

Principal's Leadership in Improving Teachers' Ability to Implement the Merdeka Curriculum

Sri Ambarwati¹, Nur Ahyani², Meilia Rosani²

¹SD Negeri 83 Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia, ²Universitas PGRI Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: wsri75286@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study aimed at improving teachers' abilities at SD 83 Palembang in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum through training and mentoring. The study employed a classroom action research design. The research subjects were the teachers at SD 83 Palembang. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The research was conducted from April to May 2024 at SD 83 Palembang, involving 31 teachers and 9 educational staff as samples. The findings revealed that training and mentoring were effective in enhancing teachers' capabilities in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The principal of SD 83 Palembang has fostered a positive school environment, evident in their active role in enhancing teachers' competencies in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum grants schools and teachers greater autonomy in designing learning that aligns with students' needs and potential. This necessitates teachers possessing adequate capabilities to effectively implement the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum, Teacher's Competence, Teacher's Mentoring, Teacher's Training

A. Introduction

Education is an important foundation in the development of a nation because the next generation will be formed and prepared to face future challenges (Malik, 2018). In line with the development of global dynamics, the demand for relevant, adaptive, and progressive education system is increasing (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2020). In Indonesia, to strive the advance of the education sector, there is a strong push to update the curriculum that is more responsive to the needs of students and allows for an overall improvement in the quality of education. One real effort to update and strengthen the national education system is the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum (Azmi et al., 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum is presented as an educational innovation that provides independence to schools in developing a curriculum according to local needs, student's characteristics, and the potential of

their respective regions (Fauzan et al., 2023). This concept aims to free schools from a rigid curriculum framework and overly fixed national standards, thus allowing for the development of more flexible and contextual curriculum.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is not easy and requires strong support and commitment from various parties, especially in terms of leadership at the school level (Ingthias et al., 2022). The principal, as the main leader plays a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation. The role of the principal is not only as an administrator but also as the main driver in aligning the school's vision and mission with the objectives of the curriculum, providing the necessary support and resources to teachers, and overcoming various challenges and obstacles that may arise during the implementation process. The ability of teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is also a crucial factor in the success of the implementation (Ben Gurion & Nasir, 2024).

Teachers are not only expected to master the learning material but also to be able to adapt learning methods in accordance with the principles of the curriculum, utilize local resources optimally, and encourage active participation of students in the learning process. In this context, in-depth research on the role of principal's leadership in improving teachers' abilities in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is very relevant. Through a deeper understanding of the factors that influence teachers' ability to implement the curriculum, it is hoped that more effective strategies and policies can be developed to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and improve the overall quality of education in Indonesia. According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2007 Article (1), every teacher is required to meet the nationally applicable academic qualification and teacher competency standards. Teacher competency is defined as a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that must be possessed, internalized, and mastered by teachers in carrying out their professional duties. This is in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 045 of 2002 concerning the core curriculum of higher education. He explained that competence is a set of intelligent, responsible actions that a person has as a requirement to carry out tasks according to certain jobs. Article 10 of the Teachers and Lecturers Law states that teacher competence includes pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competence among the four competencies that must be possessed by a teacher; we only limit professional competence that is considered to have a fairly close influence on teacher's performance. Teacher's performance is the willingness of teachers to carry out an activity and perfect it according to their responsibilities with the expected results (Birhasani, 2022).

Teacher's performance is the work results that can be achieved by teachers in learning activities according to their respective authorities and responsibilities in an effort to achieve school goals. Performance is a condition that must be known and

confirmed to certain parties to find out the level of achievement related to the vision carried out by an organization (Hartinah et al., 2020).

According to Connolly et al. (2019) teacher's performance will have an impact on educational productivity. Teacher's performance can affect the number of graduates who are qualified in the world of work. In the dimension of performance or work achievement is the final result of an activity that has been done by someone to achieve a goal in a certain target (Urduan & Kaplan, 2020). The achievement of this work result also serves as a means of comparing the previously established work results. If someone's work results meet or exceed work standards, it can be argued that the performance was successful.

According to the findings of interviews at SD Negeri 83 Palembang, there are still teachers who are not disciplined in their teaching time, such as arriving late to school or merely handing assignments to pupils in class without direction from the instructor. Teaching utilizing only a few approaches and rarely incorporating learning media into the classroom. Teachers focus solely on the topic, with no regard for pupil comprehension. This situation is aggravated by teachers' lack of willingness to participate in various trainings due to their age, despite the fact that adding fresh insights is critical as a teacher. This condition persists for a long period. Additionally, the findings from our observations at SD Negeri 83 Palembang.

