

The Role Of School Principal Leadership In Enhancing Teacher Professionalism At Gebangan Public Elementary School, Pengasih, Kulon Progo

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the role of school principal leadership in enhancing teacher professionalism at Gebangan Public Elementary School, Pengasih, Kulon Progo. The principal's leadership plays a strategic role in providing direction, guidance, and motivation for teachers. The research was conducted in September and October 2025, located at Gebangan Public Elementary School, Pengasih, Kulon Progo District. A qualitative approach and case study methodology were used in this research. The subjects were the principal and teachers. Data collection was done through observation and in-depth interviews. Data analysis included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research results show that the role of the principal's leadership at Gebangan Public Elementary School has a significant impact on improving teacher professionalism. Despite facing challenges such as limited time, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and varying motivation among teachers, the principal successfully overcame these through regular training, flexible scheduling, and providing moral support and adequate facilities.

Keywords: school principal leadership, teacher professionalism, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process that enables students to actively develop their potential. The goal is to acquire spiritual strength in religion, self-control, personality formation, have noble morals, and master the skills needed by themselves, society, as well as the nation and state (Sufiyati & Novianto, 2021). Education is a process aimed at changing behavior, enriching knowledge and life experience, so that students become wiser in thinking and behaving (Rahmi et al., 2023). Improving the quality of education is essential to face the era of globalization. Quality education includes student achievements not only in the academic field but also in non-academic fields (Sari et al., 2023). Education appears as the realization of a work subject to an unconscious inner movement and a desire to be part of the world (Baatouche, 2022).

From the above opinions, it can be concluded that education is a conscious and purposeful process to fully develop human potential in terms of knowledge, attitude, skills, and life values. Education is not only about the transfer of knowledge but also about shaping character, personality, and the way a person thinks and acts in facing life's challenges. Teachers and principals have a role in improving the quality of education in schools.

The changes in the world of education today are happening very quickly and present many challenges. Education must be able to respond to challenges arising from social changes as well as policies set by the government, such as curriculum changes and mandatory programs. Therefore, schools need to take concrete steps, especially in prioritizing quality, effectiveness, and readiness in facing the future. (Harahap et al., 2023).

Leadership is the ability to influence a group to achieve a vision or set of predetermined goals. The source of this leadership can be formal, such as the role held by managerial incumbents within an organization (Hutasoit, 2024). Leadership is an interaction and relationship established with followers that influences, motivates, or empowers other individuals towards achieving specific goals (Costa, 2023). Leadership can be conceptualized as the process of influencing and supporting others through various types of behavior and actions to achieve specific results and goals. It involves a combination of qualities, roles, and behaviors that influence and guide others to achieve specific shared goals or visions (Wan Mustapa et al., 2025). In the educational world, the figure of a leader is the principal. The success of a principal in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, whether in leading learning, managing the educational unit, managing school facilities, improving teacher quality, or organizing various other activities, is greatly influenced by their role as a leader (Lestari, 2023). The leadership of a principal has a strategic role in determining the direction of school development, especially in improving teacher performance and the overall quality of education (Saputra, 2025). Principals play an important role in improving the quality of education through efforts to enhance teacher performance. They not only bear the responsibility of administrative management but also serve as agents of change who influence the atmosphere and learning culture in schools (Ridlo, 2024). Leadership in the education sector is the principal's skill in encouraging, influencing, coordinating, and mobilizing teachers and other school members. This is related to the application of teaching and learning processes to achieve educational and teaching goals optimally (Qudsya et al., 2023). The principal's ability to lead affects the overall quality of the school (Hasannah, 2024). An effective principal is not only an administrative leader but also acts as a facilitator and motivator in creating a work environment that supports teacher professionalism (Fauzan, 2025).

