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SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN SMPN 1 BANDA ACEH AND SMPN 8 BANDA ACEH

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Abstract. The leadership style of the principal affects how well the school performs as a whole. The general pattern or course of action that the principle takes, which is seen as a tactic for raising teacher professionalism in order to achieve the next objective, which will build a pattern and an integral unity, is known as the principal's leadership. The purpose of this study is to determine how performance is enhanced by the principal's leadership. instructor at Banda Aceh SMPN 1 and Banda Aceh SMPN 8. This study employs a qualitative methodology using a descriptive research design. Techniques for gathering data include documentation, interviews, and observation. Using methods for data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-making, qualitative descriptive analysis is the data analysis approach applied. According to research findings, it was discovered that: (1) programs designed and implemented to enhance the performance of teachers, such as those that involve training or improving soft skills for teachers, educational seminars, workshops for teachers, MGMP, KKG, awarding excellence in teaching, adding incentives for teachers, and giving them the chance to use IT devices to solve problems that arise during teaching and learning activities; (2) The principal's plan to raise teacher performance includes: offering incentives, recognizing exceptional teachers with prizes, introducing teacher incentives, educational seminars, MGMP, and teacher workshops; (3) The following are barriers to better teacher performance that school administrators must overcome: insufficient funds, time, or motivation; moreover, they lack the assistance of professionals who can conduct workshops or offer training in a language that is easily understood by teachers. The provision of suitable infrastructure that facilitates engaging, successful, and efficient teaching and learning activities is one of the supporting variables in the interim.

Keywords: Leadership, Principal, Teacher Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Schools function as formal educational institutions with the primary goal of nurturing intellectual development in students and improving national intelligence levels. The role of principal leadership is fundamental in supporting teachers and staff, significantly impacting teacher performance (DeMatthews et al., 2022; Sahlin, 2023; Saleem et al., 2020). Effective leadership is essential for schools to achieve educational objectives, particularly in enhancing learning efficiency and effectiveness (Díez et al., 2020; Rostini et al., 2022).

The principal of the school oversees the planning of instructional programs, administration, hiring and training of additional teachers, and upkeep of infrastructure and facilities (Aris et al., 2023; O. K. T. Kilag et al., 2023). Students that exhibit patterns of behavior that are energetic,

highly curious, unable to keep quiet about anything, and driven to grow both personally and professionally are considered creative.

School principals must understand the current school culture, and realize that this cannot be separated from the structure and leadership patterns. Healthier cultural changes must start from the leadership of the school principal. School principals must develop leadership based on dialogue, mutual attention and understanding of each other (Zhou et al., 2018). Let teachers, administrative staff and even students convey their views on the current school culture, which aspects are positive and which are negative, especially with regard to the principal's leadership, organizational structure, values and norms, satisfaction with classes, and school productivity (O. Kilag, 2023; Pietersen et al., 2023). This view is very important for efforts to change school culture.

The school principal is one of the educational components that plays the most role in improving the quality of education. The principal of the school has to have a comprehensive, high-quality education management plan in addition to a vision and purpose statement. In order to keep the emphasis on the needs of the clients—in this example, students, graduate users, teachers, employees, the government, and society—this approach is a methodical and organized endeavor to consistently enhance service quality (Rosa, 2023).

In order to administer education in line with effective and efficient educational goals, school principals must perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. The principal is a functional teacher who is given the task of leading a school where the learning process is held, or a place where interaction occurs between teachers who give lessons and students who receive lessons (Hamzah et al., 2021; Owan & Agunwa, 2019; Pardosi & Utari, 2022).

In accordance with Minister of National Education Regulation Number 28 of 2010 concerning the Assignment of Teachers as School/Madrasah Principals that: "To become a school principal you must fulfill certain procedures and requirements such as: educational background, experience, age, rank and integrity." A school principal in achieving this goal must have many obstacles that must be overcome, such as problems that arise in schools, which are mostly faced by every school principal, namely delays in both students and teaching staff, creating a conducive climate and most importantly producing output (IRDALISA et al., 2022). Therefore, school principals need the right solution to solve problems.

Creating solutions or solving problems must require deep and creative thinking. Creative leadership and expertise in finding concrete problem solutions are needed by school principals. For this reason, every leader of an educational institution is required to be able to be innovative and creative in improving the quality of learning, developing the curriculum, developing the quality of teachers, increasing funding, providing facilities and infrastructure, as well as developing students' personalities and skills (Asbari et al., 2020; Fathih et al., 2021).