Classroom management and organization are still weak, and instructional media are not placed on the walls. The number of books remains low, and teachers' innovation in classroom arrangement has not been observed. In fact, proper classroom circumstances will promote passion for teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Children will feel at home and delighted to learn in class (Lazarides et al., 2019; Mahler et al., 2018). If the teaching environment is appealing and pleasant. Teachers have a low level of interest and competence to use information technology. This has an impact on the learning environment, which is generally uninteresting. Students are not prepared for IT-based learning. In the twenty-first century, instructors and students must employ information technology in their teaching and learning activities. Using IT-based media will make it easier for teachers to assist with teaching materials and interactive learning media (Winarto, 2019).

B. Methods

This study was done between March 2024 and May 2024. The study was carried out at SD Negeri 83 Palembang. This is one of Palembang's elementary schools that is accredited by the state. It contains 12 study rooms, 1 library room, 1 principal's office, 1 teacher's room, 1 UKS room, 3 teacher toilets, and 6 student toilets. The object of research, also known as the informant, is a person who can offer the primary information required for the investigation. According to the general

qualitative research perspective, the social context analyzed encompasses features of place, actors, and activities that interact synergistically. This research is for the principal's leadership in enhancing Teacher performance in implementing the Merdeka curriculum at SD Negeri 83 Palembang; thus, the primary data source for this research is persons who are deemed vital in obtaining clear and correct information. The focus of this study is on the principal's leadership in enhancing teacher performance in implementing the Merdeka curriculum at SD Negeri 83 Palembang.

Table 1. Research Object

No	Research Object	Number of Objects
1	School Supervisor	1
2	Principal	1
3	Teachers	4
4	School Committee	1
5	Administration	2
Amount		9

The school committee and administration were chosen as the research subjects because they are the people who provide ways or actions to improve teacher excellence through self-evaluation and assist teachers in dealing with problems. Teachers are used as research subjects because they do all behaviors aimed at improving their performance. The principal, as the school's learning leader, takes an active position in this study because he or she is aware of the situation at all times. This study also includes supervisors as research subjects because the supervisor will learn a lot about the principal's and teachers' performance in the school under their supervision.

This study was classroom action research. Data collecting methods include observation, interviews, and case study documentation. Observations are carried out to ensure the accuracy of data on the principal's management, interviews are conducted to learn more about the situation and phenomena, and document studies are undertaken to interpret all documents in accordance with the problem's scope. Data analysis consists of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusions or data verification. The steps taken in this study are through 3 stages, pre-field stage, field work stage, and data analysis stage:

Pre-field stage

The pre-field stage is an action that we perform before collecting data. This stage begins with a field investigation to identify the topic or subject of the research. This stage involves the following steps: creating a field design, selecting a research field,

obtaining permits, appraising the field, selecting and utilizing information, preparing research equipment, and dealing with research ethics issues.

Fieldwork Stage

The fieldwork stage is our activity at the research site. At the implementation stage, we collect data based on the problem's emphasis and study objectives. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation studies. We prepare the essential materials for this data collection, which include interview sheets, photo cameras, and audio recorders. We do direct interviews. To the study's informants: school supervisors, principals, classroom instructors, administrative staff, and school committees. After we have acquired the necessary data, the following stage is to process the research data, as we know that data analysis in qualitative research occurs both during and after fieldwork. The actions include compiling the data and information gathered and then applying it to the study of this research, namely the management of facilities and infrastructure in support of the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, the data acquired from the field is thoroughly evaluated using ideas proposed by different education specialists. The theoretical study is then concluded, and recommendations are made to the appropriate parties so that they can utilize it as input to carry out their organizational operations in a more productive, effective, and efficient manner.

Data Analysis Stage

This level covers the fundamentals of data analysis, including the basis, theme identification, and problem framing. Before being evaluated, all data acquired in the field and during the research will be verified for trustworthiness. In this study, we acquired primary data via interviews with the principal, teachers, and other school residents at SD Negeri 83 Palembang. Secondary data sources received by us include data obtained directly from linked parties in the form of school data and relevant literature, such as documents on school conditions or teacher and student successes.