Professionalism is an essential trait for every profession, including the teaching profession. Teacher professionalism in the Society 5.0 era is influenced by the understanding of digital technology, the development of 21st-century competencies, the implementation of humanistic learning approaches, capacity enhancement through continuous learning, and collaboration with various educational stakeholders (Masitoh, 2024). Teacher professionalism reflects their mental attitude and commitment to improve and enhance teaching competencies through various means and strategies, as well as continuously developing their abilities according to the needs of the times (Hamidah, 2024). Teacher professionalism is a crucial factor in determining the quality of education in schools. Professional teachers not only have a deep understanding of the subject matter but also possess effective pedagogical skills and a high work ethic (Sam, 2024). Teachers are a vital component in education who must actively and professionally adapt to societal developments. Apart from delivering knowledge, teachers also convey values and provide guidance to students (Dewi J, 2024). Professional teacher competence plays an important role in ensuring they can carry out teaching duties effectively (Prayoga, 2024). There is a positive correlation between school principals' leadership behavior and teacher professionalism (Pana, 2024).

Various studies on school principal leadership have been conducted by several individuals. One of them is a study by Siti Muawanatul Hasanah in 2024 titled "Principal's Leadership in Enhancing PAI Teachers' Professionalism at SMP An Nashr." This research used a qualitative methodology with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and recording techniques. Data analysis was performed through data presentation, data reduction, validation, and the use of credibility methods, including expanding participation, careful observation, triangulation, reference adequacy, and peer review through discussion. The research results showed that teachers at SMP An Nashr have achieved competence in pedagogical, personal, professional, and social fields, although some teachers are not yet optimal. The school principal's leadership style is described as charismatic and democratic.

Another study on school principal leadership was conducted by Nasroh (2025) titled "School Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teachers' Professional Competence at SDN 2 Kekait (A Case Study Approach)." This research utilized qualitative methods with a case study approach. The author's conclusion suggests that the school principal's leadership plays a significant role in building a collaborative work environment, supporting professional development, and enhancing teachers' technical skills. Despite facing obstacles such as resource limitations, the principal remains capable of motivating teachers to innovate and adapt to the demands of contemporary education.

Another related study is *The Role of School Principal's Leadership Quality in Enhancing Teacher Professionalism* (Nur Indah, 2025). This research concludes that in their role as a leader, a principal is obligated to build a positive work culture, provide professional support, and formulate policies and strategies to enhance teacher capabilities. Effective leadership from a principal can optimize teacher performance, which in turn becomes a determining factor in the overall success of the education system.

The research conducted by Riche Zunia Sumbahari in 2025 was titled "The Influence of School Principal Leadership on Teacher Professionalism in Guiding Students at SD Negeri 18 Pekanbaru." This study employed a qualitative method with a case study design. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with the principal and seven selected teachers, non-participant observation of classroom interactions and guidance activities, and analysis of school record documents. The results of the study indicated that certain leadership behaviors of the principal can either encourage or hinder the professional development of teachers in providing guidance to students, offering an in-depth understanding of the interaction between leadership and teacher professionalism.

In the implementation of basic education, the ideal condition expected is the creation of a school environment that supports continuously improving the quality of education. As a leader in the field of education, the principal can function as a motivator, innovator, supervisor, as well as a manager who encourages the creation of a professional work culture among teachers. Meanwhile, teachers are expected to be able to conduct innovative learning that meets students' needs and actively engage in self-development activities.

In reality, the implementation of education at SD Negeri Gebangan is not as expected. It still faces various challenges affecting the improvement of teacher professionalism. The principal has tried to fulfill their leadership role but has not yet been fully optimal. The principal is often more occupied with administrative matters, so the coaching of teachers has not been optimally

implemented. Academic supervision, which should be planned, continuous, and constructive, tends to be just formality and emphasizes administrative aspects over the improvement of learning quality.

From the perspective of teacher professionalism, the ideal condition demands that all teachers actively develop their competencies through training, workshops, and similar activities. However, in reality, teacher motivation varies; some are active, but others are less enthusiastic about enhancing their competencies. Similarly, in terms of technology utilization, ideally, teachers are expected to integrate technology into learning, but in reality, many teachers still face obstacles due to limited skills and available facilities.