Currently, it is evident that school administrators must broaden, refresh, and enhance their knowledge and creativity in order to effectively lead their schools to meet academic objectives, given the accelerated pace of changes occurring at the school level (Fuadi & Irdalisa, 2022). As a result, effective management will dictate how well an individual performs in doing their job. The role of principal's leadership encompasses strategic planning of instructional programs, administrative management, recruitment and training of teachers, as well as maintenance of facilities and infrastructure (Aris et al., 2023; Kilag et al., 2023). This leadership is crucial in cultivating a healthy school culture and promoting open communication, mutual respect, and understanding among school members, including students, teachers, and administrative staff (Zhou et al., 2018).

Teacher performance is closely linked to the leadership provided by the school principal. Factors such as

professional development opportunities, availability of resources, and organizational support influence teacher effectiveness. This performance can be enhanced through various programs such as incentives, training, and access to information technology tools (Kilag et al., 2023; Petersen et al., 2020).

This study aims to explore how principal leadership impacts teacher performance at SMPN 1 and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh. The study specifically addresses the following questions:

1. How does the principal's leadership contribute to enhancing teacher performance?
2. What effects do incentives, professional development programs, and IT resources have on teacher performance?

Based on the background of the problem above, the author is interested in studying more deeply the leadership of school principals. This research is entitled "School Principal Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh".

II. METHODS

The study employs a descriptive research design with a qualitative methodology, chosen specifically to gain an in-depth understanding of the leadership practices of school principals in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Banda Aceh and SMP Negeri 8 Banda Aceh. A qualitative approach was selected over a quantitative or mixed-method approach due to its ability to capture the nuanced, complex interactions and experiences associated with principal leadership. This approach is well-suited to explore the subjective experiences and behaviors of the participants, which aligns with the research questions focusing on understanding and interpreting personal perspectives and organizational dynamics (Kholis, 2022).

The data were collected from 10 participants, which included principals, teachers, and administrative staff from both schools. Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in school leadership activities and their ability to provide relevant insights. Criteria for selection included experience in the school system, roles in leadership or administration, and availability for in-depth interviews. Potential biases in sampling were addressed by including both senior and junior staff members to ensure a range of perspectives.

Data were collected through field notes, document reviews, and semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility and deeper exploration of themes as they emerged. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Banda Aceh and SMP Negeri 8 Banda Aceh between January 10 and February 10, 2024. These locations were selected based on logistical feasibility and strategic importance in the Banda Aceh educational landscape.

The data analysis followed the steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion-making. During data reduction, raw data were systematically condensed to focus on elements directly related to the research questions. For example, interviews were transcribed, and significant

statements were highlighted and categorized based on recurring themes such as leadership strategies, challenges, and impacts on teacher performance. Themes were identified by looking for patterns in the data and categorizing these under broader themes, such as "leadership communication" and "teacher motivation." To illustrate, statements from participants on the principal's use of incentives were grouped under "motivational strategies," which then fed into the broader theme of leadership effectiveness.

Data were displayed in tables and matrices, organizing responses from different participants by themes to facilitate comparison. For instance, a matrix was created to compare insights on motivational strategies across both schools, which helped in identifying commonalities and differences in leadership approaches. Finally, conclusions were drawn by verifying themes against multiple data sources, such as observation notes and document reviews, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Zulfiter et al., 2020).

This systematic approach to data reduction, thematic identification, and conclusion-making ensures a credible and reliable interpretation of the qualitative data, providing insights into how principal leadership influences teacher performance in these schools.

III. RESULT

Principal Leadership Program at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

As a leader, the principal is able to mobilize the school community so that they carry out their duties and obligations well in order to achieve goals. It is realized that every leader of an educational institution, especially school principals, has a work program that has been prepared and formulated at the beginning of the year. The results of research on SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh are as follows (Sonedi et al., 2018).