C. Results and Discussion

Description of Management Data in Supporting the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

Minister Nadiem Makarim, who supports autonomous education and adapts to changing circumstances, has legislated an independent learning curriculum. Nadiem Makarim went on to say that holistic abilities necessitate curriculum changes in order to promote educational reform. The Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in a more flexible manner than the preceding curriculum. For example, schools have complete authority to produce curriculum texts and instructional materials. The benefit of applying the Merdeka Curriculum is that teachers become more creative and innovative in their approach to teaching.

Merdeka Curriculum implementation in grades 4 and 1 allows students to learn content sequentially or randomly, depending on which section they need to grasp first. According to Nurwiatin, the teacher's ability to effectively administer the curricular requirements established by the government determines how successfully they are applied. Teachers' perspectives and interpretations have a variety of implications for implementation. Curriculum modifications have both positive and negative effects on educational quality. In a favorable direction, children can learn by keeping up with the times with the assistance of school administrators, instructors, teaching staff, students, and the institution itself. Teachers must give lessons that students can understand, and students must be of high quality so that they may study carefully, work hard, and develop into creative and critical problem solvers with each lesson. Whereas the administrator must maintain positive ties with his superiors and subordinates, both teachers and pupils must be of excellent caliber.

The growth of learning in the form of an integrated system or learning planning is comprised of various interconnected components. An initial assessment is conducted before planning the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at SD Negeri 83 Palembang. Based on the interview results, the principal revealed that the introduction of independent learning began with a first assessment to determine student understanding. Planning, execution, and evaluation are three stages that must be considered when doing learning activities. This preparation is the first step in preparing for effective implementation, and evaluation follows learning activities to determine whether or not the learning was successful. To allow time for teachers, principals, and the education office to learn, the independent curriculum is adopted gradually.

Changes in the curriculum framework will undoubtedly require adaptation in all sectors of the educational system. To achieve the intended results, raising education standards in Indonesia must be carefully managed. An autonomous curriculum allows teachers to tailor the available teaching modules to their students' situations, traits, and requirements. Using this learning strategy, teachers can assist students based on their individual requirements. Schools can utilize a range of teaching strategies to remove students from the expectation that they must be equally remarkable in all areas, allowing them to express themselves uniquely.

The Role of the Principal in Supporting the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

The principal is a school leader; all of the principal's behavior and performance will undoubtedly be observed and imitated by all members of the school, but only positive behavior such as high discipline, a friendly and open attitude toward work, fellow teachers, and education staff will be emulated. Empathy, honesty, and

professionalism, as well as a strong determination and excitement to go forward together, are qualities that all members of the school can replicate.

Based on the findings of interviews, observations, and documentation, the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang demonstrates attitudes and behaviors that can serve as role models for all school residents who exhibit high discipline, professionalism, and positive behavior toward the school. Referring to the theory of the principal's function and role, it demonstrates that. As a result, it may be inferred that the principle performed admirably in his duty as a leader.

During the disciplinary coaching, the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang indicated that teachers and school residents are already familiar with the school rules, which include entry, break, and departure times. The calendar of habituation activities, such as the flag ceremony on Monday, Rohis on Friday, SKJ, and Scouts on Saturday, has been established. All of this is done to ensure that all school inhabitants comply and carry out their jobs with a strong feeling of accountability. If there are any infractions, the principle will provide coaching in the form of reprimands, reminding them of their responsibilities at school, and collaborating with the supervisor and the Education Office as needed.

Based on the results of our observation interviews and paperwork, we can conclude that the principal performed his job well and responsibly in enforcing the school's rules and regulations. In carrying out his duties, the principal warns teachers or educators who are not disciplined in carrying out their duties in a friendly manner; however, if the violations continue, the principal will issue a written warning letter. So, in this case, we can conclude that, referring to the theory of the principle's function and role in enforcing discipline, the principal performed his functions and roles in accordance with the existing theory, namely the principal as a leader.

Class visits are the main task and function of the principal as a learning leader in the school (Thessin & Louis, 2019). Class visits are carried out in various ways; there are mandatory visits once a semester to supervise learning that is scheduled together, and there are also unscheduled class visits to adjust the principal's schedule (Noor et al., 2020). Class visits are not conducted to identify teacher shortcomings, but rather to take the first steps toward improving the quality of learning even more. Based on the results of our interviews, observations, and documentation, it appears that the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang has carried out his duties and roles to the best of his ability, as evidenced by consistent supervision activities and periodic teacher administration checks, possibly based on the principal's function and role theory. The principle has performed admirably as a supervisor.

