

Improving Teacher Competence at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City, Through Principal Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This Community Service Program (PKM) aimed to improve teacher competence at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City, through strengthened principal leadership. The program responded to limited communication, delayed information, and insufficient professional guidance for teachers. It was conducted from September to October 2025 using a participatory and andragogical approach involving training, mentoring, simulation, group discussion, and evaluation. The activity emphasized transformational, democratic, participative, and instructional leadership to improve pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competence. The results showed that teachers' average competence score increased by 17.6%, from 73.2 in the pre-test to 86.1 in the post-test, with the highest improvement in professional competence (22.5%). The program also strengthened communication, collaboration, supervision, and teacher motivation.

Keywords: *Community service; Instructional leadership; Principal leadership; Teacher competence; Transformational leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality is one of the most decisive factors in improving the quality of elementary education. Teacher competence includes pedagogical, professional, social, and personality dimensions that must be continuously strengthened so that classroom learning remains effective, adaptive, and responsive to students' needs (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007). In this context, the principal has a strategic role in shaping teacher competence because leadership influences how teachers receive direction, support, supervision, feedback, and professional development opportunities.

The principal, as the leader of an educational institution, is responsible not only for administrative management but also for creating a supportive school climate, motivating teachers, facilitating professional learning, and guiding the improvement of instructional quality. Mulyasa (2013) explains that effective school leadership is reflected in the ability to mobilize all available school resources to achieve optimal educational quality. Similarly, Usman (2019) emphasizes that the principal's success in developing teacher competence is determined by the extent to which the principal provides motivation, academic supervision, and support for continuous professional development.

Various studies have shown that the principal's leadership style directly affects teacher performance, work motivation, and professional commitment. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) argue that transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, a shared vision, empowerment, and active participation, can strengthen teacher commitment and performance. In school practice, transformational leadership needs to be accompanied by democratic, participative, and instructional leadership so that teachers are not only motivated but also guided through clear academic supervision and meaningful collaboration.

In Batam City, educational development is closely related to rapid population growth and economic expansion. The city has experienced strong demographic and economic dynamics, with a population of approximately 1,277,000 people and economic growth of around 6.69% according to BPS Kota Batam (2024). These conditions require teachers to improve their competence continuously so that they can adapt to changes in educational policy, learning technology, and

community expectations. Therefore, schools need principals who can lead change, build professional learning cultures, and encourage teacher readiness to respond to educational transformation.

Preliminary observations at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City, showed that 7 of the 11 teachers experienced challenges related to performance competence. These challenges were associated with leadership practices that were perceived by some teachers as unclear, less responsive, and insufficiently supported by timely information and structured guidance. Information from the School Principals Working Group (K3S) and the Batam City Education Office was sometimes received late, which affected teachers' motivation and readiness to improve their professional practice.

Interviews and observations conducted on September 10, 2025, further indicated that teacher motivation and competence were affected by ineffective decision-making, limited communication, and the lack of training specifically designed to address teachers' needs. In response to these conditions, a structured community service activity was designed to provide training, mentoring, and group discussion involving teachers and the principal of SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja. The activity aimed to develop a more participative, transformational, democratic, and instructional leadership pattern so that collaborative relationships between the principal and teachers could be strengthened.

This Community Service Program (PKM) was therefore implemented as a collaborative intervention to enhance the competence and motivation of elementary school teachers through strengthened principal leadership. The activity was expected to improve teachers' awareness of their professional potential, strengthen pedagogical and professional practice, build effective communication with the principal, and support the development of a school culture that values collaboration, empowerment, and continuous improvement.

METHOD

This community service activity used a participatory and collaborative approach supported by qualitative and descriptive evaluation procedures. Teachers and the principal were positioned as active participants rather than merely as recipients of training. This approach was selected to ensure that the program was not limited to the transfer of knowledge, but also encouraged reflection, dialogue, problem-solving, and application of the program outcomes in the daily work environment of SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City. The activity also applied an andragogical approach, which emphasizes adult learning based on experience, real needs, practical relevance, and problem-solving. Through this approach, teachers and the principal were able to connect the training materials with actual leadership and instructional practices in the school. The program was implemented through four management stages: planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation.