SMP N 1 Banda Aceh

From the results of the interview, it can be understood that the school principal creates or compiles a plan to improve the performance of teaching staff, which is carried out in the form of a meeting or annual work plan (RKT) which is held at the beginning of each new school year. Apart from that, the principal also involves all elements in the school in preparing plans to improve the performance of teaching staff at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh (Sonedi et al., 2018). So, from the statements of several sources above, it can be concluded that the leadership of school principals plays a very important role in improving teacher performance. The school principal is a manager who manages and organizes all school members so that they can carry out each program properly and in accordance with joint planning. The programs to improve teacher performance are: MGMP, regular meetings at schools or in clusters, teacher workshops, teacher training, educational seminars, giving teachers the opportunity to use IT tools in learning, as well as giving rewards to teachers

who excel and also increasing teacher incentives (Guntoro, 2020).

SMP N 8 Banda Aceh

Based on data findings from research on school principal leadership in improving teacher performance conducted at SMPN 8 Banda Aceh by interviewing the school principal. Based on the results of observations made by researchers at SMPN 8 Banda Aceh, it can be concluded that the principal's policy is to improve teacher performance through soft skills strengthening programs. The soft skills strengthening program carried out by the school is: supervision program, MGMP training, seminars, and making prota/prosem/rpp, as well as other activities that support improving teacher soft skills (Giantoro et al., 2019). The programs carried out by the principal of SMPN 8 Banda Aceh are very supportive in improving teacher performance and teacher success in planning/implementing a more interesting learning process. The differences in principal programs at the two schools studied can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Differences in Principal Programs at Two Schools

No	Principal Program	SMPN 1	SMPN 8
1	MGMP	√	√
2	Regular meetings at school / cluster	√	
3	Teacher <i>workshops</i>	√	√
4	Teacher training	√	
5	Educational seminars	√	√
6	IT Training	√	√
7	Give <i>rewards</i> g outstanding teacher	√	√
8	Increase teacher incentives	√	
9	Creation of prota/prosem/rpp,		√
10	Supervision	√	√
11	Other training for teachers	√	√
12	Educational seminars	√	

Based on the table above, we can understand that there are differences between the two schools studied regarding teacher performance improvement programs. The principal's program at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh is: MGMP, regular meetings at school or in clusters, teacher workshops, teacher training, educational seminars, supervision, providing opportunities for teachers to use IT tools in learning, as well as giving rewards to teachers who excel and also increase teacher incentives. Meanwhile, the head of SMPN 8 Banda Aceh's program is a supervision program, MGMP training, seminars, and making prota/prosem/rpp, as well as other activities that support improving teacher soft skills.

Principal's Strategy for Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

Regarding teacher performance, there are several definitions according to the opinions of several experts, all of whom have slightly different visions, but in principle the similarity appears to be that performance is the actions carried out by someone in achieving goals. Performance consists of several components related to a person's duties, functions and position. The results of data collection and research data processing are as follows.

SMPN 1 Banda Aceh

Teaching is an academic and professional job. Academic because the learning process is an interaction to transfer knowledge, instill exemplary attitudes and behavior, and develop students' skills. With this process, adequate knowledge is required, both mastery of the material and knowledge that will be taught to students, in addition to that, you must also master supporting sciences such as psychology that are related to students.

SMP N 8 Banda Aceh

Someone who wants to become a professional in learning certainly needs knowledge and teaching skills so that with that mastery, the learning process can run well. The success of learning is not only determined by an adequate number of hours, but is also largely determined by the teacher's competence. There are four competencies that a teacher must have so that he can carry out his teaching duties professionally, namely professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence and personal competence or personality (Fitriyanti et al., 2022).

Obstacles and Supporting Factors for School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance

Obstacles for School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

In implementing the soft skills strengthening program to improve teacher performance, there are many things that are faced, there are many things that support the implementation of the program, apart from that, there are also obstacles faced by the school, such as lack of support from the education department, from the government, lack of teacher motivation, lack of teacher cooperation, and lack of funding (Sinulingga, 2019).

Based on the results of observations made by researchers, in implementing various teacher performance improvement programs, school principals also experienced obstacles related to teacher motivation, chaotic scheduling of teacher training, and lack of funding. During the implementation of several soft skills strengthening programs, there were obstacles that made some teachers uncomfortable participating in the running program, such as when they were indoors, the room facilities were limited, and teachers felt hot due to the lack of air conditioning.

Supporting Factors for School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation that researchers found while conducting research at the two schools, it was found that there were supporting factors for school principals in improving teacher performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh. The results of the research are as follows:

The supporting factor for the principal in improving the quality of teacher performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh itself is the ability of the principal himself to lead the teachers to develop their respective performance abilities. One of the supporting factors that continuously improves the quality of teacher performance is the completeness of infrastructure.

