership. Managerial competence involves planning, implementing, and evaluating work programs, while entrepreneurial competence focuses on empowering and developing the school. This study aimed to understand the role of these competencies in enhancing school quality at State Vocational High Schools in South Aceh Regency. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that (1) managerial planning involves all stakeholders in contributing ideas, (2) managerial implementation is supported by teamwork led by the principal, (3) managerial evaluation includes monitoring and follow-up actions, such as staff training, (4) principals demonstrate entrepreneurial qualities like innovation, resilience, problem-solving, high motivation, and an entrepreneurial mindset, and (5) both competencies significantly enhance school quality and student outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone of national development, crucial for nurturing high-quality, capable individuals. At its core, education is a lifelong need that shapes character, encourages growth, and leads to societal improvement. In line with Indonesia's National Education System Act No. 20 of 2003, education is a deliberate effort to create a conducive learning environment where students can actively develop their spiritual, intellectual, and social skills. This goal is carried out within educational institutions, each guided by qualified leadership to ensure effective learning and development.

The role of school principals is essential in driving the success of educational institutions. Principals must demonstrate both managerial and entrepreneurial competencies to support school quality improvement. Managerial competency involves careful planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programs, optimizing resources to meet National Education Standards. Entrepreneurial competency, on the other hand, requires innovation, a proactive mindset, resilience, and the ability to identify and leverage opportunities to empower the school community.

As school leaders, principals' effectiveness in applying these competencies is key to fostering a supportive and high-quality educational environment that prepares students for the future. This study explores the impact of these managerial and entrepreneurial competencies among principals at State Vocational High Schools (SMK) in South Aceh Regency, assessing how they contribute to enhancing school quality and educational outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Managerial Competence

The term "competence" refers to an integration of knowledge, skills, and attributes that enhance an individual's performance (Marzuki & Sumardjo, 2023:108). It combines proficiency in intellectual and physical tasks (Robbins in Albaar, 2020:24) with domain-specific expertise (Darmadi, 2018:45). Meanwhile, "managerial" derives from management principles involving planning, organizing, directing, and controlling others to achieve organizational goals (Yunhendri, 2023:27). Managerial competence in school principals thus refers to their ability to manage school resources effectively from planning through implementation.

Educational management integrates resources like staff, funds, facilities, and information towards educational objectives (Mukhtar, 2018:9). Principals, as school leaders, are responsible for administrative, curriculum, and community relations duties (Tumbel & Rukmana, 2023:5). Based on Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 13 of 2007, principals should have personal, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social competencies, aiding them in leading the school toward improved educational quality.

Functions of Educational Management

Managerial competence for school principals is vital for improving school quality. Key management functions include:

- a) Planning - Defining goals and strategies to achieve them (Siagian in Mukhtar, 2018:48).
- b) Organizing - Structuring school activities and resources systematically (Karuru et al., 2024:6).
- c) Implementation (Actuating) - Executing plans and ensuring smooth learning processes (Karuru et al., 2024:7).
- d) Monitoring (Controlling) - Evaluating and aligning activities with educational goals (Karuru et al., 2024:8).

Indicators of Managerial Competence

Mukhtar (2018:47) outlines 16 indicators for principals, which include formulating school plans, organizing resources, managing change, fostering a positive school climate, and conducting curriculum and finance management transparently. Effective implementation of these indicators leads to enhanced school management and educational quality.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative research approach, focusing on narrative descriptions of phenomena. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is based on post-positivist philosophy and studies natural objects (Rukin, 2021:7). Trie et al. (2024:6) add that qualitative research emphasizes participants' perspectives, focusing more on meaning than generalization. A descriptive qualitative method is applied here. Sukmadinata (in Rudini, 2020:125) defines descriptive research as illustrating phenomena from present or past events. Qualitative descriptive research relies on various theories, requiring direct observation in the field and comparison with expert theories.

According to Creswell, qualitative research involves forming questions, collecting data from sources, analyzing data from specific to general, and interpreting meanings (Umrati, 2021:7). For this study, data collection will be done through surveys, interviews, observation, and documentation, enabling the researcher to describe the role of managerial and entrepreneurial competencies of vocational school principals in South Aceh in improving educational quality.

Research Location and Time

The research will be conducted at all public vocational schools (SMKs) in South Aceh Regency over three months, from July to September 2024.

