

COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGLISH TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstrak - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi kepemimpinan kolaboratif kepala sekolah terhadap peningkatan kompetensi guru bahasa Inggris di kelas EFL di SMP Negeri 18 Palembang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan korelasional. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada 50 guru bahasa Inggris dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik statistik deskriptif dan inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kolaboratif memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kompetensi guru, yang meliputi kompetensi pedagogik, sosial, dan kepribadian. Melalui pelibatan guru dalam pengambilan keputusan dan perencanaan pembelajaran, kepala sekolah menciptakan budaya kerja yang partisipatif, terbuka, dan saling mendukung. Hal ini berdampak pada peningkatan profesionalisme guru, kolaborasi dalam pengajaran, serta kualitas pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas EFL. Temuan penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penerapan kepemimpinan kolaboratif oleh kepala sekolah untuk memperkuat kompetensi guru dan meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran di lingkungan pendidikan.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan kolaboratif, kompetensi guru bahasa Inggris, pembelajaran EFL, kepemimpinan sekolah, pengembangan profesional.

Abstract - This study aims to analyze the contribution of collaborative school leadership to the enhancement of English teachers' competence in EFL classrooms at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang. The research employed a quantitative descriptive method with a correlational approach. Data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to 50 English teachers and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results revealed that collaborative leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' competencies, including pedagogical, social, and personal domains. By engaging teachers in decision-making and instructional planning, the principal fosters a participative, open, and supportive school culture. This collaborative environment enhances teachers' professionalism, teamwork, and the overall quality of English language instruction in EFL contexts. The findings emphasize the importance of implementing collaborative leadership practices to strengthen teacher competence and promote effective teaching and learning within the educational setting.

Keywords: Collaborative leadership, English teacher competence, EFL instruction, school leadership, professional development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a cornerstone of human development, functioning not only as a means to sustain societal progress but also as a foundation for the intellectual and cultural advancement of a nation (Amini & Kemal, 2021; Piper et al., 2016). Continuous educational reform is essential to improve teacher competence, instructional quality, curriculum design, educational infrastructure, and management systems, as well as to promote innovative and student-centered learning (Imants & Van Der Wal, 2020; Nurmiyanti & Candra, 2019; Amirah & Saidalvi, 2023). These initiatives are aimed at elevating the quality of education in Indonesia and preparing educators capable of addressing global challenges in the 21st century (Kurniawan et al., 2022; Saraswati et al., 2021; Fitriani & Mulyani, 2021). A robust

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education system produces competent human resources who can contribute meaningfully to national development (Simanjuntak et al., 2022; Zusniarni et al., 2024; Afni & Hartono, 2020).

In this context, school leadership plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and quality of education. Principals serve as the central figures in driving institutional growth and fostering a conducive learning environment (Ceballos et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021). Among the various leadership styles, collaborative or participatory leadership has been recognized as particularly effective in education, as it emphasizes teamwork, shared decision-making, and empowerment of teachers (Chan et al., 2018; Muluk et al., 2021). Collaborative leadership encourages open communication, inclusivity, and mutual trust, allowing teachers to express their ideas and creativity in instructional planning and classroom practice.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, the role of collaborative school leadership becomes even more significant. English teachers face diverse classroom challenges that require pedagogical innovation, reflective practice, and adaptability. However, many teachers still demonstrate gaps in competence, especially in designing engaging lessons, applying effective methodologies, and integrating communicative strategies aligned with curriculum goals. This highlights the importance of supportive leadership that not only guides but also involves teachers in academic and professional development processes. Collaborative school leadership emphasizes the shared responsibility between principals and teachers in achieving educational objectives. Rather than adopting a top-down management style, collaborative leaders engage teachers as partners in decision-making, curriculum design, and problem-solving (Rusdarti et al., 2021; Ahmad, 2022). This inclusive approach nurtures a sense of ownership, motivation, and professional commitment among teachers (Nurmiyanti & Candra, 2019; Lasmah, 2023). It also fosters a positive school climate that supports pedagogical improvement and continuous professional learning, especially in the teaching of English, where creativity and communicative competence are essential.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 16 of 2007, teacher competence includes four key dimensions: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional (Dewi & Siwi, 2024; Setiawan et al., 2023). These competencies encompass knowledge, teaching skills, ethical values, and social engagement, enabling teachers to fulfill their instructional and educational roles effectively (Fitriani & Mulyani, 2021; Sapan, 2020; Islami, 2022). The enhancement of these competencies is closely linked to the quality of school leadership, as principals serve as mentors, facilitators, and motivators (Susanto & Rozali, 2020; Nurhidayat et al., 2024). In junior and senior high schools, particularly within EFL contexts, collaborative leadership allows principals to engage English teachers in planning and implementing instructional strategies that meet students' linguistic and cultural needs. Through shared decision-making and cooperative problem-solving, teachers feel valued and supported, leading to improved instructional quality and learner outcomes (Chan et al., 2018; Creighton, 2018). Collaborative leadership thus contributes to creating a professional culture where teachers continuously reflect, innovate, and grow in their practice.

