Situational Leadership Strategy of The Principal in Improving Teachers' Discipline and Motivation at SMK Futuuhal Arifin Lembar, West Lombok

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyze the situational leadership strategy implemented by the principal in improving teachers' discipline and motivation at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar, West Lombok. Situational leadership is an approach that emphasizes adapting leadership styles to the prevailing circumstances and conditions. In the educational context, this is crucial to ensuring the achievement of optimal educational goals, particularly in enhancing teachers' work quality and motivation. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the principal of SMK Futuhul Arifin implements various strategies, including open communication, rewards, and regular coaching for teachers, which have proven effective in improving discipline and motivation. Thus, an appropriate situational leadership strategy can foster a productive work environment and enhance the quality of education in the school. This study recommends that the principal continue to develop situational leadership skills in accordance with the needs and challenges in the field.

Keywords: Principal's Situational Leadership Strategy, Improving Teachers' Discipline and Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of human resources, making schools key institutions in fostering academic excellence and character development (Nasihin et al., 2024; Nasri, Muliadi, et al., 2024). One of the fundamental factors influencing the effectiveness of a school is the leadership style of the principal. Leadership in education is not merely about administration but also about inspiring and motivating teachers to perform at their best. Among various leadership approaches, situational leadership stands out as a highly adaptive and responsive model (Alim et al., 2024; Arif Saefudin et al., 2024; Muliadi, Abd. Karim, et al., 2024). It requires principals to adjust their leadership style based on the conditions and readiness of their teachers, ultimately aiming to enhance their discipline and motivation (Apipuddin et al., 2024; Azzahidi & Nasri, 2024; Fahrurozi et al., 2024; Muliadi, Rasyidi, et al., 2024; Nasri & Adiba, 2023).

Situatinal leadership is based on the premise that there is no single best leadership style. Instead, effective leaders must assess the competence, experience, and motivation of their subordinates and apply the most suitable leadership strategy (Haris & Nasri, 2024; Indinabila et al., 2024; Nasri, Atsani, et al., 2023; Nasri, Indinabila, et al., 2024). In the context of education, where teachers have diverse backgrounds, competencies, and levels of commitment, situational leadership becomes an essential tool for school principals (Muliadi, Asyari, et al., 2024; Nasri, 2015, 2018a, 2018b, 2023c; Nasri, Khairi, et al., 2023; Nasri, 2024a, 2024b). By employing this approach, principals can foster a more engaging and supportive work environment, leading to improved teacher performance and student outcomes.

Discipline and motivation are two critical elements in ensuring teacher effectiveness. Discipline in the workplace is essential for maintaining a structured and productive learning environment (Husnawadi & Nasri, 2023; Jinan et al., 2024; Muliadi & Nasri, 2023). Teachers who adhere to schedules, meet deadlines, and fulfill their responsibilities contribute significantly to the overall success of a school. Conversely, a lack of discipline can lead to inefficiencies, disrupt learning activities, and negatively impact students' academic performance. Therefore, it is imperative for school principals to implement strategies that reinforce discipline among teachers (Astani et al., 2024; Haris & Nasri, 2023; Nasri, 2023c; Nasri & Astani, 2024).

Motivation, on the other hand, is a key determinant of a teacher's enthusiasm and commitment to their profession. Highly motivated teachers tend to be more engaged, innovative, and dedicated to student success. Intrinsic motivation, driven by passion and a sense of purpose, combined with extrinsic motivation, such as recognition and rewards, can significantly enhance a teacher's performance (Ansori et al., 2024; Nasri & Mulyohadi, 2023; Nasri & Rahmatullah, 2023; Suparman & Nasri, 2024). Principals who adopt situational leadership strategies can tailor their motivational approaches to meet the specific needs of their teachers, thereby fostering a more dynamic and motivated workforce (Nasri, 2019b, p. 33, 2019a, p. 7, 2023b, p. 54; Nasri, Gufran, et al., 2024, p. 87; Nasri, Wahid, et al., 2024, p. 32).

SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar, located in West Lombok, serves as an ideal case study for examining the impact of situational leadership on teacher discipline and motivation. As a vocational high school, SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar faces unique challenges in maintaining high standards of discipline and motivation among its teachers. Vocational education demands a balance between theoretical instruction and practical application, requiring teachers to be highly committed and disciplined (Nasri, 2016a, p. 31, 2016b, p. 54, 2017, p. 65). Moreover, the diverse backgrounds of the teaching staff necessitate a flexible leadership approach that can cater to varying levels of experience and motivation.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on educational leadership by highlighting the effectiveness of situational leadership in improving teacher performance. Additionally, the study provides practical recommendations for school administrators seeking to enhance their leadership strategies (Atsani et al., 2023; Habiburrahman et al., 2023; Haryadi et al., 2021, p. 53; Irjanawadi et al., 2023; Nurdiah et al., 2023). By adopting a situational leadership approach, principals can create a positive school culture that promotes discipline, motivation, and overall academic excellence.

In conclusion, situational leadership is a powerful strategy for school principals aiming to enhance teacher discipline and motivation. Through adaptive leadership styles, principals can address the varying needs of their teachers, ensuring a more productive and motivated teaching force. This research will explore the specific strategies implemented at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar and their impact on teacher performance. By doing so, it seeks to provide valuable insights that can be applied to other educational institutions striving for excellence.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore the situational leadership strategies implemented by the principal of SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar in improving teacher discipline and motivation (Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022; Mainwaring & Aujla, 2023; Mey, 2023; Nasri, 2023a). The qualitative method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the leadership styles, teacher discipline, and motivation through direct engagement with the participants. The study follows a case study design, focusing on the leadership strategies of the principal in a specific educational setting (Elliott et al., 2023; Mihas, 2023; Tshabangu et al., 2022). A case study approach enables a detailed exploration of real-life situations, providing a holistic understanding of how situational leadership is applied in practice. This design is particularly relevant for examining complex social phenomena such as leadership in schools, where multiple factors influence teacher discipline and motivation (Iswadi et al., 2023, p. 77; Yin, 2003, p. 21).

The research is conducted at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar, West Lombok, a vocational high school that faces unique challenges in maintaining discipline and motivation among its teachers. The study involves several key participants, including the principal, selected teachers from various departments, and administrative staff. The principal's leadership strategies are closely examined, while teachers provide insights into how these strategies influence their discipline and motivation. Additionally, the perspectives of administrative staff help understand how leadership strategies are implemented at the institutional level (Tanaka et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2024).

To obtain accurate and rich data, this research employs three primary data collection techniques: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the principal, teachers, and administrative staff to gather perspectives on leadership strategies (Barrett & Twycross, 2018; Christopher & Grastien, 2024; Gill et al., 2008). The interviews include open-ended questions,

allowing participants to express their views freely, and their responses are recorded and transcribed for analysis. Key areas of focus in the interviews include the principal's approach to leadership adaptation, strategies used to enhance teacher discipline, and methods to motivate teachers and improve their performance (Kasales et al., 2019; Kryger, 2017). Direct non-participant observations are carried out in the school environment to examine leadership interactions, teacher behavior, and disciplinary practices. Observational notes document key findings related to leadership influence on teacher motivation and discipline, focusing on aspects such as the principal's engagement with teachers, teachers' responses to leadership interventions, and the implementation of discipline policies and motivational strategies. Document analysis involves reviewing school records, policy documents, and teacher performance reports to understand the formal strategies implemented for discipline and motivation (Tănase, 2017; White, 2006). Meeting minutes and evaluation reports are analyzed to identify leadership interventions, including teacher attendance records, performance evaluation reports, and internal policies related to teacher discipline and motivation (Nasri, Mulyohadi, et al., 2024; Nasri & Rahmatullah, 2025; Saefudin et al., 2024).