Research Subjects

South Aceh has 10 public vocational schools, including SMK Negeri Labuhan Haji Timur, SMK Negeri 1 Labuhan Haji, SMK Negeri 1 Meukek, SMK Negeri 1 Sawang, and SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan, among others. Due to resource limitations, the researcher uses a sample from these schools through non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. Purposive sampling selects samples based on research objectives (Amin et al., 2023:23). Sample schools include SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan, SMK Negeri 1 Meukek, and SMK

Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan. Research subjects include principals, vice principals in curriculum, and teachers.

Research Instruments

Sugiyono (2019:156) defines research instruments as tools to measure observed phenomena. This study employs interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation to gather data through questions answered by respondents. These tools help measure the study's variables.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are crucial for accurate research outcomes. This study employs:

- a) Observation - Observing daily activities with the senses as the primary tool (Morissan, 2017:143).
- b) Interviews - Conducting unstructured interviews to obtain in-depth information, guided by key problem areas (Sugiyono, 2019:116).
- c) Documentation - Gathering relevant documents from the study sites, such as photos, letters, and meeting notes, to trace historical data on principals' managerial and entrepreneurial roles.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis organizes and synthesizes data from interviews, observations, and documentation. According to Sugiyono (2018:482), it involves systematically categorizing, interpreting, and concluding data for clarity. This process begins before fieldwork and continues through data collection. In this study, the data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's method with these stages:

- a) Data Reduction - Selecting and focusing on relevant data from field notes, eliminating irrelevant information.
- b) Data Display - Presenting data in narrative form, charts, or flow diagrams to make it easier to understand.
- c) Data Verification - Drawing conclusions and verifying data through continuous analysis; triangulation checks the data's validity through multiple sources (Helaluddin & Hengki, 2019:22).

RESEARCH RESULT

This chapter presents the findings of a study on the managerial and entrepreneurial competencies of principals at public vocational high schools (SMKs) in South Aceh Regency. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Meukek, SMK Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan, and SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and are presented in a descriptive narrative format.

School Profiles

- a) SMK Negeri 1 Meukek: Established in 2011, located in Lhok Aman, Meukek, South Aceh. It holds a "B" accreditation, offers two departments (Motorcycle Engineering and Fashion Design), and is led by Mr. Syamsuddin, S.Pd, with 27 teachers.

- b) SMK Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan: Founded on August 10, 2004, located in Sialang Village, Kluet Selatan, South Aceh, with "B" accreditation and led by Drs. Wahidin.
- c) SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan: Located in Lhok Bengkuang, Tapaktuan, South Aceh, this school is accredited "A" and led by Mr. Kurnaidi, S.Pd., M.Pd, with six departments, including Computer and Network Engineering, Multimedia, Office Management, Accounting, Microfinance, and Fashion Design.

Managerial Competencies of School Principals

- a) Managerial Programs for School Quality Improvement:
 - Principals employ managerial skills to organize school activities for quality enhancement. According to the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan, educational management involves controlling activities such as ensuring teachers fulfill their responsibilities.
 - Programs include supervising the school, gathering input from staff, involving teachers and staff in school activities, organizing training and workshops, and conducting evaluations.
- b) Implementation of Managerial Competencies:
 - Principals involve teachers, staff, and community stakeholders in implementing school development initiatives, such as forming work teams, encouraging collaboration, and motivating staff.
 - Principals align school activities with national education standards, as illustrated by the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan, who aims to develop students' skills and improve teacher professionalism.
- c) Organizational Development:
 - Principals foster a conducive organizational culture and engage all school stakeholders, from janitorial staff to the school committee.
 - Development strategies include clear mission and vision building, creating a positive school environment, enhancing professional growth for teachers, and maintaining effective communication channels.
- d) Improvement of Staff and Teacher Competency:
 - Principals encourage teachers and staff to participate in training, internships, and further education, promoting both professional and personal development.
- e) School Resources Management:
 - Each principal delegates the management of school facilities and resources to a vice-principal in charge, who maintains accurate inventory records.
- f) Community Relations and New Student Admission (PPDB):
 - Schools collaborate with community stakeholders through the school committee to maintain harmonious relationships. Principals also form committees to manage new student admissions effectively.

- g) Improving Graduate Competency Standards:
 - Schools collaborate with industries to align curriculum with real-world needs, such as SMK Negeri 1 Kluek Selatan's partnership with Capella Dinamik Nusantara to provide students with work-ready skills.
- h) Curriculum Management:
 - Principals form curriculum development teams and align the curriculum with industry requirements. SMK Negeri 1 Meukek integrates Islamic and local wisdom into the national curriculum.
- i) Financial Management:
 - Principals implement transparent financial management systems, involving teachers, staff, and the school committee in budgeting and financial reporting.
- j) Administrative Management:
 - Principals assign roles based on individual competencies and monitor the performance of administrative staff.
- k) Special Services:
 - Each school provides unique services, such as counseling, library access, health services, and student dormitories, to support students.
- l) Information and Communication Systems:
 - Schools leverage technology to enhance communication and learning. Social media and digital resources like online learning tools and interactive videos support classroom activities and improve information access.