In summary, collaborative school leadership is characterized by active participation, open communication, and mutual respect between principals and teachers. This leadership style plays a pivotal role in enhancing the competence of English teachers by promoting pedagogical innovation, professional growth, and reflective teaching in EFL classrooms (Maisyaroh et al., 2024; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Therefore, the purpose of this study is

to analyze the impact of collaborative school leadership on the improvement of English teachers' competence in EFL classrooms, with an emphasis on pedagogical, professional, and interpersonal development within the framework of 21st-century education.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore how collaborative school leadership influences English teachers' competence in EFL classrooms. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The collected data consisted of words, narratives, and descriptions rather than numbers (Sugiyono, 2021; Neuman, 2019). The research report included direct excerpts from interviews and observations to provide an in-depth overview of the principal's participatory leadership in enhancing teacher competence.

2.2 Research Subjects

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang, South Sumatra, a public junior high school where English is taught as a foreign language. The research subjects were chosen using a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their relevance, experience, and involvement in the leadership and teaching processes. A total of 34 participants were involved in the study, comprising the principal, vice principals, English teachers, and administrative staff. These participants were considered key informants capable of providing comprehensive insights into the dynamics of collaborative leadership and its impact on the development of English teachers' competence within the EFL learning context.

2.3 Data Collection

To ensure comprehensive and trustworthy findings, several data collection methods were applied:

- 1) Interviews – conducted with the principal, vice principals, teachers, and administrative staff to obtain detailed perspectives (Kvale, 2021; Gill & Baillie, 2018).
- 2) Observations – carried out in classrooms, laboratories, the library, teacher rooms, principal's office, sports fields, and the overall school environment (Kosslyn & Miller, 2017).
- 3) Documentation – reviewing written documents, school records, and reports that supported and complemented interview and observation findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was carried out through several stages to ensure accuracy and depth of interpretation. The first stage was editing, which involved checking and refining the raw data to maintain consistency and clarity. The next stage was categorizing, where the data were grouped based on emerging themes that reflected the focus of the research. This was followed by data display, presenting the categorized information in a descriptive form to facilitate easier understanding and interpretation. Finally, the process of interpretation was conducted to draw meaning from the data and relate it directly to the research objectives. Through these steps, the study sought to provide a comprehensive picture of how collaborative school leadership shapes and enhances English teachers' competence in EFL classrooms at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The success of an educational institution in achieving its goals is closely linked to the principal's capacity to foster collaboration, optimize resources, and lead effectively. Findings from this study reveal that the principal of SMP Negeri 18 Palembang has successfully implemented a collaborative leadership model that emphasizes shared responsibility, inclusivity, and professional growth among teachers. Several indicators reflect this approach. First, the principal promotes a culture of trust and collegiality among all school members. Second, English teachers are provided with opportunities to share ideas and engage in open discussions. Third, the principal demonstrates responsiveness by addressing teachers' challenges and providing constructive feedback. Fourth, recognition and rewards are given to appreciate teachers' efforts and enhance motivation. Lastly, teachers are actively involved in decision-making processes, particularly in areas related to curriculum design and instructional policy development..