Planning Stage

At the planning stage, the team identified general and specific problems through coordination with the school and elementary school supervisors. The team also conducted an initial survey to understand teachers' competence conditions and the principal's leadership pattern. In addition, the team prepared evaluation instruments, training materials, schedules, locations, and resource persons needed for the activity.

Organizing Stage

At the organizing stage, the implementation team assigned responsibilities according to the needs of the training program. This included forming the organizing committee, determining speakers, appointing the master of ceremony and moderator, preparing opening remarks, arranging technical support, and ensuring that each component of the activity could be implemented effectively.

Implementation Stage

At the implementation stage, the training was conducted according to the agreed schedule. The activity was opened by a representative from the Batam City Education Office. The program began with socialization and an initial briefing on the relationship between school leadership and teacher competence. The training then continued with materials on effective school leadership, the improvement of teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competence, and simulations and case studies on leadership practice and collaborative learning.

Evaluation Stage

At the evaluation stage, the team assessed the effectiveness of the activity by comparing teachers' competence before and after the program. Feedback and reflection were also collected from teachers and the principal. The evaluation focused on changes in teacher competence, motivation, communication patterns, and the principal's leadership practices after the training and mentoring activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the activity was completed, the team measured the impact of the program on teachers' competence and on the principal's leadership practices. The activity focused on the importance of principal leadership and the strengthening of four teacher competence dimensions: pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competence. The results showed that teachers demonstrated better understanding of instructional planning, reflection on teaching practices, professional responsibility, collaboration, and communication with the principal.

The average teacher competence score increased by 17.6%, from 73.2 in the pre-test to 86.1 in the post-test. This improvement indicates that the training and mentoring activities were effective in raising teachers' competence from a generally good level to a very good level. Professional competence showed the highest increase, from 70.2 to 86.0, or 22.5%. This result suggests that the program was particularly effective in improving mastery of teaching materials, instructional techniques, and professional responsibility.

Table 1. Average Teacher Competence Scores Before and After the PKM Program

No.	Teacher Competence Aspect	Pre-test Average Score	Post-test Average Score	Improvement (%)
1	Pedagogical competence	72.2	84.1	16.4%
2	Professional competence	70.2	86.0	22.5%
3	Social competence	72.1	85.4	18.4%
4	Personality competence	78.5	89.0	13.3%
	Overall average	73.2	86.1	+17.6%

The data in Table 1 show that professional competence recorded the largest improvement, increasing by 22.5%. This finding indicates that the training program helped teachers strengthen their mastery of teaching materials and improve their technical capacity in classroom instruction. Personality competence had the highest score both before and after the intervention, increasing from 78.5 to 89.0. This suggests that the teachers already possessed relatively strong attitudes, discipline, and professional character, while the program further reinforced those strengths.

Pedagogical and social competence also improved consistently. The increase in pedagogical competence reflects teachers' progress in planning, managing, and evaluating learning activities. The increase in social competence indicates better communication, cooperation, and interaction among teachers, students, and the principal. These improvements show that the program contributed not only to individual teacher development but also to a more collaborative school climate.

The improvement in teachers' competence was closely related to changes in the principal's leadership practices. Interview results indicated that the principal became more active in providing feedback on teacher performance, carrying out supervision, encouraging collaboration, and being more open in decision-making. Teachers reported that communication with the principal became more transparent and that their ideas were more appreciated. These changes helped increase teachers' morale and motivation to participate in school improvement activities.

The findings support the argument of Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) that transformational leadership can mobilize teachers to commit to the school's vision through empowerment and active participation. In addition, the implementation of instructional leadership was useful because it positioned the principal as an academic supervisor who provides guidance, feedback, and support for improving learning quality. This is consistent with Mulyasa's (2013) view that effective principals must be able to mobilize school resources and guide teachers toward better educational outcomes.

