DIFFICULTIES OF PRINCIPALS WITH CARRYING OUT SCHOOL ACTION RESEARCH: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Conducting research is important in supporting the development of an individual and institutional competencies. School action research is considered as a form of school improvement that can be undertaken by school principals. This research examines the difficulties school principals face with carrying out school action research and their impact. This research is a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The participants in this study consisted of 11 school principals in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Purposive sampling technique where participants were determined based on criteria, namely a school principal at one of the Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in Yogyakarta Province who had served at least 4 years. Data collection was done through in-depth interviews and documentation. Data analysis used data reduction procedures, data presentation, and data interpretation. Data validity was carried out using source triangulation by cross-checking back to the informants regarding the questions and answers previously given. The findings of this research conclude that school action research should be carried out by school principals due to several factors. First, principals' knowledge of research needs to be improved. Second, motivation for research should be improved. Third, School principals have not carried out much research due to lack of motivation. Fourth, there are age factors and physical and psychological fatigue, as well as a lack of supporting competence. Fifth, there is a lack of understanding of the benefits of research for schools and a lack of outreach and facilities in conducting research. This research still has limitations regarding research subjects, locations and designs. Future research could overcome the limitations of this study.

Keywords: school principals; school action research; teacher competence

INTRODUCTION

School as an important institution in education has a strategic role. Schools carry out a learning process as determined by national education to develop the potential and abilities of students.[1] Quality output is inseparable from the quality of the school that graduate these students.[2,3]

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[1] Ahmad Hanany Naseh et al., "Implementation Of Religious Learning For Students With Special Education Needs Through Online Applications During The Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology* 100, no. 3 (2022): 690–704.

[2] Janu Arlinwibowo et al., "Differences between Indonesia and Singapore Based on PISA 2015: Five-Factor Students' Perception in Science Education," *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan IPA* 6, no. 1 (2020): 79–87, https://doi.org/10.21831/jipi.v6i1.32637.

[3] Ngoc Hai et al., "Principal Leadership and Teacher Professional Development in a Vietnamese High School for Gifted Students: Perspectives into Practice," *European Journal of Educational Research* 10, no. 4 (October 15, 2021): 1839–51, https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.1839.

Meanwhile, school quality is also inseparable from the critical role of the school principal who oversees the implementation of education as a whole.[4,5] The task and responsibility to improve the standard of all components of school lie with the school principal as leader.[6] Teaching and learning process in school is as equally crucial as developing human resources,[7] establishing policies[8] and other areas.[9,10] Schools' shortcomings and shortfalls are problems that require attention and solutions.[11] School action research, which is carried out by school principals, is one method for identifying solutions.[12] This action research is the study of social situations with the aim of improving the quality of action within them' (school).[13] In action research as a form of professional learning, the research focus is on testing solutions to practical problems, collecting data, analyzing and evaluating.[14]

Some of the problems that often arise are the need for more in-depth knowledge about how to conduct research for school principals. Apart from that, the weakness of

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[4] Sutipyo Ru'iya and Hanif Cahyo Adi Kistoro, "Peningkatakan Kemampuan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Bagi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Sekolah Menengah Pertama Dan Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah Se Kulon Progo," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Karya Husada (JPMKH)* 1, no. 2 (2019): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/u2s57.

[5] Jennifer Lambrecht et al., "The Effect of School Leadership on Implementing Inclusive Education: How Transformational and Instructional Leadership Practices Affect Individualised Education Planning," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 26, no. 9 (July 29, 2022): 943–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1752825.

[6] Tobing Riyanto and Masniar Masniar, "Pengaruh Kompetensi Manajerial Kepala Sekolah Dan Motivasi Guru, Terhadap Prestasi Siswa Sd Negeri Sekecamatan Pulau Rimau," *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 180, https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v4i2.2907.

[7] Agus Dudung, "Kompetensi Profesional Guru," *JKKP (Jurnal Kesejahteraan Keluarga Dan Pendidikan)* 5, no. 1 (2018): 9–19, https://doi.org/10.21009/jkkp.051.02.

[8] Ahmad Sulaiman and Udik Budi Wibowo, "Implementasi Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Internal Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di Universitas Gadjah Mada," *Jurnal Akuntabilitas Manajemen Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2016): 17, https://doi.org/10.21831/amp.v4i1.8197.

