

# Navigating the New Normal: Exploring How School Principal Roles Impact Teacher Competency Enhancement

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## ABSTRACT

In the new normal, the education world is changing to be more challenging and interesting, including exploring the principal's role and improving the competence of teachers. This article aims to explain the relationship between the principal and the teacher in improving the competence of teachers in a new normal situation. In this study, we administered and collected data in three vocational schools (SMK). The data were obtained from 40 participants using the semi-structured interview, descriptive data analysis, and Chi-square analysis. The results found that the role of the principal reached 50% both as an educator and a school manager. In addition, it also increases the competence of teachers by around 40% less in the academic aspect and professional achievement to enter the era of the new normal. The chi-square analyzed the hypothesis that showed a significant relationship between the principal's role and the improvement of teachers' competence. It confirmed that the principal's role directly related to or affected the improvement of teachers' competence. In conclusion, the integration of both the principal roles and the improvement of teacher competence affect the educational program's success in the new normal situation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia is forced to adapt to a new condition called a new normal era. For over two years, Indonesia has been forming recent behavior changes and habits embedded in everyday life (Habibi, 2020). Some researchers argued that education in this country had not been successfully adapted. As the data showed in 2018, Indonesia ranked fifth out of 10 ASEAN countries, with only 44% of the population completing secondary school and 11% failing to complete education (May et al., 2020). A substantial attempt to improve the quality of education needs to be made gradually and supported by professional teachers' competence through their interactions in education (Burhanudin, 2017). Teachers are always valuable in their position both in learning and teaching. They are holistically unseparated from their central role (Mustika, 2015). A professional teacher must perform well in students' training and develop self-competence (Jelita et al., 2017). The success rate in the education sector is believed to be a strategic tool to improve the standardization of human life (Busthomi, 2018). Implementing the education sector requires educators with the ability, knowledge and expertise

professionally (Amtu et al., 2019). Then educator resources are asked to improve quality, supported by adequate teacher competence (Wang et al., 2020).

Professional development is generally called improving principal roles and teachers' competencies (Grissom et al., 2015). A consensus among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners is that developing main functions and teacher competence is essential for educational reform in the next millennium era (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000). Several studies suggested that principals must strategically increase teacher competence to achieve successful academic quality in schools (Mustamin & Yasin, 2012). According to Wahyuddin (2017), the principals' role and teachers' competence affect student learning achievement. An up-to-date school management system is determined by the enlightened actions of the principal and teacher's competence that comfort the teaching and learning process implementation and maximizes school goal achievement (Sari, 2013).

The principal and teacher's roles can improve the quality of micro-scale education through eminent communication competencies. It creates an effective school environment and makes decisions professionally (Hadiyanto et al., 2020; Smith & Wolverson, 2010). Based on the theory of developing teacher competency, the principal's duties are listed as follows: show motivation, facilitate and assess teachers in achieving the results that are carried out (Goden et al., 2016). The goal is to start by improving the quality of teacher competencies and changing attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge as needed in realizing professional learning activities and encouraging the improvement of education quality in schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, school principals greatly influence teacher competency in practices as a model for the development of lifelong learning (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000).

Research conducted by (Ornopia et al., 2022) shows that in the new normal era, elementary school principals are required to be responsible for building school vision in achieving optimal learning outcomes related to teacher competence and school achievement goals by improving supervision services to teachers in conditions of change in the teaching and learning process and environment Learning, developing skills needed in the learning of the new normal era.

In facing the new normal era, a teacher is encouraged to be able to follow technical guidance (Bimtek) so that he will have skills in several things, such as knowledge of teaching skills and the nature of online learning in the new normal era, improvement of teacher skills in managing online classes; teaching skills using the Google Classroom app; improving teachers' ability to make online questions, and fortify grades into Google Classroom as well as skills in making learning videos and screen recording techniques (Arianti et al., 2021). By participating in Bimtek, teachers can adapt to the changing educational landscape and enhance their teaching methods to better engage students in online learning. This training will also equip teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively navigate the challenges of remote teaching in the new normal era.

The results of the following study highlight learning in the new normal era by adopting the Distance Learning (PJJ) approach. Teachers must adapt to the demands of changing learning methods to be more flexible and develop various learning methods to achieve existing competency standards in the school curriculum (Saumantri, 2022). The first study found the importance of the supervision of school principals in developing teacher-teaching competencies in the new normal era. His description shows that the research focuses on fostering professional competencies, so only 1 competency is highlighted. In addition, the target of the study is elementary school teachers, which is the number 1 elementary school, so it isn't easy to get a generalization of research results. Meanwhile, this study carefully highlights the principal's role in fostering four teacher competencies to open paths comprehensively and paths Out of teacher performance in facing the new normal era in these four competencies. The research was conducted in 3 vocational schools together so that generalizations of each of the three vocational schools studied could be known.