The supporting factors for the principal in improving the quality of teacher performance at SMPN 8 Banda Aceh itself are: the ability of the principal and the motivation of some teachers to improve performance. Based on the results of the interview, the Head of SMPN 8 Banda Aceh conveyed to the researchers the following: "*of course there are supporting factors in improving teacher performance, namely the availability of laptop equipment, infocus, which can support training to improve teacher pedagogical competence.*"

IV. DISCUSSION

Principal Leadership Program at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

Improving teacher performance is significantly influenced by the principal as a leader. The principle of SMPN 1 Banda Aceh is that the principal is not the only one who creates education management; the principal works in tandem with his subordinates, particularly the teachers. As stated by Mulyasa (2020:45), "the school principal is the driving force, determines the direction of school policy, and determines the school's goals so that they can be realized." This viewpoint is supported by the following: The principals of SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh have instituted many training programs at the school, such as seminars, MGMP, family gating, workshops, teacher upgrading, and training aimed at enhancing teachers' soft skills. The school creates and implements a variety of programs for teachers in order to enhance their performance as educators through the development of soft skills. These programs include teacher upgrading programs, training sessions, seminars, workshops, MGMP, family gating, and religious activities (like tahfizul Qur'an and dhuha with students) (Sedarmayanti & Safer, 2016).

Among the programs designed and implemented by schools to build soft skills are the following: organizing leadership development exercises for managers. This program aims to develop teachers' leadership skills. The principle believes that each teacher serves as a leader for their students; thus, at the conclusion of each month, all teachers gather for a meeting, which is presided over by the principal and the teachers themselves. This program's objectives are to increase instructors' self-assurance in

forums, enhance their communication skills, and educate them on how to use clear, understandable language (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019).

Secondly, hosting get-togethers for gating. Every year, the school does this exercise for all of the instructors. This program is implemented by organizing competitions for other teachers in the form of tahfiz tournaments, going on group rihlah at tourist locations, and concluding with enjoyable activities played together. In order to foster a strong working group, the program's goal is to strengthen staff members' sense of familial ties and unity among instructors at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh (Sunaengsih et al., 2019).

Third, provide MGMP-style teacher capacity-building training. Teachers enrolled in this program will have the opportunity to freely express themselves in discussion forums with other educators and/or presenters who are experts in their domains. This program's objective is to help educators become more knowledgeable and proficient in their roles as educators. This includes helping them comprehend and present the subject more effectively and using their creativity and strong teaching skills to fulfill their tasks (Ridwan, 2021).

Fourth, mandate that all teachers participate in teacher seminars, workshops, and training sessions. These can be conducted by the school or by outside organizations. Teachers may share their experiences and learn from one another at seminar events, which helps them come up with fresh ideas for teaching and learning activities (Suchyadi et al., 2019).

The fifth step is to get teachers involved in local, regional, and national contests. Teachers benefit from this activity because, in addition to making new acquaintances and experiences at large-scale schools, they may learn from other teachers in other schools to further their professional development (Ossiannilsson, 2018).

To ensure that the school's goals are met, the teacher programs previously mentioned need to be carefully planned. This includes identifying the policies, strategies, projects, methods, budget systems, and standards that must be followed in order to achieve the goals. As a result, in order to manage this planning, a plan for the program that will be implemented and the objectives that will be formulated must be prepared in order for all of the realistic goals to be met.

The principle uses the implementation of school regulations that control all teacher activities and the creation of teacher work reports as part of her approach to help teachers become more competent professionals and raise the standard of education. The goal of preparing this work report is to assess the teacher's proficiency in academics, communication, and skill areas. Expressing gratitude and inspiration for the work that teachers have done over the course of a school year. Every action is perceived as effective, and there has been a history of ongoing development.

Leading educational institutions' school principals need to have a strategic plan in place for putting teacher competency development programs into action. In order to strengthen

collaboration in executing the agreed program, SMPN 1 and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh have taken the following strategic steps: collaborating with the Head of Affairs (School Management Team/foundation) and coordinating with all coordinators at each class level (Alam et al., 2021).