[9] Zulkarnain and Hanif cahyo Adi Kistoro, "Model Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Riset Intervensi Pendidikan (JRIP)* 3, no. 1 (2021): 42–49.

[10] Wa De Jong et al., "Leadership Practices in Collaborative Innovation: A Study among Dutch School Principals," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 50, no. 6 (November 2022): 928–44, https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220962098.

[11] Reno Fernandes, "Adaptasi Sekolah Terhadap Kebijakan Pendidikan Inklusif," *Jurnal Socius: Journal of Sociology Research and Education* 4, no. 2 (2018): 119, https://doi.org/10.24036/scs.v4i2.16.

[12] Ebih Ar Arhasy And Yeni Heryani, " Workshop Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Bagi Pengawas Sekolah Dasar Di Kabupaten Tasikmalaya," *Jurnal Siliwangi* 2, No. 2 (2016): 137–40.

[13] Franz Rauch, Regina Steiner, and Peter Kurz, "Action Research for Education for Sustainable Development: The Case of the University in-Service Course 'education for Sustainable Development – Innovations in School and Teacher Education (BINE)*," *Educational Action Research* 30, no. 4 (August 8, 2022): 632–37, https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2021.1971098.

[14] David Godfrey, "From Peer Review to Collaborative Peer Enquiry: Action Research for School Improvement and Leadership Development," *London Review of Education* 18, no. 3 (2020), https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.18.3.04.

identifying problems based on the theme to be studied is also another aspect of issues that often arise. Another factor that is considered to be a problem for school principals is the busy administrative activities at school, which take up time and become a barrier to conducting research.

Research on school action is urgent and it could become an interesting study.[15] because school action research can map the problems faced by schools and help find solutions to the problems.[16] Several researchers have carried out research on this theme, for example research conducted by Pohan and Siregar[17] which examined principal's supervisory role in monitoring teachers. Supervision carried out by the principal can improve the implementation of the teacher's main duties. Supervision can be done in the form of principal and teacher meetings to reflect on the learning process which has an important role in improving the implementation of the teacher's main duties. Research conducted by Imron[18] places more emphasis on increasing teacher professionalism through school action research. The result of the study found that the principal as a manager and supervisor has the main task of guiding and directing teachers with more planned, methodological, systematic and accountable targets.

Research conducted by Susilo[19] provides an overview of the results and shows that school action research can be used to support instruction and learning in school. School action research carried out by the head of the school is aimed at improving their educational services to the community who give confidence to the school by sending their children to the school to be educated there. Improvement could be done by developing their own abilities as well as the ability of teachers and all school personnel to provide educational services. The school principal could invite teachers to inquire about how to

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[15] Dona Aji Karunia Putra, "Tingkat Keterampilan Menulis Karya Ilmiah Pada Guru-Guru Mi Dalam Program Dual Mode System Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan Uin Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta," *Al-Bidayah:Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 8, No. 1 (2016): 13–26.

[16] Esti Setiawati and Sunarti, "Training Class Action Research, School Action Research and Writing of Scientific Articles for Teachers and Principals of Basic School in Banyuurip Purworejo," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1823, no. 1 (March 1, 2021): 012021, https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1823/1/012021.

[17] Nirwana Pohan And Yulia Elfrida Yanty Siregar, "Peran Supervisi Kepala Sekolah Terhadap Pelaksanaan Tugas Pokok Guru: Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, N.D.

[18] Ali Imron, "Peningkatan Keprofesionalan Guru Oleh Kepala Sekolah Melalui Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah," N.D.

[19] Herawati Susilo, "Pemanfaatan Kemampuan Melaksanakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas/ Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Untuk Menunjang Proses Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Sains* 3, no. 2 (2012): 81–102.

teach their students by forming a professional learning community (PLC), and one way is by implementing school-based lesson study (LSBS).

Conducting research is the obligation of school principals to improve the quality of the school, but also to meet the requirements for.[20,21] The main obstacle faced by school principals is that only a few can carry out school action research. This is certainly a major problem because lack of school action research may correlate with little effort to improve managerial and operational aspects of the school. The constraints and difficulties faced by the principal could also impact the school quality as a whole.