The principal is the leader of learning in the school. The principal's task is to build a compact and active working group (Sukandar, 2019) to discuss all learning needs

required from administration, learning strategies, creative learning media, classroom management, and an innovative school environment. As a principal, he must provide a forum for teachers to share good practices together to exchange opinions and ideas so that all teachers and school residents can move forward and educate the nation's children, especially at SD Negeri 83 Palembang.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted us, it shows that the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang Besar has been very good at building an active and creative teacher working group, as seen from the existence of a learning community that is a positive forum for all teachers and other working groups such as KKG. Referring to the theory of the function and role of the principal, we concluded that the principal has built an active and creative working group. This means that the principal has carried out his function and role as an innovator and motivator.

The principal must always add new knowledge and insights to the progress of the world of education; the goal is that the education profession can adapt to the demands of the times that have changed much more advanced. Various programs and training from the central government and local governments must always be followed in order to add new insights and knowledge. As a principal, you must play an active role in following existing programs such as driving schools, driving teachers, Merdeka Curriculum, and so on. The potential of teachers and education personnel must be maximized by encouraging and motivating all teachers and being able to facilitate them in various teacher professional development programs, both face-to-face and online training.

Based on the results of observation interviews and documentation, it shows that the principal always plays an active role in involving teachers in various teacher competency development activities aimed at increasing teacher insight in developing their competencies. Referring to the theory of the function and role of the principal in developing the teaching profession, we conclude that the principal has fully carried out his duties as a motivator for teachers to participate in activities. Involving the community in school activities. The principal is a leader who can maximize all assets and potentials both within the school, such as teachers, education personnel, and students, and outside the school, namely the community, such as the school committee, parent-teacher associations, and other institutions that can contribute to advancing and supporting school activities. The principal is required to always actively collaborate with the community in order to support school activities and progress and have a positive impact on the world of education.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation that have been carried out us, it shows that the principal has involved the community in school activities; it is seen to be active with the school alumni community and class

association activities that always support school programs. So in this case we can conclude that based on the theory of the role function of the principal, the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang has carried out his function and role as a leader with the existence of an MOU and cooperation with the community in advancing the school.

The principal gives rewards for the achievements and dedication that have been achieved by the teacher. The principal has explained that in giving awards to teachers, it does not have to be in the form of material or luxury goods, but a principal can give awards in the form of charters or certificates of appreciation and appreciation with words and praise for the achievements achieved by a teacher.

Teacher's Performance

Based on the results of observations that have been carried out by us, it can be seen that the performance of teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang is good. This can be seen from the complete teacher administration that can be seen from the completeness of the administration of learning needs that have been met. Cooperation between teachers runs well and complements each other. Collaboration between classes A and B looks very harmonious and uniform in learning, so we observe that good teamwork can realize the vision and mission of this school well.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted us, we concluded that the teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in making learning devices (RPP) and teaching modules were good and in accordance with the applicable curriculum or the curriculum implemented in schools, and collected RPP administration routinely and periodically to the principal. Looking at the theory of principal leadership in improving teacher's performance is in line with the existing theory.

In the implementation of learning activities in the classroom, teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang have been very good, as seen from the preparation of teachers before teaching. Based on the results of interviews and observations that we have conducted, it shows that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in delivering lesson materials are in accordance with the applicable curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum for grades 1 and 4. However, there are still some teachers who have difficulty using learning with the 2013 curriculum because they have to link one lesson with the next properly. So, with these results, we can conclude that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in the process of delivering material are in accordance with the current curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, although there are still some obstacles.

The results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by us show that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in delivering learning materials are

structured in accordance with what is planned in the RPP, or Teaching Module. This is if referring to the existing theory, then we can draw the conclusion that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in delivering learning materials have been done in a structured manner by referring to the RPP that they have prepared so that students find it easy to understand each lesson material delivered.

Regarding the use of learning media, teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang have fully used learning media to help the process of delivering material in the classroom. This is based on the results of interviews and observations that we have conducted. So with this, we can conclude that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang have used learning media in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by us, it shows that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in classroom learning activities have created active, creative, and innovative student learning. This can be seen from the enthusiasm of students in asking questions when participating in classroom learning activities. So, we can conclude that teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in learning have created active learning in accordance with the demands of the existing curriculum to involve students actively in class.

Teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang in the teaching and learning process in the classroom, teachers have used a variety of learning methods. The methods used are adjusted to the material presented to students with the aim of making the learning process enjoyable. In terms of interpersonal relationships, teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang are open to students. With good learning communication between students and teachers, the learning process in the classroom will feel warm, and students will find it easier to receive learning materials.

In carrying out the evaluation of learning outcomes, teachers of SD Negeri 83 Palembang provide oral, written, practical, and project-based practice questions. Evaluation is given to determine students' understanding of the achievement of objectives (Hill & Chin, 2018). Differentiated learning is based on each student's learning style (Boelens et al., 2018). Evaluation is also given in the mid-semester assessment and final semester grades for each semester. In addition, teachers have carried out evaluations of learning well in the form of providing written, oral, and practical questions and conducting project-based performance assessments through the observation process.

Challenges and Obstacles to Principal Leadership in Improving Teachers' Ability to Implement the Merdeka Curriculum at SD Negeri 83 Palembang

In carrying out leadership in a school, a principal will certainly experience various challenges and obstacles. Theoretically, the principal's task as a supervisor is to

monitor teacher's performance, completeness of teacher administration, and assess the teacher's teaching methods while in the classroom and conduct other clinical supervision. From the results of interviews with the principal, it was found that senior teachers were still lacking in the use of varied teaching methods. There are still teachers who have not mastered IT well, as seen from the minimal use of IT-based learning media such as projectors, laptops, and speakers. The principal also shared his assessment of teachers who were lazy and less interested in participating in existing self-development training even though training information had been provided via WA group or directly with various reasons such as forgetting, not understanding IT, and so on. Another obstacle was found that when teaching hours were over, many teacher activities were ineffective, such as chatting, some asking for permission to go out for a while, and other activities that were considered ineffective as a teacher. In implementing class supervision and administrative supervision, the principal also said that there were time constraints in its implementation. This is due to the large number of teachers and other activities as a principal, and this school is also a driving school where the activities of the driving school itself are quite dense. These obstacles are the challenges for the principal in improving the performance of teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation that have been carried out by us, it shows that the principal and teachers of SD Negeri 83 Palembang have carried out their duties with full responsibility, although there are still some obstacles. The principal has provided an example and role model for teachers, although not all teachers can accept it easily. So in this case, we can conclude that the principal at SD Negeri 83 Palembang has carried out an evaluation of the performance of teachers at the school and become a learning leader at the school.

The principal of SDN 83 Palembang empowers teachers by giving autonomy and trust to teachers to make decisions and carry out their duties independently. The principal also encourages teachers to innovate and develop their creativity in learning. The efforts made by the principal to improve Teacher's performance are by forming a learning community. The learning community is held every Thursday from 12.30-14.00 WIB. In this activity, all teachers actively participate. The contents of the activities start from weekly teaching reflections and sharing good practices of teachers to learn together, starting from discussing curriculum topics, teacher administration, assessment, and self-development. The principal can easily monitor the performance of teachers and become a forum for the principal to improve Teacher's performance through this community. In addition to the learning community, the principal is also active in forming four large teams of teachers and education personnel at the school to support the progress and performance of the school. The first team is developing school literacy. The programs to be achieved are the Class Reading Corner, My Knowledge Source Library, Book Resume, Reading

Clinic, Reading Books with Your Friends, Fun Saturday Stories, and Let the Walls Speak. Another effort made by the principal of SD Negeri 83 Palembang is to actively participate in the school mover program and implement it in the school. All teachers and school residents are involved in participating in running this program. There are many benefits from the school mover program that are felt by teachers at the school. The school mover program can increase knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum; teachers can take part in various interesting trainings so that the knowledge and insight of teachers at SD Negeri 83 Palembang are much better than before; and teachers also get certificates from this program that can be used to support their careers.