Evaluation of the Principal's Managerial Competence in Improving School Quality at SMK Negeri in South Aceh Regency

Every program requires evaluation and monitoring by a leader to assess its successes and challenges. According to the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan, challenges often include time management and task complexity, which demand strategic solutions to address them effectively. Therefore, thorough monitoring and evaluation are essential. The principal further explains, *"Each activity has an organizing committee and a lead coordinator, so each program requires careful planning, and upon completion, each activity must report back to us. Additionally, we conduct direct observations of all activities carried out."*

DISCUSSION

Managerial Competence

a) Program Planning

Effective program planning is crucial for reaching organizational goals. According to Robbins (2011) in Imron (2021), it involves setting organizational goals, outlining strategies, and integrating activities. At SMK Negeri in South Aceh, principals plan to improve school quality through supervisory activities, gathering staff input, engaging all educators, conducting workshops, managing student admissions, and implementing evaluations. At SMK Negeri 1 Meukek, supervision of educators is prioritized to improve teaching effectiveness, with evaluations and solutions

provided to address any classroom challenges. Principals collaborate with school staff and hold discussions with school organizations to ensure quality improvements.

b) Implementation

The managerial competence of principals is reflected in monitoring discipline, punctuality, and compliance among staff. To enhance school organization, they form strong teams, assigning capable teachers as team leads, while principals oversee and evaluate. School resources are maximized, with rewards and professional development opportunities given to staff. Additionally, technology resources are allocated to promote independent learning and digital literacy.

Principals also focus on adapting the school to societal needs by fostering a democratic culture, prioritizing team decisions. Facilities are managed by a dedicated team reporting regularly to the principal. Principals maintain good relations with the community and manage new student admissions with careful planning. Curriculum development teams align standards with industry needs, ensuring students meet relevant competencies.

c) Evaluation

Regular evaluations by principals identify strengths and weaknesses in activities. Challenges such as time management and task complexity require strategic adjustments to address.

Entrepreneurial Competence

Principals must possess entrepreneurial skills to drive school progress. This involves identifying opportunities, fostering innovation, and collaborating with industries, like partnerships with Capella and local government departments at SMK Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan, and establishing production units for student training. At SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan, students have developed bioethanol from banana peels, and many have succeeded in STEM competitions. Principals inspire staff through innovative, motivated leadership and promote adaptability in a technologically advanced era.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research findings on the managerial and entrepreneurial competence of school principals in improving the quality of education at SMK Negeri, South Aceh, the following conclusions are drawn:

- a) The planning and implementation of managerial competence by the principals of SMK Negeri 1 Meukek, SMK Negeri 1 Kluet Selatan, and SMK Negeri 1 Tapaktuan are in accordance with management procedures. Resources are managed effectively, and principals successfully coordinate staff and teachers toward established goals. Schools also foster student competence development through collaborations.

- b) Managerial competence evaluation by principals includes supervision, monitoring, and follow-up on school activities, often resulting in teacher and staff training and development.
- c) Entrepreneurial competence is strong, as principals demonstrate innovation, perseverance, problem-solving, high motivation, and entrepreneurial instincts, which contribute to improving school quality.
- d) The combined impact of managerial and entrepreneurial competence among principals significantly enhances school quality and student outcomes.

Implications

- a) Managerial competence among principals positively impacts the educational quality of SMK schools in South Aceh.
- b) Entrepreneurial competence similarly has a positive effect on improving school quality.
- c) Principals with strong managerial and entrepreneurial skills influence educators, staff, and students effectively.

Recommendations

- a) Principals should regularly monitor all programs to ensure accurate implementation.
- b) Principals should collaborate with supervisors to enhance transparency in school management.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

- a) **Limited Scope of Schools:** This research was conducted in a few selected SMK schools in South Aceh, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Further studies involving more schools from different regions may be needed to obtain broader insights.
- b) **Data Collection Constraints:** The data collection relied on interviews, observations, and documentation, which may introduce biases due to the subjective nature of participant responses and the researchers' interpretations. A mixed-methods approach, including quantitative data, could provide more comprehensive results..

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