The quality of the principal reflects the quality of the institution.[22] This viewpoint argues that a school principal plays a crucial part in the development of a school. The management of the school might also represent the quality of the school. The standard of instruction in school may depend on how well the principal manages.[23,24] As a way of enhancing the required knowledge and abilities, school principals must also possess a variety of competences.[25] Administrative and operational skills that school principals possess could be sufficient to direct, enhance, and give effective and efficient targets in attaining school goals and enhancing school quality.

In the context of education, the principal is one of the central figures that cannot be separated from the school development.[26] According to government regulations

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[20] Oktarina Puspita Wardani et al., "Pelatihan Penulisan Karya Tulis Ilmiah Bagi Guru-Guru SD Di Desa Geneng Kabupaten Jepara," *Indonesian Journal of Community Services* 1, no. 1 (2019): 116, https://doi.org/10.30659/ijocs.1.1.116-125.

[21] Somprach Kanokorn, Popoonsak Pongtorn, and Tang Keow Ngang, "Collaborative Action Professional Development of School Principals," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116 (February 2014): 77–81, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.171.

[22] Zelvi Fitriani, "Strategi Guru PAI Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Membaca Dan Menghafal Al-Qur'an Pada Siswa Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri 31 Pagaralam," *Muaddib: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (2018): 53–62, https://doi.org/10.19109/muaddib.v1i1.3045.

[23] Srisai Ponsombut, Somprach Kanokorn, and Sombatteera Sujanya, "Factors Affecting Charismatic Leadership of Primary Schools Principals," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 112 (February 2014): 962–67, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1255.

[24] Aydin Balyer, Hakan Karatas, and Bulent Alci, "School Principals' Roles in Establishing Collaborative Professional Learning Communities at Schools," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 197 (July 2015): 1340–47, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.387.

[25] Nindiasari Agung Pangesti, "Elementary School Teachers' Science Literacy Capabilities In Diy And Their Implementation In Preparation For The Asesmen Standardisasi Pendidikan Daerah (Aspd)," *Al Bidayah* 14, No. 2 (2022): 331–43.

[26] Wessam Al Chibani and Pascale Hajal- Al Chibani, "Leadership Styles of School Principals in Lebanon: Multiple Case Study," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 93 (October 2013): 174–76, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.09.173.

regarding school principals,[27] principals are teachers whose key responsibilities are leading and managing education units which include kindergarten, special needs kindergarten, elementary school, special needs elementary school, junior high school, special needs junior high school, senior high school, vocational high school, special needs high school, or Indonesian school abroad.

School principals are selected based on predetermined criteria. The government regulations may indicate that the government has made an effort to improve the quality of public schools by hiring competent principals. These principals can properly perform all of their duties, obligations, and responsibilities because of the quality and competence they possess.[28]

More specifically, it is necessary to increase the competency of school principals to carry out school action research to determine and improve the quality of school in general. A study conducted by school principals is beneficial in identifying school needs and evaluating learning activities, improving teacher quality, developing curriculum, and others. Research conducted in the academic world is helpful in improving education.[29]

The fundamental problem often found among primary and secondary schools is an underdeveloped research culture.[30] In contrast, research conducted at the tertiary level is an obligation that the academic community must carry out. Research is often seen as a burden and difficult to conduct.[31] Principals and teachers rarely participate in research projects for knowledge development, indicating that research is less common than teaching. Other problems that arise can also be caused by research that is not carried out properly in school. Apart from that, the challenge faced in the educational transition is

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[27] Kementerian pendidikan dan kebudayaan, "Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2018 Tentang Penugasan Guru Sebagai Kepala Sekolah," Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan § (2018).

[28] Deni Suhandani and Julia Kartawinata, "Identifikasi Kompetensi Guru Sebagai Cerminan Profesionalisme Tenaga Pendidik Di Kabupaten Sumedang (Kajian Pada Kompetensi Pedagogik)," *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar* 1, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.17509/mimbar-sd.v1i2.874.

[29] Jaco Janse Van Vuuren and Francois Van Der Bank, "The Development of a Behavioural Competency Framework for School Principals," *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 49 (February 28, 2023), https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v49i0.2050.

[30] Arif Wicaksa, "Pelatihan Penulisan Ilmiah Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Keterampilan Menulis Ilmiah," *PLAKAT (Pelayanan Kepada Masyarakat)* 1, no. 1 (2019): 8, https://doi.org/10.30872/plakat.v1i1.2690.

