

PROFESSIONALISM OF THE PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHERS IN THE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF NGAWET WEST HALMAHERA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the professionalism of school principals in improving the performance of Social Sciences (IPS) teachers at Ngawet Private Elementary School, West Halmahera Regency. The professionalism of school principals has an important role in creating a conducive work climate, fostering teacher competence, and encouraging the improvement of the quality of learning. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects include school principals, social studies teachers, and several related parties in the school environment. Data collection techniques are carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation, while data analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the professionalism of school principals is reflected in managerial skills, leadership, academic supervision, and teacher coaching and development. The principal actively provides guidance, motivation, and evaluation of the performance of social studies teachers, so that it has a positive impact on learning planning, the implementation of the teaching and learning process, and the assessment of student learning outcomes. However, there are still several obstacles, such as limited infrastructure and sustainable development of teacher competencies. Therefore, efforts are needed to consistently improve the professionalism of school principals and support from various parties to improve the performance of social studies teachers optimally..

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INTRODUCTIONS

Education constitutes a fundamental determinant in enhancing human resource quality and national development capacity. The successful implementation of educational programs within schools is critically dependent upon multiple interconnected components, particularly school principals and teachers who serve as primary agents of instructional change (UNESCO, 2015). As instructional leaders, principals occupy a strategic position in managing

school resources, directing pedagogical initiatives, and cultivating institutional capacity to achieve optimal educational outcomes. Consequently, principal professionalism functions as the cornerstone for establishing a conducive school climate and systematically improving teacher performance through evidence-based leadership practices (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Principal professionalism manifests through four interrelated dimensions: managerial competence, instructional leadership, academic supervision, and the capacity to mentor and motivate teaching staff. Professionally competent principals demonstrate proficiency in strategic school planning, implement continuous formative supervision cycles, and provide context-sensitive guidance that addresses teachers' developmental needs (Warman, 2022). Through these mechanisms, principals facilitate teachers' enhancement of pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies dimensions formally recognized in Indonesia's teacher competency framework which directly influence classroom instructional quality and student learning outcomes (Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007).

Elementary Social Studies (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial/IPS) teachers fulfill a pivotal role in shaping students' civic knowledge, democratic attitudes, and socio-cultural competencies. Social Studies instruction transcends mere content mastery to encompass the deliberate cultivation of social values, cultural appreciation, and character development aligned with national educational goals (Fauzi, 2020). Consequently, IPS teacher performance must demonstrate excellence across the entire instructional continuum from lesson planning and implementation of diverse pedagogical strategies to authentic assessment of student learning. Research consistently demonstrates that such comprehensive teacher performance is significantly mediated by principals' supportive leadership and systematic academic supervision (Sunaryo et al., 2021).

Preliminary observations conducted at Ngawet Private Elementary School in West Halmahera Regency revealed persistent challenges affecting IPS teacher performance, including suboptimal lesson planning, limited pedagogical repertoire, and inadequate utilization of instructional media. These deficiencies reflect broader patterns documented in Indonesian educational contexts where teachers' instructional capacity remains constrained without consistent principal guidance (Hidayat, 2021). This situation underscores the urgent necessity for professionally competent principals to implement structured coaching, formative supervision, and motivational strategies that enable sustainable improvement in teacher practice particularly in geographically remote regions facing resource limitations.

Therefore, investigating principal professionalism in relation to IPS teacher performance enhancement at Ngawet Private Elementary School represents a significant scholarly and practical endeavor. This research will generate empirical evidence regarding the specific mechanisms through which principals influence teacher practice in under-resourced contexts, while contributing to the limited body of literature on educational leadership in Eastern Indonesia (Jaidie & Mappiasse, 2020). The findings are anticipated to inform school improvement initiatives and provide actionable recommendations for educational stakeholders committed to advancing instructional quality and human resource development in peripheral regions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive research type. This approach was chosen because the research aims to describe and understand in depth the professionalism of school principals in improving the performance of Social Sciences (IPS) teachers at Ngawet Private Elementary School, West Halmahera. This research was carried out at Ngawet Private Elementary School, West Halmahera Regency. The research time is carried out in the current semester of the ongoing academic year (can be adjusted to the actual research time).