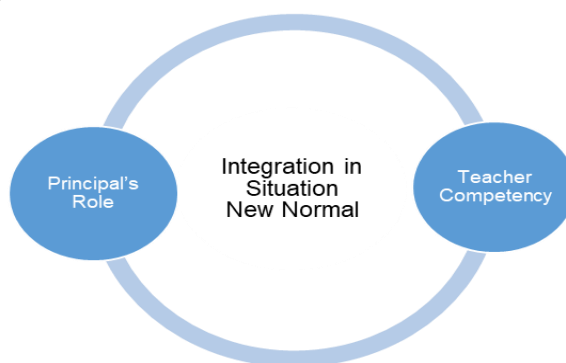
The second study highlights the new normal era but focuses more on learning techniques and methodologies. This study suggested mastering several learning techniques in the new normal age. Meanwhile, in this study, the new normal era is not only addressed from the teacher teaching methodology but more deeply explores the role of the principal as a manager and motivator in schools

to cultivate paedagogic, professional, personality and social competencies. It certainly opens up more opportunities for problem solutions because the new normal era is a period of transition and changes in teacher teaching styles and student learning that must be studied. Of all the competencies possessed by teachers, that is where the role of the principal is needed.

The third study focuses more on the effectiveness of Distance Learning (PJJ) in the new normal era. The results of previous research describe the importance of teacher flexibility in teaching approaches so that students can easily learn and understand the material taught by the teacher. The results of this latest study also emphasize the importance of mastering teaching techniques in the new normal era by focusing on the principal's managerial strategy to encourage the implementation of good education in The new normal period through the implementation of 4 teacher competencies comprehensively.

From the novelty of this research, it is very important. The benefits are due to the absence of the latest research that comprehensively involves 4 teacher competencies at once: Paedagogic, professional, personality and social, using a management approach, namely the role of the principal in managing the implementation of education and learning in the new normal era. The previous three studies focused more on teacher professional competence, namely improving learning skills and did not involve 3 other competencies. In addition, it does not include the managerial role of the principal and is only carried out in 1 school. Meanwhile, this new research, conducted in 3 schools simultaneously, involved 4 teacher competencies comprehensively.

Indonesian Constitution No. 14 of 2005 on teachers and lecturers article 8 states that every teacher must have teaching competence (Suraji, 2012). This study was guided by two key concepts associated with entering the new normal era and the relationship between the principal's role and the teacher's competencies (Figure 1). Globally, some countries have upgraded the quality and capability of their school principal in the last few years (Pont, 2013). Eventually, in this new normal era, there is a gap between the principal roles suppressed by the pandemic and the teachers' competency (Sudrajat, 2020), So the theoretical knowledge needs to be explained through the integration of school principals and the teachers' competence improvement in facing the new online learning atmosphere. Integrating these two aspects is necessary for a school system's governance because it deals with teaching needs and the educational process's sustainability (Saryati, 2014).



**Figure 1.** Schematic of the conceptual framework.

Based on the needs explained, many skills must be enhanced to improve sustainable educational performance (Febrialismanto, 2017). Regarding the national education policy perspective, the school principal has a few main roles, such as the teachers, managers, administrators, and supervisors (Thomas & Parijo, 2013). These four functions have certain strategies for improving the performance of schools' education professionalism (Khasanah et al., 2019). Meanwhile, based on the Ministry of Education in Indonesia number 16 of 2007, teacher competence developed into four core competencies: pedagogic, personal, social, and professional (Atikah et al., 2013). The success of understanding the competencies

above can make a teacher carry out the duties and responsibilities as a whole that are applicable to various expected conditions (Pahrudin et al., 2016). In the case of unexpected preparation during the new normal period, the research on integrating school principal roles is inadequate. This study is expected to explain the correlation between the school principal's role and teacher competency, which must be achieved in carrying out the teaching and learning process during the new normal period.

## 2. METHODS

This research is exploratory (Lambert & Bouchamma, 2019). Based on an observational study, this was conducted in three locations as research objects: SMKN 1, 2, and 3 in Bekasi Regency, Indonesia. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach to produce data analysis and scientific narratives (Jelita et al., 2017), providing an overview of the correlation of the role of school principals to improving teacher competence in SMKN 1, 2, and 3 Bekasi Regency in the new normal situation. In addition, this study used a sample of 40 teachers as a sample using proportional stratified random sampling techniques and collected data from questionnaires. Data collection techniques include questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations. For data analysis, the Pearson Correlation Test with SPSS 21 devices was used to determine the relationship between the role of the principal and teacher competence. Validity and reliability tests were carried out as normality tests.