[31] Pete Wright, "Developing an Empowering School Curriculum: A Renewed Focus on Action Research," *London Review of Education* 18, no. 3 (2020), https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.18.3.01.

that most teachers are less reflective, critical and innovative in their practice and this has an impact on their ability to apply action research.[32]

School action research carried out by the school principal at the primary education level can serve as an evaluation and improvement effort in school management. school action research is essential in helping school principals improve school quality in terms of learning and school management in general. The main objective of this school action research is to improve schools' quality. The principal must find the best way to achieve it.

Identical to classroom action research (CAR) conducted by teachers, school action research (SAR) is in principle a form of reflection and improvement in the quality of school. SAR specifically functions as a medium for school principals to improve the quality of school management and school in general. SAR can identify the weaknesses and shortcomings of schools in managerial and operational practices, and a more innovative and comprehensive way of thinking and planning the necessary corrective actions. Furthermore, SAR can be a tool for school principals to meet the requirements for improving their career development opportunities. This means that the principal must also have the eligibility for promotion and class. Advancement of the school principal's rank and class may directly affect the level of income earned following applicable regulations. One of the requirements for a promotion that the principal must fulfil is the implementation of research or research whose results are published in a scientific journal. This study aims to analyze the difficulties of school principals face with carrying out school action research and their impact on school development and progress. School as an important institution in education has a strategic role. Schools carry out a learning process to develop the potential and abilities of students that have been determined by national education[33]. Quality output is inseparable from the quality of the school that

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[32] Gladys Ayaya, Tsediso Michael Makoelle, and Martyn Van Der Merwe, "Participatory Action Research: A Tool for Enhancing Inclusive Teaching Practices Among Teachers in South African Full-Service Schools," *SAGE Open* 10, no. 4 (October 2020): 215824402096357, https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020963576.

[33] Naseh et al., "Implementation Of Religious Learning For Students With Special Education Needs Through Online Applications During The Covid-19 Pandemic."

graduate the students.[34] Meanwhile, school quality is also inseparable from the critical role of the school principal who oversees the implementation of education as a whole.[35,36]

The school principal, the highest leader in school, has the duty and responsibility to improve the quality of all existing elements.[37] Both strengthening human resources [38] and policy development[39] are crucial, and equally important is the implementation of the learning process in schools.[40] Problems and challenges faced by schools are issues that need to be solved and addressed.[41] One way of finding the solution is school action research conducted by school principals.[42]

Because the selection of school principals is based on predetermined criteria, the selection of school principals requires specific criteria that have been determined so that not all teachers meet these requirements. This shows that the government has made efforts to improve the quality of schools by selecting qualified and competent school principals. A competent school principal can carry out all his obligations and responsibilities effectively.[43,44]

Primary and secondary schools frequently suffer from an underdeveloped research culture. Research, as opposed to that carried out at the tertiary level, is a duty that the academic community must fulfill.[45] Research is still frequently perceived as being burdensome and challenging.

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[34] Arlinwibowo et al., "Differences between Indonesia and Singapore Based on PISA 2015: Five-Factor Students' Perception in Science Education."

[35] Ru'iya and Kistoro, "Peningkatakan Kemampuan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Bagi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Sekolah Menengah Pertama Dan Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah Se Kulon Progo."

[36] Arismunandar, "Competency of Elementary Schools Principals in Supporting the Standardization of Leadership in Education," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1028 (June 2018): 012184, https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1028/1/012184.

[37] Riyanto and Masniar, "Pengaruh Kompetensi Manajerial Kepala Sekolah Dan Motivasi Guru, Terhadap Prestasi Siswa Sd Negeri Sekecamatan Pulau Rimau."

[38] Dudung, "Kompetensi Profesional Guru."

[39] Sulaiman and Wibowo, "Implementasi Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Internal Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di Universitas Gadjah Mada."

[40] Zulkarnain and Kistoro, "Model Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Di Sekolah Dasar."

[41] Fernandes, "Adaptasi Sekolah Terhadap Kebijakan Pendidikan Inklusif."

[42] Arhasy And Heryani, " Workshop Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Bagi Pengawas Sekolah Dasar Di Kabupaten Tasikmalaya."

[43] Suhandani and Kartawinata, "Identifikasi Kompetensi Guru Sebagai Cerminan Profesionalisme Tenaga Pendidik Di Kabupaten Sumedang (Kajian Pada Kompetensi Pedagogik)."