The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying recurring themes related to situational leadership, discipline, and motivation. The process includes data familiarization by reading and re-reading transcripts and observational notes, coding key phrases and categorizing data into meaningful themes, establishing connections between different aspects of leadership and their impact on teachers, and interpreting findings based on thematic patterns and linking them to the theoretical framework of situational leadership (Ma, 2024; Schwandt, 2021). To ensure ethical compliance, the research obtains informed consent from participants, guarantees confidentiality and anonymity, ensures data accuracy and reliability by cross-checking sources and using triangulation techniques, and maintains objectivity throughout data collection and analysis.

To enhance the credibility of the research, triangulation is employed by comparing data from multiple sources (interviews, observations, and documents) to ensure consistency. Member checking allows participants to review and verify

the accuracy of their statements, while peer review engages academic peers to evaluate the research process and findings (Jansen et al., 2022; Nagashima et al., 2024). By employing this systematic methodological approach, the study aims to provide a detailed, evidence-based understanding of the situational leadership strategies utilized at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar and their effectiveness in improving teacher discipline and motivation. The findings from this study will contribute to educational leadership research and provide practical recommendations for school administrators.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this research highlight the effectiveness of the principal's situational leadership strategies in improving teacher discipline and motivation at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar. The results indicate that the successful implementation of these strategies depends on the principal's ability to adapt leadership styles to the specific needs and conditions of the teachers. Key findings from the study are as follows:

Effectiveness of Situational Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Discipline and MotivationThe study reveals that the situational leadership approach, when implemented effectively, has a positive impact on teacher discipline and motivation. The principal's ability to adjust leadership styles based on circumstances, establish open communication, build mutual trust, and create a supportive school culture plays a crucial role in achieving these improvements. Despite challenges such as limited resources and resistance to change, situational leadership strategies, when supported by all stakeholders, significantly enhance teacher discipline and motivation.

Influence of Leadership Style on Teacher BehaviorThe success of the principal in enhancing teacher discipline and motivation is closely linked to their ability to apply the appropriate leadership style. Whether using an instructive, persuasive, or delegative approach, the principal's adaptability ensures that teachers receive clear communication and fair recognition in terms of rewards and disciplinary actions. Both internal factors (such as the principal's leadership skills) and external factors (such as policies and resource availability) contribute to the effectiveness of these strategies. Challenges such as teacher resistance or lack of training can be

mitigated through regular evaluations and adjustments in leadership approaches. Impact of Leadership Strategies on School Environment and Teacher EngagementThe study further identifies several significant positive outcomes resulting from the principal's situational leadership strategies. The application of a flexible and considerate leadership approach helps create a comfortable and supportive work environment. By allowing teachers to voice their concerns while maintaining discipline, the principal fosters a sense of accountability without creating undue pressure. This balance improves teacher awareness and responsibility.

Additionally, adjusting leadership styles based on teacher needs—providing structured guidance for new teachers while granting autonomy to experienced ones—strikes an effective balance between support and independence. As a result, teacher motivation increases, as they feel valued and empowered in their roles. Open communication is also instrumental, enabling the principal to address issues transparently, thereby boosting teacher confidence and involvement. Overall, the findings indicate that a flexible and communicative situational leadership approach fosters a harmonious and supportive work environment, leading to significant improvements in teacher discipline, motivation, and overall performance at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar.

Discussion

The results of this study highlight the significant role of situational leadership in improving teacher discipline and motivation at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar. The principal's ability to adapt leadership styles according to the specific needs and conditions of teachers plays a crucial role in enhancing the school environment and ensuring better teacher engagement. This section discusses these findings in relation to established leadership theories and educational management frameworks (Haris & Nasri, 2024; Nasri, Indinabila, et al., 2024).

1. Situational Leadership and Teacher Discipline

The findings align with Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, which posits that effective leaders adjust their leadership styles based on the maturity and competency levels of their subordinates. In this study, the principal successfully applied different leadership styles, ranging from directive (for new teachers needing guidance) to delegative (for experienced teachers who require autonomy). This adaptability helped maintain teacher discipline while fostering a sense of responsibility and accountability. Additionally, transactional leadership principles were evident in the principal's approach to discipline. Through the use of clear rules, structured rewards, and consequences, the principal reinforced discipline among teachers. The ability to provide consistent feedback and maintain fair disciplinary actions ensured that teachers remained aligned with institutional expectations. These findings support previous research suggesting that transactional leadership can be effective in educational settings where structure and consistency are necessary for maintaining discipline.