Thus, this research is important to obtain a clear picture of how school principals play their role in mentoring teachers, the factors that support or hinder them, and the efforts that can be made to develop teacher professionalism at SD Negeri Gebangan in line with educational demands. This research is expected to make a tangible contribution to the effort to improve the quality of education in elementary schools, especially through effective school leadership focused on enhancing teacher quality.

METHOD

This research was conducted at Gebangan Elementary School, Pengasih District, Kulon Progo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The study took place over two months, from September to October 2025. The research subjects included the principal and two classroom teachers, focusing on the role of the principal's leadership in enhancing teacher professionalism. According to Sugiyono, a research method is essentially the scientific means used by researchers to obtain specific data. Appropriate methods and approaches are necessary in all research activities to ensure that the research proceeds as previously planned (Regiani, 2023).

This research employs a descriptive approach with a qualitative method. This approach is a research method that emphasizes the observation of phenomena at a certain time to explore related knowledge and theories. Additionally, according to Creswell (2016), qualitative research is an approach used to seek, explore, and understand certain phenomena.

The data collection methods applied are observation and interview techniques. According to general opinion, the observation technique is a method where researchers directly go to the field to collect data. Observations are conducted with the aim of obtaining a real picture of a phenomenon that serves as a solution to the research problem formulated. Meanwhile, the interview technique is a method of data collection through a question-and-answer session between the interviewer and the informant. Essentially, interviews aim to explore and obtain information related to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data analysis techniques are methods for processing information obtained from research. In this study, data analysis is followed by three steps as follows:

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction involves summarizing, simplifying, and removing insignificant information so that the remaining data is easier to understand for drawing conclusions.

2. Data Presentation

The study adopts a qualitative approach in data presentation, involving direct field visits in the search for data sources.

3. Conclusion

After completing data reduction and presentation, we can draw conclusions. This aims to affirm the main points of the research conducted. These conclusions also include answers to previously formulated questions. (Irawan, et al., 2022: 101-102).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SD Negeri Gebangan is an elementary school located in Timpang Hamlet, Pengasih Village, Pengasih District, Kulon Progo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This school is classified as a public school and is under the auspices of the Youth and Sports Education Office of Kulon Progo Regency. Established around the 1950s, SD Negeri Gebangan continues to innovate and develop into one of the elementary schools committed to improving the quality of education in its area.

At SD Negeri Gebangan, the implementation of educational programs is supported by both teaching and non-teaching staff. The teachers at this school number 8, including 1 principal, 6 classroom teachers, and 1 Islamic Religious Education teacher. Additionally, there is one educational staff member who serves as an administrative staff and school operator. There is also one school caretaker. The total number of students at SD Negeri Gebangan is around 80, divided into six class groups, from grade I to grade VI.

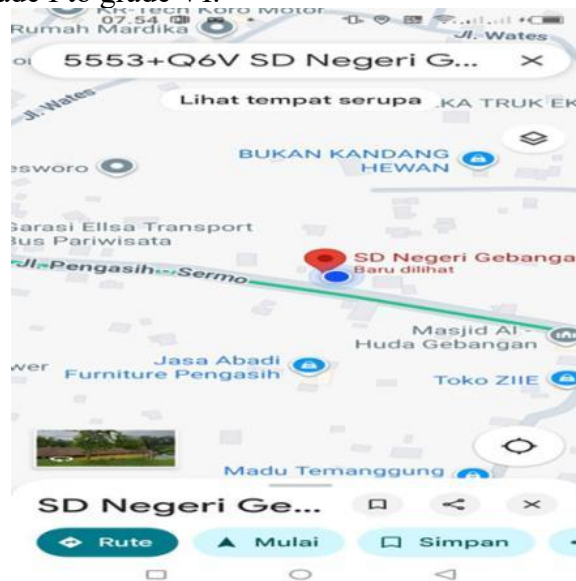


Figure 1.
Map of SD Negeri Gebangan
(source: Google Maps, accessed on September 25, 2025).