Manage learning data and teacher performance, develop it, conduct assessments for ongoing improvement, and balance the curriculum in order to foster harmony among teachers. SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh teachers' performance may be enhanced by enhancing their soft skills; thus, the school developed training programs to enhance a variety of teacher competencies (Forson et al., 2021).

The goal of SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh is to develop quality graduates, and by putting this curriculum into practice, we can produce quality teachers and educators who can work successfully. Principals of schools hold the view that educators who possess strong soft skills and professionalism may significantly enhance the standard of instruction in their institutions. In addition to supporting teacher activities like reading instructional materials, receiving training on media and learning processes, and exchanging information with colleagues who can advance their careers through MGMP, the principal of SMPN 1 and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh is also working to improve teacher performance (Murtiningsih et al., 2019).

Teachers at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh frequently engage in these exercises as a way to enhance the growth of their soft skills. This is in line with the viewpoint given by Aqib and Elham (2017:30), which states that "A person who can be said to have good soft skills is a person who has the desire to always pursue professional development opportunities that can enhance and improve the quality of knowledge and skills, improve and maintain the image of the profession, and display behavior that is close to ideal standards."

Principal's Strategy for Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

Through his adept management, the school administrator has worked hard to raise teacher performance. In addition, the principle consistently assists in overseeing and bolstering the planning of school programs, meaning that in this instance, the principal persists in liaising with all members of the school staff. To ensure that school staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities, the principal of the school creates organized plans for various levels of planning (Shin & Hur, 2020). The leadership of SMP Negeri 1 and SMP Negeri 8 Banda Aceh has a solid plan in place for raising teacher performance through:

Motivation generator (provides encouragement/ motivation)

Every teacher is required by the principle to complete it and submit it to the principal simultaneously for approval. The principle offers guidance and motivation to enable effective learning planning. It turned out that the principal also offered instructions by calling the instructors whose preparation was subpar (Habibi et al., 2019).

Organize and involve teachers in scientific forums (education and training or up grading/in-service training), workshops, seminars, education and training.

Teachers are allowed to participate in seminars or other forms of training that are hosted by other organizations, such as the department. In addition to being hosted by other institutions, schools occasionally host their own workshops. Other institutions host training sessions. The main goal of workshops, training sessions, and other events is to increase teachers' proficiency in the classroom, for instance, with regard to teaching instruments.

School principals naturally encounter several challenges when attempting to apply administrative competence to enhance teacher effectiveness, particularly with regard to poor facilities and infrastructure. But in order to solve these issues, the school principal constantly works with committees, supervisors, and staff members. Good management, which entails organizing, planning, carrying out, and overseeing (Bellibaş et al., 2022).

Planning

When a manager wants to do a task, he or she must first complete this planning. This is due to the fact that planners as a whole play a crucial role and cannot be isolated from other functions. According to Yusmiar (2019:26), "Planning is a mature and intelligent determination of what will be done in the future in order to achieve goals; planning is also a process of preparing a set of decisions for making in the future." Planning is associated with the aims and objectives that are accomplished; nevertheless, a manager is not only a planner; they are also implementers.

It is envisaged that, through planning, we would be able to establish coordination and give instruction to the teaching personnel. There will be more coordination and collaboration within a team if everyone is aware of their responsibilities. At SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh, planning is done through monthly and annual meetings that evaluate past performance in order to improve outcomes for the upcoming academic year. The principal, supervisors, teachers, and other relevant parties can share solutions they have planned to improve teacher performance.

Organizing

It's common knowledge that organizing involves breaking up a job into smaller tasks, allocating these jobs to individuals based on their resource allocation capacity, and collaborating to successfully accomplish organizational objectives. Hamiyah (2019) states that "organizing is the act of seeking effective behavioral relationships between people so that they can work together efficiently and obtain personal satisfaction in carrying out certain tasks in certain environmental conditions in order to achieve goals or a specific target."

Additionally, each member of the educational staff finds it very easy to carry out their duties in accordance with the position they hold. This organizational structure can also facilitate communication between external parties and the school regarding who is in charge of each field, which will

later enable external parties to assist in supervising the principal in managing the school, particularly with regard to the principal's capacity to enhance teacher performance (Suratman et al., 2020).

Supervision

Among the components that are now in place, supervision is just as crucial. "Supervision is the process of observing all organizational activities to ensure that all work being carried out runs according to predetermined plans," as stated by Samsuddin (2020: 17). If the education management process plays a significant role, education may be accomplished successfully and efficiently.