For supervision activities, the principal involves teachers to become a peer supervisor team (Brandon et al., 2018; Honig & Rainey, 2019). Due to the limited time available to the principal, the principal asks teachers to observe each other in class periodically. In addition, teachers are also active in checking the administration of other teachers. The results of this peer supervision activity are reported to the principal for evaluation and follow-up. To utilize natural and human resources in the school environment, the principal activates school committee activities and asks homeroom teachers to form a class association program. The principal tries to maximize all existing potential to support student learning activities by involving parents as learning resources and the surrounding environment as a learning medium, such as observing plants in the garden. Environmental care activities by collecting garbage and learning to make batik cloth by utilizing plants and asking parents as resource persons in learning. These efforts are carried out by the principal as an active step in overcoming various problems and obstacles in the school.

Overall, the principal has demonstrated good leadership values, the principal has and demonstrated exemplary attitudes and behavior to the school community by being disciplined in coming and going home according to schedule, always providing disciplinary guidance to all school residents for those who violate with full responsibility, actively conducting class visits by supervising learning and teacher administrative completeness periodically and continuously, the principal also continues to build active and creative work with various programs that are run together such as learning communities, school development teams and other activities, the principal is very active in supporting the development of teacher professionalism by providing motivation to always be active and participate in various training, seminars and other routine teacher activities such as KKG IHT training and so on, the principal actively involves the community in school activities.

From the description of the discussion on the leadership of the principal in improving teacher's performance in line with research conducted by (Faudi & Muchsin, 2021), the level of skills required according to the nature of the organization is different. The skills possessed by the leader of the organization

enable the organization to achieve double benefits. Double benefits can be obtained if the leader has conceptual skills, manual skills, skills in working with other institutions, the ability to negotiate with the government, maturity in analyzing opportunities, and others. The skills possessed by the principals are demonstrated in efforts to achieve educational goals and the maturity of students. Educational institutions must truly function, both as heirs of values, agents of change, and institutions for fostering human behavior. Teacher's performance development includes responsibility for tasks, teacher discipline, and teacher commitment to improving the quality of the teaching and learning process.

From the data obtained in this study through observation, interview, and documentation studies, there are still several obstacles faced by the principal in improving Teacher's performance at school. There are still teachers who violate work discipline, such as coming late, leaving school because of personal matters, teaching using methods and media that are less varied, and weak understanding and use of IT in teaching, which are problems for senior teachers. This problem could be caused by too many regulations being made without involving the voices of teachers as a whole, so that it becomes a burden for some teachers. Mapping the abilities and readiness of teachers in running a program must be studied carefully in terms of mental and physical readiness and the ability of school residents to run it.

From the description of the discussion on the obstacles to principal leadership in improving Teacher's performance, in line with the results of research conducted by Setiyadi & Rosalina (2021), there are inhibiting factors for principals in improving Teacher's performance, namely that there are still honorary teachers, so this can be related to the performance of a teacher. Then the facilities are still lacking, such as LCD projectors, so that the learning process is hampered. Lack of ability of teachers in managing classes and creating a conducive and enjoyable learning climate so that students feel bored in learning. Furthermore, there are still teachers who are not fully disciplined, such as when coming to school and entering class. This will make students noisy and often leave the classroom so that it disturbs other classes that are studying. The results of this study are also in line with previous research by Hanim et al. (2020), which stated that there was resistance to the principal in rejecting tasks given by the principal. This resistance is caused by the large workload that causes teachers to not focus on carrying out their duties and the inability of teachers to use technology-based learning media devices.

Principal leadership is very important in motivating and empowering teachers to develop the competencies and skills needed to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. By implementing the right strategies, principals can help teachers become professional and competent teachers in implementing the new curriculum. Here are some strategies that can be carried out by principals to motivate and

empower teachers in developing competencies and skills in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum:

- a. Creating a clear school vision and mission that is in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. A clear school vision and mission will provide direction for the development of teacher competencies and skills;
- b. Building a positive and collaborative learning culture in schools. A positive learning culture will encourage teachers to learn from each other and share knowledge with each other;
- c. Providing opportunities for teachers to participate in training and professional development. Training and professional development can help teachers improve the competencies and skills they need to implement the Merdeka Curriculum;
- d. Providing awards and recognition for teacher achievements. Awards and recognition will motivate teachers to continue to improve their performance;
- e. Facilitating communication and collaboration between teachers. Good communication and collaboration between teachers will help them to learn from each other and share knowledge with each other.
- f. Providing support to teachers in facing challenges. The principal must always be ready to provide support to teachers in facing the challenges they face in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