This section of research findings and discussion presents key findings from qualitative research on the role of school principal leadership in enhancing teacher professionalism at SD Negeri Gebangan, Pengasih, Kulon Progo, followed by an in-depth discussion and relevance to supporting theories.

1. Leadership Style of the Principal at SD Negeri Gebangan

"I try to integrate a democratic and participative leadership style. In every activity, I routinely involve teachers to discuss and make decisions collectively. I hope all teachers feel a sense of ownership of this school, so they also take responsibility for its progress." (source: interview by the researcher with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd as the principal of SDN Gebangan on September 25, 2025).

From the interview above, it is revealed that the leadership style at SD Negeri Gebangan, Pengasih, Kulon Progo implemented by Mr. Samidi, M.Pd is a democratic and participative leadership style. This principal always involves teachers in the decision-making process, especially those related to learning aspects, school activities, and the professional competency development of teachers. Mr. Samidi hopes that all teachers feel proud to be part of this school and contribute to advancing it.

"I also strive to be a role model in terms of discipline and responsibility, because I believe a leader must set a good example." (source: interview with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd as the principal of SDN Gebangan on September 25, 2025).

Based on the interview, it can be concluded that the principal of SDN Gebangan sets an example in terms of discipline, integrity, and responsibility, which helps create a conducive and harmonious working environment at the school.

"Our principal is an open and democratic type. He often invites us to meetings and discussions to decide school programs. For instance, when planning semester programs, we are asked to provide input." (source: interview with Mrs. Sumartinah, S.Pd as a grade VI teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

The statement above shows that the principal provides opportunities for teachers to be actively involved in the school program planning process. Whenever a policy is to be made, the principal calls a meeting with the teaching staff to discuss plans and receive various inputs and suggestions. With this approach, the resulting decision is a collaborative effort and not just a single-party decision.

Moreover, the principal is also known for being open to criticism and innovative ideas from teachers. On every occasion, the principal encourages teachers to express their viewpoints freely and responsibly, fostering a harmonious and collaborative working atmosphere. This attitude nurtures a sense of togetherness and shared responsibility in implementing school programs.

"Our principal is not authoritarian, but he is firm. If there's a rule, he explains its purpose and provides examples first. This makes it easier for us to follow. He also often provides encouragement, even praising teachers who excel. We feel appreciated and supported." (source: interview with Mrs. Suparyati, S.Pd, a first-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

The principal of SD Negeri Gebangan demonstrates a leadership style that is firm but not coercive. In performing his duties, he always communicates the purpose behind each regulation set for the teachers, so that every policy is understood as part of a collective effort to achieve the school's vision. Before asking teachers to implement a policy, the principal provides concrete examples first, allowing teachers to emulate and apply it more easily while understanding the meaning behind the rules. This approach reflects an educative, communicative, and exemplary leadership style.

Additionally, the principal is known as a leader who provides moral support and motivation to teachers. He frequently offers encouragement in daily activities and gives recognition or praise

to teachers who demonstrate excellent performance or achievements. This makes teachers feel valued, supported, and increasingly motivated to continually improve their performance. The work environment becomes more positive and productive, as teachers feel they have significant value and contributions to the school.

Based on interviews with various sources mentioned, it can be concluded that the principal of SD Negeri Gebangan implements a leadership method based on democracy and participation. This leadership approach is evident in various aspects of task execution and interaction between the principal and teachers.

One of the main characteristics of his leadership is teacher participation in the school's decision-making process. Whenever a program, policy, or activity is planned, the principal always involves teachers in deliberations and discussions. Teachers are given space to express opinions, ideas, and suggestions, so the decisions made are a result of mutual agreement. This engenders a sense of ownership and responsibility among teachers towards the programs being implemented.

The principal also employs a familial approach in his leadership. The relationship between the principal and teachers is warm, respectful, and empathetic. However, the principal remains firm in enforcing rules, thereby creating a balance between a friendly atmosphere and maintained discipline.