Research contents include four teacher competitions, namely: 1) Paedagogic competence with indicators; lesson planning, organizing learning, evaluating learning; 2) Professional competence with indicators; mastery of the material, curriculum development, material delivery ; 3) Personality Competence with indicators; empathy, patience and courtesy and ethics; 4) Social competence with indicators; communication, collaboration and motivating. The grid for the role of the principal has indicators of the principal as manager, principal as supervisor, and principal as school manager. The total statements for the part of the principal and the four teacher competencies were 5 statements each, bringing the total to 15 statements for the role of the principal and 20 statements for the teacher competence. The questionnaire uses a Likert Scale of 1-5. With the choice of strongly agree, agree, hesitate, disagree, or strongly disagree, in favourable and unfavourable form.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three principals, namely the heads of SMKN 1, SMKN 2, and SMKN 3 Bekasi Regency. Interview questions were conducted to explore data related to the pedagogic competence of teachers on indicators: lesson planning, organizing learning, and evaluating knowledge. Professional competence with indicators: mastery of material, curriculum development, delivery of material. Personality Competencies with indicators: empathy, patience, courtesy and ethics. Social competence with indicators; communication, collaboration and motivating. The results of interviews with the three principals obtained data that the principal acted as an educator and school manager. In addition, the principal also tried to improve teacher pedagogic, personality, professional, and social competence in entering the new normal era.

The following are guidelines to provide interpretation and analysis for the correlation coefficient according to Sugiyono:

**Table 1.** Correlation Coefficient

No	Correlation Value	Categorization
1	0,0 – 0,199	Very Low
2	0,20 – 0,399	Low
3	0,40 – 0,599	Keep
4	0,60 – 0,799	High
5	0,80 – 1,0	Very High

Source: Sugiyono

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and reliability tests were previously carried out for each instrument in each competency to determine the relationship between the role of the principal and improving teacher competence. The number of questionnaires on the role of principals amounted to 15 from 3 indicators, which were declared valid and reliable with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.720. For teacher competence, which consisted of 4 competencies, 3 indicators, and each indicator, which consisted of 5 statements, all valid and reliable statements were obtained with a Cronbach Alpha average of 0.745. After conducting the Validity and Reliability Test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test was carried out, and the Asymp value was obtained. Sig. (2-tailed) of  $0.275 > 0.05$ . It means that the data is normally distributed.

#### 3.1 Principal's Role in the New Normal Period

Each Principal has planned a pattern of guidance and development in their institution during a new normal situation; this can be seen from the average teacher's statement regarding the analysis using the instrument items on the role of the principal as educator, manager, administrator, and supervisor. The average teacher said several principal functions are improved during the new normal situation (Figure 1).

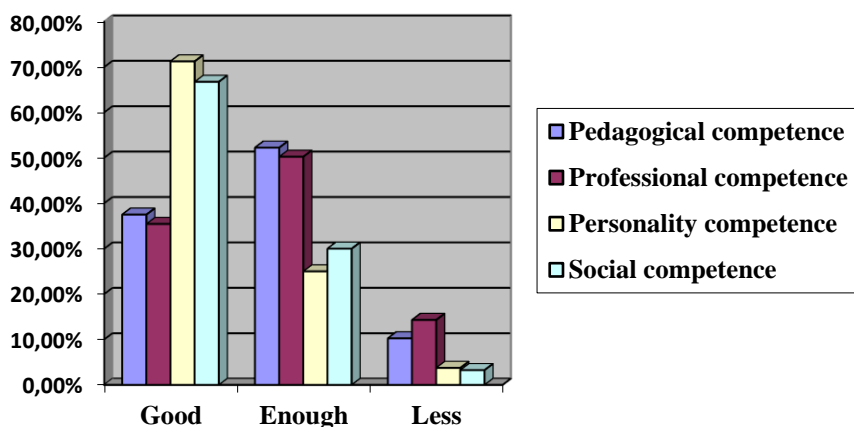


Figure 2. The Average Results of Principal Statements on The Teacher Competence

Based on the research results, the data shows that teachers face several obstacles in implementing learning activities at home with online media. It is proved that the category only reached 37.50% in the Good category for developing academic competence.

Besides, during the new normal situation, the principal also assessed the increased competency of the teachers at three vocational schools in the district of Bekasi to develop teacher professional competence, which only reached 35.45% in the good category during the new normal period. However, the average achievement on a good category level was between 66.75% and 71.25% for the personal and social competence of the teachers. These findings indicate the constraints the vocational school teachers face in the district of Bekasi in developing the teachers' competence and education quality during the new normal situation, especially in terms of educational and professional competence elements.