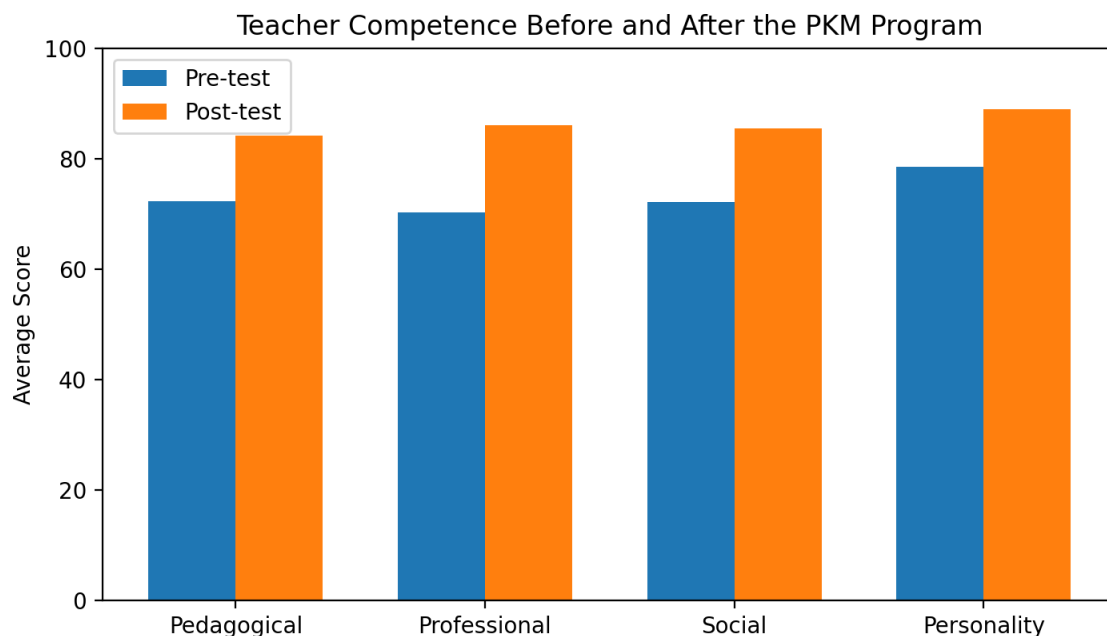


Figure 1. Teacher competence scores before and after participating in the PKM program.

The program also created practical benefits for the school. Teachers became more confident in sharing best practices with colleagues, reflecting on their teaching, and communicating their needs to the principal. The principal became more aware that leadership effectiveness is not limited to administrative decision-making, but also includes the ability to inspire, facilitate, supervise, and empower teachers. Therefore, the PKM activity contributed to the development of a more supportive and collaborative school culture at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja.



Figure 2. Documentation of PKM training, mentoring, and coordination activities at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja.

The activity was conducted at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City, Riau Islands Province. Its main purpose was to provide a clearer understanding of how the principal's leadership style influences teacher motivation and competence, and how strengthened leadership can support school improvement. The resource person for the activity was an elementary school supervisor from the Batam City Education Office assigned to public elementary schools in Lubuk Baja District. The program was carried out over three days, consisting of explanation, guidance, discussion, and reporting

CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation and evaluation of the Community Service Program (PKM), it can be concluded that strengthening principal leadership contributed positively to improving teacher competence at SD Negeri 002 Lubuk Baja, Batam City. The average teacher competence score increased by 17.6%, from 73.2 in the pre-test to 86.1 in the post-test. The highest improvement occurred in professional competence, followed by social, pedagogical, and personality competence. These results indicate that training, mentoring, group discussion, and reflective evaluation can improve teachers' ability to carry out learning activities more effectively.

The program also supported the improvement of principal leadership, particularly in transformational, instructional, communicative, and motivational aspects. Teachers experienced more open communication, clearer direction, greater appreciation, and better opportunities to participate in decision-making. Therefore, school principals need to continue strengthening transformational and instructional leadership by providing consistent supervision, constructive feedback, recognition for teacher performance, and opportunities for professional learning.

It is recommended that teachers and principals establish sustainable learning communities and conduct regular reflection on teaching and leadership practices. Future programs should involve a broader sample of schools, apply mixed-method evaluation, and focus more deeply on the principal as the main driver of teacher motivation and school improvement.

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