2. Teacher Professionalism

"In general, the professionalism of teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan is quite good. The teachers have a high commitment to their duties, are disciplined, and willing to learn. They prepare teaching materials well and strive to implement active learning." (source: interview with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd, the principal of SDN Gebangan on September 25, 2025).

Based on the interview with the principal, it can be concluded that the level of professionalism among the teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan is generally adequate. The educators at this school demonstrate a high commitment to their duties and responsibilities as teachers. They arrive on time, teach with full responsibility, and show a zeal to continually improve themselves and the quality of education given to students.

Additionally, the teachers are known for their discipline in fulfilling their obligations and adhering to the rules set by the school. They routinely prepare lesson plans such as RPP, syllabus, and teaching materials properly and structurally as a form of preparation for the teaching process.

In the teaching and learning process, the teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan strive to implement active, innovative, and enjoyable teaching methods. They endeavor to involve students directly in the learning process so that students can more easily understand the material and are encouraged to learn.

Furthermore, the teachers also have a desire to continue learning and developing themselves, whether through training, professional discussions, or sharing experiences with peers. This eagerness to learn and openness to innovation is an important indicator of teacher professionalism at this school.

"In my opinion, teacher professionalism is the ability to carry out tasks competently and responsibly, including in designing lessons, teaching, assessing, and guiding students. I strive to improve my skills by attending training sessions, webinars, and teacher working groups, as well as

learning from fellow teachers." (source: interview with Mrs. Suparyati, S.Pd, a first-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on an interview conducted with one of the teachers at Gebangan Public Elementary School, it was found that the teacher has a deep understanding of the concept of professionalism. The teacher stated that professionalism in the teaching world is the ability to perform the role competently and responsibly, encompassing several vital aspects in carrying out duties as an educator.

She argued that professionalism is not only measured by teaching skills in the classroom, but also includes the ability to design a well-structured learning process, create structured lesson implementation plans, conduct the teaching and learning process efficiently, assess objectively, and guide students to develop optimally both academically and in character.

This teacher also emphasized her commitment to continuously improve professionalism through various self-development activities. She actively participates in training sessions, webinars, and teacher working groups (KKG) to broaden her knowledge and enhance her skills. Additionally, she learns from experience and shares best practices with colleagues, as a step to learn collaboratively to improve the quality of education in the school.

"The teachers here are quite professional. We strive to perform our duties according to regulations, create teaching modules, and conduct learning in accordance with the applicable curriculum." (source: interview with Ibu Dwi Astuti, S.Pd, as a second-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on the information from the interview, it is revealed that the educators at SD Negeri Gebangan have demonstrated a level of professionalism. They endeavor to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the norms of the teaching profession, including designing teaching modules, conducting learning activities according to the curriculum, and ensuring the quality of learning to achieve educational goals optimally.

3. Challenges Faced and Solutions to Overcome Problems

"The main challenge we face is that despite my efforts to fulfill my role as a leader at the school, the outcomes have not been satisfying. Time-consuming administrative tasks often hinder me from providing effective teacher guidance. Academic supervision activities, which should be carried out with thorough planning and be continuous and constructive, tend to become merely a formality and focus more on administration than on improving the quality of teaching." (Source: Interview with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd, the principal of SDN Gebangan, on September 25, 2025).

Based on the interview with the principal, it was revealed that there are still challenges in fulfilling the leadership role, particularly in guiding and enhancing teacher professionalism. The principal expressed that although efforts to lead have been made, the results obtained are not fully satisfactory.

One of the main obstacles faced is the significant load of administrative tasks that consumes much time and energy. This administrative burden often reduces the principal's opportunities to optimally and sustainably provide teacher guidance. As a result, guidance activities that should focus on developing teacher competencies sometimes cannot proceed in-depth.

Moreover, the implementation of academic supervision, which should be carried out with meticulous planning, continuity, and constructive feedback, still faces various obstacles in practice.

Supervision often prioritizes fulfilling administrative requirements over enhancing the quality of the classroom learning process. Consequently, the main goal of supervision, which is to help teachers improve and enhance their teaching abilities, has not been fully achieved.