From the description of the discussion about the principal's leadership solution in improving Teacher's performance at SD Negeri 83 Palembang, it is very good, and this is in line with research conducted by Damayani et al. (2020), who define leadership as a process in which one individual influences other group members towards achieving defined group or organizational goals, while the leader is the individual in a group or organization who has the most influence on others. It can be said that leadership is the process of inviting, seducing, or persuading people around them to achieve common goals. The results of this study were also reinforced by research conducted by Setiyadi & Rosalina (2021) which found several supporting factors for the principal in improving Teacher's performance, namely by providing encouragement and support to teachers to continue their higher education and the enthusiasm of teachers who are always willing to be included in training both at school and outside school so that they can improve their quality in teaching. Furthermore, the fulfillment of facilities and infrastructure in schools, because these facilities and infrastructure are the support for the success of KBM (Teaching and Learning Activities). Then, each teacher must be able to provide variation in learning methods so that students do not get bored during the learning process. In addition, there is strong motivation from the principal and giving awards to teachers who have performed well.

SD Negeri 83 Palembang is a driving school, so this school has made many changes in various aspects. The driving school is attended by the principal and two teachers

as the learning committee. In the driving school program, the principal and learning committee will be trained through regular and continuous training and IHT. The principal is expected to be able to implement all driving school programs in the school well and can be a source of learning for other schools. The responsibility of becoming a driving school is not easy. Schools must disseminate an understanding of the driving school program in their own schools and also various good practices in implementing the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, where each activity must reflect the profile of Pancasila students and uphold local wisdom values as a source of strength so as to provide an impact of change for teachers in schools rapidly.

The significant difference that can be seen between driving schools and non-driving schools is in terms of financing. Driving schools receive assistance in the form of BOS Performance. This makes the driving school have its own privileges because it can use the funds to support independent learning programs in schools such as P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project), actively holding learning outcome performances and participating in learning exhibitions to the maximum to become agents of change for other schools because the principal and teachers can be used as learning resources as resource persons to share good practices in understanding the Merdeka Curriculum. Driving schools are also more at the forefront in creating programs that have a positive impact on students so that this becomes an attraction and can be imitated by other schools.

The above is reinforced based on the research results of Rachmawati et al. (2022) to implement the Pancasila student profile through local wisdom values, a strategy that can be carried out by schools together with stakeholders or partners. Local wisdom values: in the new educational paradigm, according to the Pancasila student profile, students are basically taught to work on projects prepared by local wisdom implementing teachers. The new paradigm of the independent learning curriculum plans to explore student competencies based on their interests and skills by exploring global diversity in the student's environment so that students have learning experiences, lifelong learning, and strong skills based on Pancasila. The values taught by local wisdom values. Local wisdom is knowledge or part of regional character development, so it must be included in the educational content to preserve the character of the nation. From the results of the study above with previous research, no significant differences were found that the driving school had the same program even though in different places, the driving school program focused on the Pancasila student profile strengthening program (P5) through local wisdom values and involving stakeholders as partners. Driving schools are pioneers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted by us on the leadership of the principal in improving Teacher's performance at SD Negeri 83 Palembang, it can be concluded that the leadership of the principal in improving Teacher's performance is as follows:

1. The leadership of the principal is very good at improving teacher's performance. The principal has been able to condition teachers to be orderly in learning administration such as prota, promes, syllabus, teaching modules, provide assessments, carry out learning evaluations, carry out follow-up assessments, and master learning study materials. The principal has been able to carry out his duties and roles with a full sense of responsibility, for example, providing motivation, carrying out class supervision, being able to lead all school residents to achieve the vision and mission set by the school, being able to provide consultation on problems in classroom learning, being able to show an exemplary attitude for all school residents, and being able to develop the teaching profession both through teacher working groups (KKG), school learning communities, and principal working groups (K3S).
2. Factors that inhibit the principal's leadership in improving Teacher's performance at SD Negeri 83 Palembang are the lack of awareness of teachers to follow the development of science and technology; this can be seen from the low interest of teachers in participating in training activities or educational seminars held online independently, as well as creativity in teaching, which still needs to be improved in accordance with the learning needs of students who are increasingly advanced and developing today.
3. The principal's leadership is very important in motivating and empowering teachers to develop the competencies and skills needed to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. By implementing the right strategies, the principal can help teachers become professional and competent teachers in implementing the new curriculum.

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