[44] Marit Aas and Kirsten Foshaug Vennebo, "Building Leadership Capacity in School Leadership Groups: An Action Research Project," *Educational Action Research* 31, no. 2 (March 15, 2023): 348–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2021.1934710.

[45] Wicaksa, "Pelatihan Penulisan Ilmiah Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Keterampilan Menulis Ilmiah."

The aforementioned background show that school principals' capacity and competency in conducting school action research are designed to expand their knowledge and proficiency in administrative and operational aspects. The ability to identify needs based on shortcomings and barriers could help address them administratively. Operations are also designed to help schools meet their learning implementation goals.

Researchers have studied school action research in different manners and places. Research conducted by Basri, for example, studied school action research for elementary school principals in Gowa District. This study emphasizes research objectives which are providing training materials for classroom action research. The results of the study found that the participants of the training, who were subjects of the study, could identify the problems and develop school action research proposals.[46]

Research conducted by Arhasy concerns the demands for the qualifications and competencies of school supervisors. The study reported the implementation of action research in fulfilling their functions and maintain their authority. They were required to produce scientific writings based on the results of the school action research. Thirty out of 115 elementary school supervisors in Tasikmalaya District experienced difficulties with increasing their level from IVa to IVb due to their lack of ability to carry out school action research, which was a major hindrance to them. Therefore, it was necessary to assist them in the preparation of school action research proposals. The aim of holding a school action research (SAR) workshop was to help elementary school supervisors in Tasikmalaya District understand how to carry out school action research. The results of the training showed that the participants showed interest [47] and the ability of the supervisors to design school action research proposals improved.

Similar research has been conducted by Nitiasih. [48] In this research, school supervisors and principals in Buleleng were given a reflective training to develop their competence in carrying out school action research. This study found that there was an

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[46] Syamsurijal Basri, Muh Ardiansyah, And Irmawati, "Best Practice Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah," In *Seminar Nasional Hasil Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat "Peluang Dan Tantangan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Yang Inovatif Di Era Kebiasaan Baru"* (Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang, 2018), 369–72.

[47] Ricardo Ricardo and Rini Intansari Meilani, "Impak Minat Dan Motivasi Belajar Terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa," *Jurnal Pendidikan Manajemen Perkantoran* 2, no. 2 (2017): 79, https://doi.org/10.17509/jpm.v2i2.8108.

[48] Putu Kerti Nitiasih, "Pelatihan Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Melalui Implementasi Reflective Model Pada Pengawas Dan Kepala Sekolah Sd Di Kecamatan Buleleng," *Jurnal Widya Laksana* 3, no. 1 (2017): 87, https://doi.org/10.23887/jwl.v3i1.9154.

increase in the competence of school principals and supervisors in identifying school problems, finding solutions and preparing school action research proposals.

Research on school action research was also conducted by Tolla[49] in Gowa District. The aim was to help improve knowledge and understanding of school supervisors and principals of the implementation of school action research because one of the obligations and duties of school heads and supervisors was improving school quality by conducting school action research.

The results of Susilo's research[50] on classroom action research/ school action research to support the education and learning process are aimed to improve the school's educational services to the students, notably helping students realize their full potential by creating an optimal learning environment for them. SAR is research carried out by head of school to improve the school's services to the community who give confidence to the school by sending their children to the school to be educated. Improvement is done by developing their own abilities, as well as the teachers and all school personnel's abilities to provide services. Principals conduct SAR by inviting the teachers to take part in a discussion to inquire about how to teach their students by forming a professional learning community (PLC), and one way is by implementing a school-based lesson study (LSBS). Teachers conduct CAR by at least collaborating with another teacher who teaches the same subject. Teachers can also improve the quality of their CAR by implementing lesson study-based CAR.

School action research conducted by Rahyasih[51] noted the significant role of school human resources (HR) in educational institutions, and they are considered the main instrument for achieving academic goals and even national development. This research aimed to improve the competence of school human resources in conducting school action research (SAR) and preparing research proposals. This research, which was in the form of community service, was carried out in collaboration with the Bandung City Education Office, and the participants were supervisors and principals of junior high schools in

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[49] Ismail Tolla, Abdul Hamid, and Lukman Hb, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Penulisan Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Bagi Pengawas Dan Kepala Sekolah Dasar," in *Semianr Nasional Hasil Pengabdian 2021 :Penguatan Riset, Inovasi, Dan Kreativitas Peneliti Di Era Pandemi Covid-19* (Universitas Negeri Malang, 2021), 856–60.