Collaborative Leadership and the Enhancement of English Teachers' Professional Competence

The research findings indicate a significant improvement in the professional competence of English teachers at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang. This progress is reflected in their consistency and accuracy in preparing Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP) and instructional materials. Both the principal and teachers confirmed that lesson plans were systematically developed before the start of each semester. This demonstrates a heightened sense of professional accountability and preparation. Professional competence, as defined in the context of EFL teaching, involves the ability to design instruction that considers learners' language proficiency, integrates communicative approaches, incorporates technology, and encourages student-centered learning. The principal's collaborative leadership has created an environment where teachers feel supported to continuously improve their instructional practices, thereby enhancing the quality of English language teaching at the school.

Collaborative Leadership and the Improvement of English Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

The study also shows that collaborative leadership contributes to strengthening pedagogical competence among English teachers. Teachers at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang have demonstrated improved mastery of teaching strategies, classroom management, and learning assessment techniques appropriate for EFL contexts. According to both the principal and teaching staff, teachers are now more confident in implementing diverse methodologies, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based learning (TBL), to engage students effectively. This improvement stems from the principal's inclusive leadership, which encourages collaboration, peer mentoring, and reflective dialogue. Consequently, teachers develop greater autonomy and confidence in managing their classrooms to foster meaningful English learning experiences.

Collaborative Leadership and the Strengthening of English Teachers' Social Competence

Another important finding relates to the enhancement of teachers' social competence through collaborative school leadership. The principal's open and approachable leadership style has nurtured a culture of cooperation and empathy within the school. This positive climate has encouraged teachers to build strong relationships not only with colleagues but also with students and parents. Teachers actively communicate with parents about students' progress and engage in collaborative problem-solving to address learning challenges. These practices

demonstrate improved social competence, which is essential in maintaining a supportive EFL learning environment and promoting community engagement in education.

Collaborative Leadership and the Development of English Teachers' Personal Competence

In addition, the principal's integrity, fairness, and exemplary behavior have contributed to the enhancement of teachers' personal competence. Through collaborative leadership, the principal models professionalism and ethical behavior, inspiring teachers to embody similar values. The study found that English teachers at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang exhibit personal qualities aligned with national education standards—such as emotional stability, maturity, moral integrity, and responsibility. These traits not only strengthen their teaching practice but also position them as role models for students in character development and lifelong learning.

Based on the research findings and supported by relevant educational leadership theories, collaborative school leadership has had a significant positive impact on English teachers' professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies. Teachers reported feeling empowered, respected, and motivated under a leadership model that values their input and promotes teamwork. The principal's collaborative approach has enhanced teacher engagement, teaching performance, and school effectiveness. Ultimately, this leadership practice not only elevates the quality of English language education at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang but also contributes to the broader advancement of EFL teaching and educational excellence within Palembang City and the South Sumatra Province.

3.2 Discussion

The success of any educational institution in achieving its objectives is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to promote collaboration, encourage participation, and optimize available resources to support effective school management. At SMP Negeri 18 Palembang, the principal has demonstrated strong collaborative leadership, which significantly contributes to enhancing teachers' competence, particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. This leadership model fosters a school culture where teachers feel respected, trusted, and empowered to participate in decision-making processes related to instructional and institutional development (Cumbo & Selwyn, 2022; Nurhidayat et al., 2024). As a result, teachers develop a deeper sense of ownership and accountability toward improving both their own professional practice and the school's overall performance.

The findings of this study reveal that collaborative school leadership at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang is manifested through several key practices: cultivating a sense of unity and teamwork among school members, creating open communication channels for teachers to express opinions, addressing teachers' concerns responsively, acknowledging and rewarding performance, and involving teachers in formulating school policies. These actions have strengthened teachers' engagement, motivation, and sense of belonging, leading to meaningful improvements in their teaching competencies. Collaborative leadership has played a central role in advancing teachers' professional competence. A professional English teacher not only possesses subject-matter expertise but also the ability to design learning experiences that reflect creativity, adaptability, and contextual relevance (Martinez, 2022; Pan et al., 2022). Teachers at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang consistently prepare Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP) ahead of each semester, demonstrating improved professionalism and instructional readiness. This practice indicates teachers' growing ability to align their lesson objectives with students' individual needs, promote active learning, integrate reading and writing activities, incorporate digital tools, and provide constructive

feedback (Nafi'a et al., 2022). The principal's collaborative leadership has empowered teachers to refine these competencies through mutual discussion, peer collaboration, and continuous professional reflection.