The research subjects in this study are school principals and Social Science teachers. The research informants include: (1). Principal of the Private Schools (2). Social Studies Teacher, (3). Classroom teachers (as supporting informants). The selection of informants is carried out by purposive sampling technique, which is to select informants who are considered to understand the problem being researched. To obtain accurate data, the researcher used several data collection techniques, namely: (1). Observation. Observations were carried out to directly observe the activities of the principal in carrying out his professional duties and the performance of social studies teachers in the learning

process. (2). Interview. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals and teachers. Social studies to dig up information related to the professionalism of school principals and their impact on teacher performance. (3). Documentation Documentation is used to collect data in the form of school documents, such as principal's work programs, supervision schedules, teacher learning tools, and other archives relevant to the research.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes: (1). Data reduction, which is selecting and focusing data that is relevant to the research objectives. (2). Data presentation, which is presenting data in the form of a descriptive narrative. (3). Drawing conclusions and verification, namely concluding the results of research based on the data obtained

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Research conducted at Ngawet Private Elementary School in West Halmahera demonstrates that principal professionalism plays a pivotal role in enhancing the performance of Social Studies (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial/IPS) teachers. This professionalism manifests across four interrelated dimensions: managerial competence, instructional leadership, academic supervision, and teacher motivation and development—each contributing synergistically to instructional improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020).

1. Principal Professionalism in Managerial Aspects

The study reveals that the principal effectively executes managerial functions across the planning-organizing-implementing-evaluating cycle, establishing systematic structures that directly support teacher performance. By involving IPS teachers in school work program development, the principal cultivates shared ownership of instructional goals, which positively influences teachers' commitment to preparing comprehensive learning instruments including syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching materials (Warman, 2022).

The principal's professionalism in managerial aspects demonstrates significant contribution to IPS teacher performance enhancement through systematic execution of core management functions. Specifically, the principal exhibits competence in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising all school activities in alignment with Indonesia's school-based management framework (Sumarsono & Kusumahadi, 2019).

In the planning dimension, the principal develops the school work program (Rencana Kerja Sekolah) systematically while actively engaging teachers—including IPS specialists—in the planning process. This participatory approach reflects professional leadership grounded in needs assessment rather than top-down imposition, enabling IPS teachers to prepare learning instruments with greater precision and alignment to actual classroom requirements (Ali et al., 2023).

Regarding organizational competence, the principal demonstrates professionalism through equitable task distribution based on teachers' educational backgrounds and pedagogical strengths. Strategic teacher placement according to subject-matter expertise and instructional capacity enhances work effectiveness while strengthening teachers' sense of professional responsibility. This condition positively impacts IPS teacher performance by enabling focused implementation of discipline-specific pedagogy (Handoko, 2023).

In program implementation, the principal transcends the role of passive planner to become an active instructional monitor who regularly observes IPS classroom activities. Through timely guidance and contextual feedback, the principal assists IPS teachers in adopting pedagogically appropriate methods aligned with elementary students' developmental characteristics, thereby enhancing instructional relevance and engagement (Yunianto, 2024).

Furthermore, in supervision and evaluation, the principal conducts consistent academic supervision framed as formative coaching rather than punitive assessment. Constructive feedback mechanisms encourage IPS teachers to engage in reflective practice and iterative improvement—principles central to contemporary educational management theory emphasizing evaluation as a catalyst for professional growth rather than mere compliance monitoring (Sanoto et al., 2021).

Collectively, the principal's managerial professionalism generates a conducive organizational climate characterized by enhanced teacher discipline, strengthened accountability, and systematic quality improvement in IPS instruction at Ngawet Private Elementary School.