[50] Susilo, "Pemanfaatan Kemampuan Melaksanakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas/ Penelitian Tindakan Sekolah Untuk Menunjang Proses Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Di Sekolah."

[51] Yayah Rahyasih Et Al., "Peningkatan Kompetensi Sdm Sekolah Melalui Penelitian Tindakan," *Jurnal Pasca Dharma Pengabdian* 3, No. 3 (2022): 59–67.

Bandung City. The results of the research found that community service activities were carried out online (synchronous and asynchronous) through Zoom Cloud Meetings, WhatsApp Groups, Email and Google Forms. The activities involved training and mentoring which consisted of planning, implementation and evaluation stages. The outcome of the training and mentoring programs was an action research agreement which was reached between principals and the formulation of a school action research (SAR) proposal to address the problems the school faced.

Based on the above review of the existing literature, the research carried out by previous researchers is different from our research, which aims to determine the obstacles and difficulties of school principals with carrying out school action research. This research will look at the causes and factors that cause school principals rarely conduct school action research despite the obligation of school principals to conduct research as part of identifying problems faced by schools, find solutions of these problems, meet the requirement for promotion, and show professionalism.

This research explains a gap regarding the obligations of school principals in research as a requirement for increasing competence. Meanwhile, in the field, almost the majority of school principals still need to carry out research. New things that emerge from this research will also describe the obstacles school principals face in carrying out school action research and solutions to the problems. Even though this research theme is exciting to study, only a few other researchers have checked it to develop the competence of school principals in carrying out research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. This research was carried out for six months, namely July to December 2022. The research subjects were 11 school principals at Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in several areas in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province: Yogyakarta City, Sleman, Kulon Progo, Bantul and Gunung Kidul. Sample selection based on Purposive sampling technique where participants determined based on criteria, namely a school principal at one of the Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in Yogyakarta Province who had served at least 4 years. The demographic profile of participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic profile of informants

Initial of Participant	Duty	School level	Highest Education Qualifications	Region
NV	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Yogyakarta City
TR	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Yogyakarta City
YM	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Kulon Progo
RB	Headmaster	Elementary school	Bachelor's degree	Kulon Progo
KD	Headmaster	Elementary school	Bachelor's degree	Kulon Progo
RM	Headmaster	Elementary school	Bachelor's degree	Kulon Progo
WR	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Bantul
NR	Headmaster	Elementary school	Bachelor's degree	Bantul
DD	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Sleman
NT	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Sleman
US	Headmaster	Elementary school	Masters	Gunung Kidul
SC	Headmaster	Elementary school	Bachelor's degree	Gunung Kidul

Source: Personal Documents

There were several stages in the implementation of this research. This research began with coordination with the research subjects. After consent to collect data was obtained, an instrument was made for data collection. We used interviews, which were in accordance with the protocol of instruments, to collect data. Another instrument used in data collection is documentation. Brief data about the instrument can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Type of data collection instrument

Data collection techniques	Instrument	Question
Interview	Structured Interview Guide	1. How long has the respondent been a school principal 2. Do you know about school action research? 3. What advantages do you have when conducting school action research? 4. What obstacles are faced when carrying out school action research? 5. What hopes do school principals have for improving the quality of school action research?
Documentation	Check List	1. How much school action research has been carried out? 2. How many journal publications have been published?

Source: Personal Documents

The time and place of the interviews were decided based on the agreement that had been made. After collecting the data, data analysis underwent three main stages: data reduction, data presentation and interpretation.[52]

The instrument validation process went through a discussion stage with experts where the points included in the interview questions were agreed upon. There are two experts requested in preparing validation, namely experts in research methods and experts in the field of language. Expert review and revision become a validation tool for the instrument used.

Meanwhile, to maintain the validity of the research results, data triangulation was used based on sources. Where the interview results that have been analyzed are asked the respondent whether there has been a change in the results obtained. If there are no significant changes, then the results are considered valid. This is to double-check the accuracy of the data obtained based on the interview results. It is considered good if no significant changes are found in the cross-check data. The final data analysis is to interpret the meaning found based on the central theme coding that has been carried out. These main themes are then used as an overall picture to explain the research results.