The study further highlights that pedagogical competence the ability to design, implement, and assess effective learning has also improved under collaborative leadership. Teachers are given autonomy to choose suitable instructional strategies that meet the diverse linguistic needs of students in EFL classrooms (Kanter & Villagra, 2020). By fostering a culture of shared learning and mutual support, the principal has encouraged teachers to apply innovative approaches such as communicative language teaching and task-based learning. This freedom and trust have strengthened teachers' classroom management, improved student engagement, and enhanced the overall effectiveness of learning. As a result, English teachers exhibit higher confidence and creativity in planning and delivering lessons that cater to students' interests, talents, and language development.

Collaborative leadership also contributes to the improvement of teachers' social competence, which involves effective communication and relationship-building with students, colleagues, and parents (Rovio-Johansson, 2020). The principal's empathetic and approachable leadership style has established a familial and harmonious atmosphere within the school community. This environment motivates teachers to maintain open communication with students and parents, particularly in monitoring learning progress and addressing individual challenges. Such interpersonal collaboration enhances mutual understanding and reinforces the collective responsibility for student success (Chan et al., 2018). Consequently, teachers' social competence grows as they become more adept at fostering inclusive and supportive interactions in both academic and community contexts.

Lastly, the research demonstrates that teachers' personal competence has developed significantly through the principal's collaborative leadership approach. Personal competence encompasses emotional stability, maturity, integrity, and the ability to serve as role models for students (Oe et al., 2022; Smith, 2023). The principal's consistent demonstration of professionalism, fairness, and integrity has inspired teachers to emulate these values in their teaching practices and daily conduct. Teachers at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang are increasingly viewed as exemplary figures who exhibit discipline, moral strength, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The findings affirm that collaborative school leadership at SMP Negeri 18 Palembang has a substantial positive impact on English teachers' professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies. By fostering participation, dialogue, and shared responsibility, the principal has succeeded in creating a supportive environment that motivates teachers to grow both professionally and personally. This leadership model not only enhances the quality of EFL instruction but also strengthens the broader educational ecosystem, contributing to sustainable school improvement and educational excellence in Palembang, South Sumatra.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that collaborative school leadership implemented by the principal of SMP Negeri 18 Palembang has made a significant contribution to enhancing English teachers' competencies in EFL classrooms. This collaborative leadership approach emphasizes shared decision-making, open communication, and teamwork among all school members. As a result, teachers are more actively involved in the development of school policies and instructional strategies, which positively influences their pedagogical, social, and

personal competencies. Through collaboration, teachers are better able to design and deliver effective English lessons, manage classroom interactions, and engage students in communicative learning. Additionally, they demonstrate improved professionalism, responsibility, and self-discipline, supported by a school culture that values participation, trust, and mutual respect. Such a collaborative atmosphere encourages continuous professional growth, strengthens teacher motivation, and aligns with the school's overall vision and mission.

The implications of this study are multifaceted. For school principals, adopting a collaborative leadership model is essential in fostering teacher empowerment and improving the quality of English language teaching. Principals who promote teamwork and shared responsibility can create a dynamic environment that nurtures creativity, reflection, and professional development among teachers. For teachers, involvement in collaborative planning and decision-making processes enhances their sense of ownership, accountability, and engagement in improving their teaching practices. Meanwhile, for education policymakers, these findings highlight the importance of encouraging school leadership models that integrate collaboration as a key strategy for improving teacher competence and institutional performance, particularly in EFL contexts.

For future research, it is suggested to examine the long-term effects of collaborative school leadership on both teacher performance and student achievement in English learning. Comparative studies could also be conducted to explore how different leadership styles such as transformational, instructional, or distributed leadership affect teacher competence and classroom effectiveness. Furthermore, incorporating variables such as teacher motivation, school culture, and professional learning communities may offer a more comprehensive perspective on the factors influencing teacher growth. Employing mixed-methods research that integrates quantitative outcomes with qualitative insights would provide a richer understanding of how collaborative leadership shapes teacher development and contributes to sustainable improvement in EFL education.

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