"My challenge is the lack of training relevant to my field, so sometimes we have to seek out self-development information on our own. Additionally, the limitations of technological facilities also compel us to be creative with the available tools." (source: researcher interview with Mrs. Dwi Astuti, S.Pd as the second-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on the interview results, it was revealed that one of the problems faced by teachers in enhancing their professionalism is the lack of training relevant to their assigned tasks. Teachers stated that self-development activities conducted are not always aligned with the needs and disciplines taught. As a result, they have to proactively seek information and opportunities to participate in professional development activities, such as online training, webinars, or study groups that align with the competencies they need.

In addition, teachers also encounter difficulties regarding technological facilities. Not all learning support devices are adequately available, both in terms of hardware and internet access. This situation forces teachers to be more inventive and creative in utilizing the available tools and resources, in order to ensure that the learning process runs smoothly even with limited facilities.

"Sometimes time becomes the main obstacle, because besides teaching we also manage administration, learning tools, and other school activities." (source: interview with Mrs. Suparyati, S.Pd as a first-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on the conducted interview, one of the main challenges faced by teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan in enhancing their professionalism is the limitation of time. Teachers express that besides fulfilling the teaching duties in the classroom, they also have to handle various educational administrations, such as preparing learning plans, assessments, student learning outcome reports, and participating in various other school activities.

This workload often makes it difficult for teachers to manage their time to participate in self-development activities such as training, workshops, or educational seminars. As a result, efforts to improve teachers' competency cannot always be done optimally and continuously.

These various obstacles present their own challenges in efforts to improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competency.

"The main challenge we face is primarily related to the time and administrative burden of the teachers. To address this, we strive to organize training and counseling schedules that are more flexible, such as after school hours or at mutually agreed times. Additionally, we implement step-by-step and continuous coaching so that teachers do not feel overwhelmed. Regarding ICT facilities, we cooperate with local government to add devices that support digital learning. We also encourage teachers to utilize free and easily accessible online learning resources." (source: interview with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd, head of SDN Gebangan, on September 25, 2025).

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that in an effort to advance the professionalism of the educators, the head of SD Negeri Gebangan is faced with a number of challenges, particularly those related to the time limitations and administrative burdens experienced by the teachers. The high workload often makes it difficult for teachers to participate in development and self-improvement activities optimally.

The school principal implements strategic steps by creating more flexible training and development schedules. Development activities are no longer conducted rigidly but are arranged after school hours or at times agreed upon together, so as not to disrupt the main teaching and learning process. Additionally, training is conducted gradually and continuously, allowing teachers to adapt better without feeling overwhelmed by many demands at once.

Regarding the limitations of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, the school principal strives to enhance the support by collaborating with local government to provide equipment that supports digital learning. On the other hand, the school principal also encourages teachers to use free and easily accessible online learning resources, such as online training platforms, webinars, and digital learning communities.

4. Impact of School Principal's Leadership on Teacher Professionalism

"I have observed quite a significant change. After conducting mentoring, supervision, and training, teachers have become more confident and innovative in teaching. Now they are more disciplined and organized in preparing learning materials. They also start using technology to create teaching media and conduct evaluations. Most importantly, the teachers' learning enthusiasm has increased. They are no longer just teaching, but also willing to continue developing themselves, for instance, by participating in webinars, KKG, or online training." (source: researcher's interview with Mr. Samidi, M.Pd, the principal of SDN Gebangan on September 25, 2025).

Based on the interview results with the principal, it is apparent that there has been a significant change in teacher professionalism at SD Negeri Gebangan after implementing various mentoring, supervision, and training programs.

Teachers now demonstrate increased confidence and innovation in the teaching process. They are more willing to apply diverse and creative teaching methods and can adjust teaching strategies according to students' needs. Moreover, there has been progress in discipline and organization in the preparation of learning materials. Teachers increasingly understand the importance of careful planning, ensuring that teaching modules, materials, and evaluation tools are assembled more systematically and orderly.