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[52] Mathew B Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Barriers for school principals in conducting school action research

Research objectives, including those in school action research, have some targets to be achieved. However, in the process of achieving these targets, there are obstacles during planning, implementation, and writing and publication of the results of the research.

The following is a detailed explanation of the difficulties faced by school principals with designing and conducting school action research. We found that each research location showed some similarities and differences in practice. The results of the research analysis found several root causes of the difficulties with conducting research and how they had an impact on school development. The first was the need of knowledge about research methodology that could support the creation of research designs. Second, administrative duties of the school principal were time-consuming. Third, mental and physical strengths were needed. Fourth, more activities and assistance for school principals in the development of research were needed.

The four factors above can be found in some of the interviews that had been conducted with the participants. YM explained:

> "For me, school action research is quite a strenuous activity. Because firstly the principal must be physically and psychologically strong while I am no longer young. Many activities at school itself are time-consuming and that's the cause. Second, time to do research that is not fixed. Even so, I have conducted three research projects and published two. Because I realize that as a form of development, principals also need to conduct research."

School action research according to the government law must be carried out as part of performance improvement. A problem that often arises is school principals who are busy with administrative work. This condition makes it difficult for school principals to manage time, as expressed by Mrs. NV from the city of Yogyakarta:

> "All this time, as a school principal, I realize that conducting research, especially school action research, is an obligation. Because apart from being an administrative requirement for promotion it is also a way to find solutions to problems in the learning process, improve teacher abilities, and other developments. I have time constraints and also a lack of knowledge on how to do research. This is my main obstacle."

Mr. WR took a slightly different view. He said:

> "So far I have been given information about the importance of school action research. Because it usually becomes report material too. However, so far I still have many obstacles, the most important of which is the motivation to do research. Because there is a lot of work as a school principal, and sometimes I become lazy because I am tired, apart from that I also have to manage my time and maximize it."

Mrs. NT gave her view on the problem of school action research for school principals, in which she said:

> "I have conducted research three times, but the results of the research have not been published because I need to learn how to publish them first. Meanwhile, if we want to publish them as books or modules, we sometimes feel that we still need money and need to know how to write well according to the rules. While we feel that a lot of time is consumed by work as a school principal. So yes, the research that has been done has been completed but nothing has been done."

Another important explanation was also given by Mr. AS. According to him:

> "As the principal of a school in a remote suburban area, I have very little information. Lack of teachers in our school has made us focus more on the learning process. So, for research, we have never done it. Besides that, we need to learn how to do research. That is our biggest obstacle."

Based on the results of the interviews above, there were two factors that made the principals struggle to carry out school action research, namely internal and external factors. Many principals personally needed to gain the knowledge of designing and conducting research. In addition, they also had limited time because of their duties as a school principal. The most significant internal factor was lack of motivation in conducting research, which could be caused by physical and mental fatigue and large amount of work. Age could also be a barrier to research. Elderly school principals tended to have limitations in work performance.

Apart from these internal factors, another root cause of difficulties for school principals to conduct research was limited information about the benefits and uses of school action research for school principals for administrative purposes, school development and finding solutions to school problems. Many school principals should be aware that one of the requirements for promotion is to have research results and scientific papers published. This may also result in less intensive research activities. The other factor was competence in designing, implementing, reporting and publishing research results.

Although the interview findings revealed many difficulties for school principals in conducting research, data analysis also found that young school principals still have high enthusiasm for conducting research. They are aware of the importance of research and scientific work. Additionally, because some of them have a higher level of education, they have more understanding and information about research and its impact on their personal and professional development.

Impact of teacher's difficulties with school action research

The problems faced by school principals in carrying out research had some consequences, as revealed by Mr. TR who explained that:

> "As a principal who is quite old, I have limitations in conducting research... well, if I don't do research, I can't report anything. It affects performance as well. We were given information several times from the superintendent also to conduct research and scientific work, but well, because of limited knowledge and did not know how to do it, so we did not do it."