According to the aforementioned statement, the principals of SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh have a fairly good leadership strategy in place to improve teacher performance. This is supported by evidence from multiple prior interviews as well as field data gathered through observation and other supporting documents. The leaders of SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh, in collaboration with the work team, have implemented a methodical approach to acquiring infrastructure, facilities, and qualified personnel (Gordon, 2019).

Constraints and Supporting Factors for School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh

The performance of teachers can be improved by a capable principal, but there are a number of challenges that must be overcome for them to accomplish their job. Although teacher performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh is progressing, it still needs to be enhanced. Improving teacher performance at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh is hampered by a number of factors, such as low teacher motivation and challenging attendance patterns (Saihu, 2020).

The teacher training program and participation in Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) activities are two of the most successful initiatives for raising teacher performance. These events are planned annually but are hindered by a lack of funding for teacher transportation. Additionally, during a semester, more than two teachers participate in MGMP and KKG training activities (Hamzah et al., 2021).

Due to many reasons—such as inadequate family support, rank management issues, job descriptions that overlap, the fact that many of the instructors are old, IT mastery requirements, and so forth—some teachers do not wish to be sent to participate in training.

It is imperative that educators are positioned in accordance with their areas of expertise because, when faced with assignments or jobs that are outside of their areas of expertise, teachers will become dissatisfied with their work and its outcomes, which will impede the growth of their morale at work (Charles & Mkulu, 2020).

The lack of funding for after-hours teacher training, the small percentage of teachers who remain inactive, and the inability of the training's outcomes to have an influence on colleagues are the challenges faced by school principals in

helping teachers acquire the fundamentals of education and putting performance improvement plans into action. This demonstrates how a tiny percentage of educators at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh are not proficient in the fundamentals of education, which affects how well they execute lessons (Owan & Agunwa, 2019). Teachers who lack a foundational understanding of education will find it difficult to mentor and instruct their students.

Three essential components that schools need to keep improving are welfare, career development, and professionalism. This aligns with Nurhayati's (2017:8) perspective, which is as follows:

To raise the standard of education, professional educators must always be innovative and productive in implementing new ideas in the classroom. However, given Indonesia's woefully inadequate teacher welfare system, training creative educators is exceedingly challenging. Providing teachers with a variety of professional training and education opportunities is essential to enhancing their job motivation, productivity, and professionalism at educational institutions (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018).

Additionally, the availability of the school's current infrastructure supports school principals in raising the caliber of teacher performance, according to the findings of research that has been conducted. It is believed that teachers would be able to effectively carry out teaching and learning activities with the right infrastructure, particularly in terms of developing their pedagogical competence (Osman, 2020). The school principal's constant attention to detail and provision of media and learning resources is another aspect that helps to improve teacher effectiveness (Engin, 2020). Books that follow the autonomous curriculum, for example, and the availability of laptops to let instructors generate educational resources and make the learning experience more engaging using projector displays (Meyer et al., 2022).

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated the critical impact of principal leadership on teacher performance at SMPN 1 and SMPN 8 Banda Aceh. Key findings reveal that initiatives focused on soft skills enhancement, consistent training, and culturally adapted activities, such as MGMP sessions and community-centered events, significantly boost teacher motivation and effectiveness. Addressing barriers like limited funding and infrastructure, the study suggests the establishment of partnerships with local governments and universities to access additional resources, thereby providing sustainable support. To further enhance motivation, it is recommended that professional development programs incorporate community-based activities that resonate with the social and cultural values of Banda Aceh. Additionally, structured supervision programs with regular feedback mechanisms can provide ongoing support to teachers and track progress effectively.

The unique contribution of this study lies in its emphasis on culturally tailored leadership strategies within educational settings. By integrating local cultural values into leadership

practices, this research offers insights into how specific leadership approaches can influence teacher performance, particularly in regions with strong social bonds. Unlike previous studies that focus on general leadership frameworks, this research highlights the importance of adapting leadership strategies to the local cultural context. Future research could explore the application of these strategies in similar cultural settings and assess the long-term effects of such context-specific approaches on teacher performance across different educational levels. Overall, this study underscores the value of culturally responsive educational leadership in fostering a supportive and effective environment for teacher development.

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