2. Principal Leadership

Research findings indicate that the principal at Ngawet Private Elementary School employs a predominantly democratic and participatory leadership style that significantly enhances IPS teacher performance. By creating structured opportunities for teachers to voice opinions, propose solutions, and discuss instructional challenges, the principal fosters harmonious working relationships and transparent communication channels—conditions empirically associated with elevated teacher morale and professional commitment (Heryanto, 2023).

Beyond functioning as a decision-maker, the principal embodies the roles of coach and ethical exemplar. Through consistent demonstration of discipline, responsibility, and dedication to professional obligations, the principal models the very behaviors expected of teachers. This modeling effect—rooted in social learning theory—positively influences IPS teachers' work ethic and professional conduct through observational learning and internalization of leadership values (Bandura, 1977).

Additionally, the principal serves as an active motivator by providing multifaceted encouragement including verbal affirmation, public recognition during faculty meetings, and formal achievement certificates. This motivational approach aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, wherein recognition functions as a powerful motivator that enhances intrinsic satisfaction and stimulates innovation in pedagogical practice (Herzberg, 1968).

The principal also demonstrates adeptness in conflict resolution through persuasive dialogue and musyawarah (deliberative consensus-building), characteristic of Indonesian cultural approaches to problem-solving. This culturally responsive leadership style cultivates psychological safety and occupational comfort, creating an environment where IPS teachers feel secure to experiment with innovative instructional strategies without fear of punitive consequences (Faizun et al., 2024).

Overall, the principal's democratic, communicative, and motivational leadership style generates a positive school climate that systematically enhances IPS teacher professionalism—a finding consistent with meta-analytic evidence demonstrating transformational/democratic leadership's significant positive effect on teacher performance across Asian educational contexts (Firmansyah et al., 2022).

3. Academic Supervision of Social Studies Teachers

The study documents that the principal conducts academic supervision through planned, cyclical processes encompassing classroom observation, examination of instructional documents, and collaborative post-observation conferences. This supervision functions primarily as professional development rather than compliance monitoring, enabling IPS teachers to identify pedagogical strengths and growth areas through structured reflection (Glickman et al., 2018).

Supervision implementation follows a developmental framework wherein the principal provides constructive, non-evaluative feedback focused on instructional improvement. This approach enhances IPS teachers' metacognitive awareness regarding learning design quality, methodological appropriateness, and media selection aligned with elementary students' cognitive and affective characteristics (Sanoto et al., 2021).

Academic supervision further stimulates pedagogical reflection among IPS teachers, encouraging iterative refinement of teaching practices. Post-supervision dialogues prompt teachers to innovate through methodological diversification and enhanced classroom management strategies—outcomes consistent with research demonstrating supervision's role in fostering teacher agency and instructional creativity (Barokah et al., 2025).

Critically, the supervisory relationship between principal and IPS teachers operates within a psychologically safe, non-threatening environment. By framing supervision as collaborative inquiry rather than hierarchical judgment, the principal cultivates trust that enables authentic dialogue about instructional challenges—a condition essential for meaningful professional growth (Widiyan et al., 2021).

Consequently, the principal's systematic academic supervision contributes substantially to IPS teacher professionalization at Ngawet Private Elementary School, manifesting in enhanced lesson preparation quality, methodological diversity, and student-centered instructional delivery.

4. Teacher Motivation and Professional Development

Findings reveal that principal-provided motivation and professional guidance significantly influence IPS teacher performance through multiple mechanisms. The principal functions simultaneously as coach and motivator, creating conditions that stimulate continuous competence development and instructional innovation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Moral encouragement and recognition systems—including verbal appreciation, public acknowledgment in faculty forums, and formal achievement certificates—function as powerful extrinsic motivators that enhance IPS teachers' sense of professional value. This recognition-based motivation aligns with self-determination theory, wherein acknowledgment satisfies the psychological need for competence and relatedness, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation for professional growth (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The principal also provides personalized pedagogical support when IPS teachers encounter instructional challenges or classroom management difficulties. This just-in-time coaching builds teacher self-efficacy—the belief in one's capacity to execute effective instruction—which research identifies as a critical predictor of teaching persistence and innovation (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Professional development occurs through multiple modalities: school-based workshops, external training participation, mentoring relationships, and collaborative planning sessions. The principal actively facilitates teachers' access to competency enhancement opportunities, recognizing that sustained professional growth requires systematic investment in teacher learning—a principle emphasized in Indonesia's national teacher development framework (Tias et al., 2022).