2. Leadership Influence on Teacher Motivation

The study demonstrates that situational leadership is also effective in enhancing teacher motivation. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, motivation is driven by fulfilling psychological, social, and self-actualization needs. The principal's ability to foster open communication and a supportive work culture addressed teachers' needs for belonging and recognition, ultimately improving their motivation levels. Furthermore, Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides an analytical framework for understanding the impact of leadership on teacher motivation. The principal's strategies effectively addressed both hygiene factors (such as school policies, interpersonal relationships, and working conditions) and motivators (such as recognition, professional development, and autonomy). By balancing these aspects, the principal enhanced teacher motivation, leading to better performance and engagement (Arif Saefudin et al., 2024; Nasri, Atsani, et al., 2023; Nasri, Muliadi, et al., 2024).

3. Challenges and Strategies for Overcoming Leadership Barriers

Despite the positive impact of situational leadership, certain challenges were identified, such as resistance to change among teachers and limitations in school resources. These obstacles align with Lewin's Change Management Theory, which highlights that organizational change often meets resistance due to uncertainty or fear of new expectations. The principal successfully addressed this by implementing gradual

leadership adjustments and fostering a culture of trust and open dialogue (Muliadi, Rasyidi, et al., 2024; Nasri, Indinabila, et al., 2024). Moreover, Vroom's Expectancy Theory explains how teachers' motivation is influenced by their belief that efforts will lead to meaningful outcomes. The principal ensured that teachers were aware of the benefits of discipline and motivation strategies, reinforcing their commitment to maintaining high professional standards.

4. Implications for Educational Leadership

The findings of this research have several implications for educational leadership. First, school leaders must be adaptable, as rigid leadership styles may not effectively address the diverse needs of teachers. Second, open communication and participatory decision-making enhance teacher engagement and create a positive work environment (Apipuddin et al., 2024; Nasri & Adiba, 2023). Lastly, continuous professional development opportunities for teachers should be integrated into leadership strategies to sustain motivation and discipline improvements. In conclusion, the study confirms that situational leadership is an effective approach for enhancing teacher discipline and motivation. By adapting leadership styles, fostering open communication, and addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, the principal of SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar successfully created a supportive and productive school environment. These findings reinforce the relevance of situational leadership theories in education and provide practical recommendations for school administrators seeking to improve teacher performance through adaptive leadership approaches.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the application of situational leadership strategies by the principal has a significant impact on improving teacher discipline and motivation at SMK Futuhul Arifin Lembar. The findings highlight that an effective principal must be able to adapt their leadership style according to the conditions and needs of teachers. By implementing directive leadership for new teachers, supportive leadership for those facing challenges, and delegative leadership for experienced teachers, the principal successfully created a balanced and conducive work environment. In terms of discipline, the study demonstrates that clear communication,

structured reward and punishment systems, and a culture of mutual respect and responsibility contribute to maintaining teacher compliance with institutional policies. Additionally, the principal's ability to foster a supportive and engaging work culture positively influenced teacher motivation. This aligns with motivational theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which emphasize the importance of fulfilling both basic and professional needs to encourage higher performance. Despite challenges such as resistance to change and resource limitations, the principal's strategic approach, including open dialogue and gradual implementation of changes, proved effective in overcoming these obstacles. The study further supports the relevance of established leadership and motivation theories, reinforcing that adaptive leadership plays a crucial role in educational success. Overall, situational leadership is a highly effective strategy for enhancing discipline and motivation among teachers. The ability of school leaders to adapt their leadership styles, foster communication, and provide professional development opportunities is essential for maintaining a high-performing and engaged teaching workforce. Future research should explore the long-term impact of situational leadership on teacher retention and student achievement, providing further insights into its broader implications in educational management.

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