Another positive change is evident in the use of technology in learning activities. Teachers are starting to utilize various digital media and educational applications to support the teaching and learning process, as well as using technology for student assessments and evaluations. This effort indicates an increase in teachers' competence in facing modern technology-based educational challenges.

The most noticeable is the teachers' growing enthusiasm for learning and motivation to continuously develop. They are no longer stuck in teaching routines but also have an awareness to enhance their professional skills. They actively participate in various competency development activities such as webinars, KKG, and online training.

"The principal's leadership has a significant impact. Because he is open and supportive, we feel appreciated. That makes us more enthusiastic and motivated to improve our skills. We become more creative in making teaching media, more diligent in attending training, and better prepared for teaching. He also sets an example of discipline and responsibility, which we emulate." (source: interview with Ibu Sumartinah, S.Pd, a sixth-grade teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on the interview with the teacher, it is revealed that the principal's leadership has a significant impact on the professional development of teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan. The principal's open, democratic, and supportive leadership approach creates a comfortable work environment that values mutual respect and provides motivation to teachers.

The teachers feel attended to and supported in every task and activity they undertake. The principal's attitude of accepting feedback and always providing moral support and facilities makes teachers feel more enthusiastic and driven to enhance their abilities. This situation encourages teachers to be more innovative in designing teaching media, more active in attending training and personal development activities, and more prepared for the learning process in the classroom.

In addition to providing support, the principal also serves as a role model in attitude and actions. He demonstrates discipline, responsibility, and a high commitment to work, which indirectly inspires teachers to emulate and apply the same attitude in their duties. This role modeling is one of the important aspects in fostering a professional work culture at the school.

"The impact is very noticeable. With democratic and inspiring leadership, we have become more active and confident. The principal provides us the space to express opinions and innovate. We also better understand how to be professional teachers: disciplined, mastering the material, and creating meaningful learning. As a result, learning becomes more engaging and students more enthusiastic. So not only are we developing, but the quality of student learning is also increasing." (Source: Researcher's interview with Ibu Dwi Astuti, S.Pd as a Grade II teacher at SDN Gebangan on September 26, 2025).

Based on the conducted interview, it is evident that the democratic and inspirational leadership style of the principal has brought a significant positive impact on the professionalism of teachers at SD Negeri Gebangan. With an inclusive and participatory approach, the principal opens opportunities for teachers to voice opinions, innovate, and be creative in their work.

Teachers feel more involved in school activities, confident, and motivated in developing their professional skills. They not only recognize their responsibilities as educators but also increasingly understand the importance of being professional teachers who are disciplined, mastering teaching content, and able to create meaningful and enjoyable learning processes for students.

The supportive leadership of the principal that gives trust to teachers encourages them to continuously innovate in learning, such as creating creative teaching aids and using interactive teaching methods. This directly enhances the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

This change is felt not only by teachers but also by students. Learning becomes more interesting and varied, making students more enthusiastic, active, and motivated to learn. Therefore, the principal's leadership not only enhances teacher professionalism but also has a positive impact on the quality of learning and student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results indicate that the leadership role of the school principal at SD Negeri Gebangan has a significant impact on improving teacher professionalism. The principal adopts a democratic and participatory leadership approach, involving teachers in decision-making processes, creating transparent communication, and providing opportunities for innovation.

Additionally, the principal serves as a role model for teachers in terms of discipline and responsibility.

The principal's roles as an educator, manager, leader, innovator, and motivator are evident through coaching, supervision, motivation, and training provision. This has a positive influence on enhancing the pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies of teachers. Consequently, teachers become more adept, disciplined, creative, and motivated to engage in the learning process.

Some challenges faced include limited time, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and varying motivation levels among teachers, but the principal successfully overcomes these through regular training, flexible scheduling, and providing moral support and adequate facilities.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made as follows:

1. The principal should consistently apply a democratic leadership style and enhance innovation in teacher development.
2. Teachers are expected to be more active in participating in training and engage in self-development independently.
3. Schools need to improve information and communication technology facilities and create a work environment that supports professionalism.

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