Related to the current new normal situation, every element of the teacher's competencies becomes the key to online learning. The low enhancement of educational and professional competence creates difficulties in online learning because of the lack of understanding of technology-based learning. Referring to the research results of Pahrudin et al. (2016), if the teacher has a low educational competence, professional competence, personal competence, and social competence, it will affect the results of school performance and student learning outcomes, referring to the findings on this research, the academic and professional competence is still low. It is represented by the teaching methods that

showed ineffective communication in the teaching and learning process and the incapability of the scientific mastery of the media used for the learning field. Giving a good understanding of online media learning such as computer- or mobile-based learning. According to Sudrajat (2020), using adaptive media to support online learning can create a concept of independent learning and be enhanced by the role of parents when the students need to learn at home.

The principal adapts to the change based on the school's work plans and budgeting program to enhance the teachers' competence with the changing teaching and learning mode in the new normal period. Most of the principal states several alternatives to developing the student's competence, such as holding a workshop to upgrade the online learning competence. Also, creating a platform for discussing the problems in online learning and finding the best methods to solve the issues. In general, the effectiveness of the principal role should be set in every sector that supports teachers' improvement. When the teachers need guidance on improving their pedagogical and professional competence, the principal should run the function as a counsellor, educator, guardian, developer, and supervisor. Then, in a particular role, a principal should also maintain and ensure that the teachers follow the teaching and learning policy in a healthy, standardized protocol. Kempa et al. (2017) expressed that the principal should be conscious of the changing situation faced by the teachers or students in the school because the principal is always skilled in finding solutions and putting themselves in a variety of conditions so that the educational management can always maintain the quality for a better national academic.

### 3.2 The Relationship of Principal's Role to Teacher Competence Improvement

The relationship of variables is another objective measured in the study and ascertained to determine whether a relationship existed among the variables presented in the succeeding tables.

**Table 1.** Relationship Between the Principal's Role to Teacher Competence Improvement

		The Role of the Principal	Teacher Competence
The Role of the Principal	Pearson Correlation	1	0.826
	Asymp.Sig		0.000
	N	40	40
Teacher Competence	Pearson Correlation	0.826	1
	Asymp.Sig	0.000	
	N	40	40

\*Correlation significant at the 95 percent confidence level ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the Asymp. Sig value is  $0.275 > 0.05$ . This means that the role of the principal has a relationship with an increase in teacher competence of 0.826 or 82.6%, which is included in the very high category. The hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the principal's role and the improvement of teacher competence is proved. The analysis showed that the very high category of principal roles equals the improvement of teacher roles and vice versa. Integrating these two aspects is necessary for a school system's governance. Because it deals with the needs of the teaching and learning process and its sustainability, this understanding is the same as the opinion of Bredeson and Johansson (2000) that school principals, without a doubt, have much influence on improving teacher competency.

The principal's role in improving teacher competence is based on the function of an educator, manager, administrator, and supervisor. Meanwhile, improving teacher competence is the existing competence of a teacher that includes the values of personality, including academic competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. The principals will be able to change the behavior of the teachers if the principal gives good acts and examples. The changing behaviors will positively impact the outcomes of teaching quality related to the current new normal situation. The level of success in implementing the educational sector that can enter and engage the new

normal condition is considered a strategic tool, especially for the SMKN 1, 2, and 3 Bekasi vocational schools. Then, the educator resources are asked to be interconnected to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process according to the principal's roles and teacher competence.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings above, integrating the principal roles and the teachers' competence is important in the new normal era of education. Surely, the development process of the school components determines the success of online learning. Based on the result, it concluded that the good implementation of principal roles increases the teacher's competence significantly. However, two low elements are found in the research: academic and professional competence, as much as 37.50% and 35.45%. Besides, the teacher's response to the principals' role in their competency development in entering the new normal era as an educator and a manager is only 50%. Meanwhile, as the administrator and the supervisor, the percentage of success has reached 70% from the teacher's point of view. After the Chi-square analysis results were produced, it was found that the hypothesis made that there is a significant relationship between the principal's role and the improvement of teacher competence was proved. It is then concluded that a good integration of the principal functions and teacher competence affects the management of science literacy and the technology that aims to achieve the quality of student's learning outcomes.

However, this study still has limitations, including: (a) this study was conducted in the same school setting, namely 3 Vocational High Schools, also at the same level (Vocational High School), studied in the same area (All schools are from the county area). This condition is possible for easy generalization of research results because respondents and the character of the research setting have been homogeneous, (b) this study has not discussed the same once about the effectiveness of the role of the principal as an effort to increase 4 teacher competencies to encourage the achievement of learning outcomes in the new normal era. The new normal era is an era of transition of student learning and also the change of teaching methods for teachers. It is very necessary to do a learning design that can accelerate this condition into a Prevalence (habit) utilizing supervision and guidance carried out by the principal to each teacher and student.

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