Mentoring and regular pedagogical discussions focused on lesson planning and learning assessment enable incremental skill development among IPS teachers. This scaffolded coaching approach yields observable improvements in teachers' creativity regarding instructional materials development, methodological variation, and optimal utilization of available learning media—outcomes consistent with Desimone's (2009) core features of effective professional development.

5. Impact of Principal Professionalism on IPS Teacher Performance

Research at Ngawet Private Elementary School demonstrates that principal professionalism exerts significant positive impact on IPS teacher performance across multiple dimensions. This influence manifests concretely through enhanced teaching preparedness, diversified instructional methods, and more effective classroom management practices (Jaidie & Mappiasse, 2020).

Managerial and leadership professionalism cultivates heightened discipline and responsibility among IPS teachers throughout the instructional cycle—from lesson planning through learning assessment. Teachers demonstrate strengthened accountability for both process and outcomes, attributable to the principal's structured guidance, consistent supervision, and clear performance expectations—evidence supporting school effectiveness research linking administrative coherence to teacher professionalism (Sammons et al., 2017).

Systematic academic supervision enables IPS teachers to refine pedagogical strategies through iterative improvement cycles. Teachers exhibit increased creativity in method selection and media utilization while adapting instructional approaches to diverse student needs—outcomes reflecting the principal's success in fostering a culture of continuous instructional improvement (Sunaryo et al., 2021).

Principal-provided motivation—through recognition systems and moral support—elevates IPS teachers' professional morale and stimulates innovation in classroom practice. Teachers demonstrate greater proactivity in seeking professional development opportunities, indicating internalization of growth mindsets cultivated through sustained motivational leadership (Dweck, 2006).

6. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The study identifies multiple contextual factors influencing the principal's capacity to enhance IPS teacher performance. Supporting factors include strong collegial collaboration among school stakeholders, transparent communication channels, and the principal's unwavering commitment to instructional leadership—conditions that collectively amplify professional influence (Hidayat, 2021).

Conversely, inhibiting factors present significant challenges, particularly limited instructional facilities/media and restricted access to external professional development opportunities characteristic of geographically remote regions in Eastern Indonesia. These constraints reflect systemic inequities affecting educational quality in Indonesia's 3T regions (Terdepan, Terluar, Tertinggal/frontier, outermost, underdeveloped areas) (Revina et al., 2020).

Notably, the principal demonstrates adaptive leadership by maximizing available resources and creating localized professional learning communities to compensate for external limitations—a resilience strategy documented in research on educational leadership in resource-constrained Indonesian contexts (Sumarsono & Kusumahadi, 2019).

Ultimately, the principal's effectiveness in enhancing IPS teacher performance depends on the capacity to leverage supporting factors while strategically mitigating constraints through creative resource mobilization and culturally responsive leadership practices—a balancing act essential for school improvement in peripheral Indonesian regions (Jaidie & Mappiasse, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the background description, it can be concluded that the professionalism of school principals has a very important role in improving the performance of Social Sciences (IPS) teachers at Ngawet Private Elementary School, West Halmahera Regency. Professional school principals are able to carry out leadership, managerial, and supervisory functions effectively so that they can create a conducive work climate for teachers to carry out learning tasks.

The optimal performance of social studies teachers is not only determined by the individual abilities of the teachers, but is also greatly influenced by the coaching, motivation, and support provided by the principal. The problems that are still found in the implementation of social studies learning show the need to continuously improve the professionalism of school principals in order to be able to guide and develop teacher competence.

Therefore, research on the professionalism of school principals in improving the performance of social studies teachers at Ngawet Private Elementary School, West Halmahera, is important to be carried out as an effort to provide an empirical picture and recommendations in order to improve the quality of education in the school.

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