Issues related to old age may also influence school action research activities for school principals who approached retirement. Older people may lack enthusiasm and their physical and mental abilities may subtly be reduced. This is in line with a statement from Mrs. RB:

> "I'm nearing retirement as a principal, so sometimes I don't have much enthusiasm. So indeed age and physical limitations have prevented me from doing research. Well.. as a consequence, I can't apply for a higher promotion."

Mr. SC also had a similar view. He noted:

> "If we are in a small school, we do have many problems in managing the school... for example, the number of students we have is still limited or few. Teachers are also limited. Therefore sometimes we still prioritize school management so that the number of students can increase every year or at least the number of registered students is stable. So for research, we are aware and admit that we have never done it. Yes.. as a result our school couldn't improve, unlike other high-performing schools."

Based on the analysis and the findings above, there are several root causes of teachers' difficulties with conducting research. Principals who have better abilities and knowledge could help improve the school, one of which is by conducting research. Motivated school principals who are able to conduct research and make scientific work are more dynamic and active in managing schools. On the other hand, school principals who have not fostered self-development, such as through research and scientific work,

have not shown many achievements. The causes of the difficulties of school principals in conducting school action research both internally and externally and the effects they have is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Root causes of difficulties for school principals with conducting research and their impact

Causative factor	Causal aspects	The impact of research difficulties
Internal	1. Lack of motivation 2. Ability to design research 3. Age 4. Physical and mental exhaustion 5. Lack of competence	1. Little information is available 2. Competencies are not developed 3. Difficult to compete with principals or other schools
External	1. Unaware of the benefits of research 2. Lack of outreach and training in conducting research for school principals 3. Lack of support for principals who want to publish their research	1. Promotion is hampered 2. Not used to doing research 3. Few research results and publications

Source: Personal Documents

Based on the analysis and research findings, several factors cause difficulties regarding the implementation of school action research by school principals. These factors also have an impact on the performance of school action research.

Difficulties Faced by School Principals in Carrying Out School Action Research

To date, research for school principals and teachers has been considered a secondary activity. This means that the principals or teachers prioritize teaching and learning, and school management in general. The principal functions more as the head of all others in school. Ideally, the school principal is also responsible to improve individual abilities and find the best preparation for school development. Principals who have a broad knowledge base, sufficient competence and also high motivation are likely to encourage the full development of all school elements. Such school principals are usually more active and dynamic in finding ways and solutions to the problems they encounter at school. These difficulties may relate to teachers, students and the school environment.

Principals in Yogyakarta Province have different abilities and strategies for developing their schools. Their personal and professional development as a school

principal also varies. According to the government regulations, research and scientific work in is one aspect of principal assessment. This means that principals are also required to develop their competence in doing research because it is one of the indicators and requirements for a promotion. As research and scientific work are worth high score, school principals are required by the government to constantly enhance their abilities to support their work as a school principal who can manage the school and find solutions to the problems that occur. One way to develop a solution is through school action research which can help seek information about the teaching process, teaching strategies and existing teacher competencies.

Impact of Difficulties with Conducting School Action Research

Research can be carried out regularly if principals know how to design, implement and report research results.[53] In addition, the school principals should be aware of their duties and obligations as a school principal who can set a good example and contribute to school improvement through the research conducted. Inability to create a systematic and detailed research design and to make research more sustainable may greatly hamper the research process. The impact is that the school principals may not be able to develop their competencies optimally. Research must contain elements of novelty, innovation and solution to existing problems[54]. Another benefit of good and regular research, and routine publications is that they may also contribute to the school principal's performance report as a requirement for promotion. Implementation of the research can also provide added knowledge and competencies for school principals, which can become a reference in solving school problems. Research activities that have become school culture will help improve the quality of the school because all members of the school community play an active role in seeking out new findings for school improvement.

Although research can hone and develop the abilities of school principals, it is necessary to pay attention to the obstacles encountered to minimize problems in designing and conducting research. Principals can analyze the problems that can be used as research themes that may improve their quality as principals which will indirectly affect the quality

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[53] Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54, https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075.

[54] Diand Mardiana and Euis Rabiatul Awaliah, "Pengembangan Tts (Tabel Tenses Sederhana) Sebagai Alat Bantu Metode Drilling Pembelajaran Berbicara Bahasa Inggris," *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA* 6, no. 2 (2020): 568–79, https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v6i2.582.

of the school. Research with a directed design requires adaptation to be carried out properly. A clearer picture of the research results is portrayed in Figure 1.
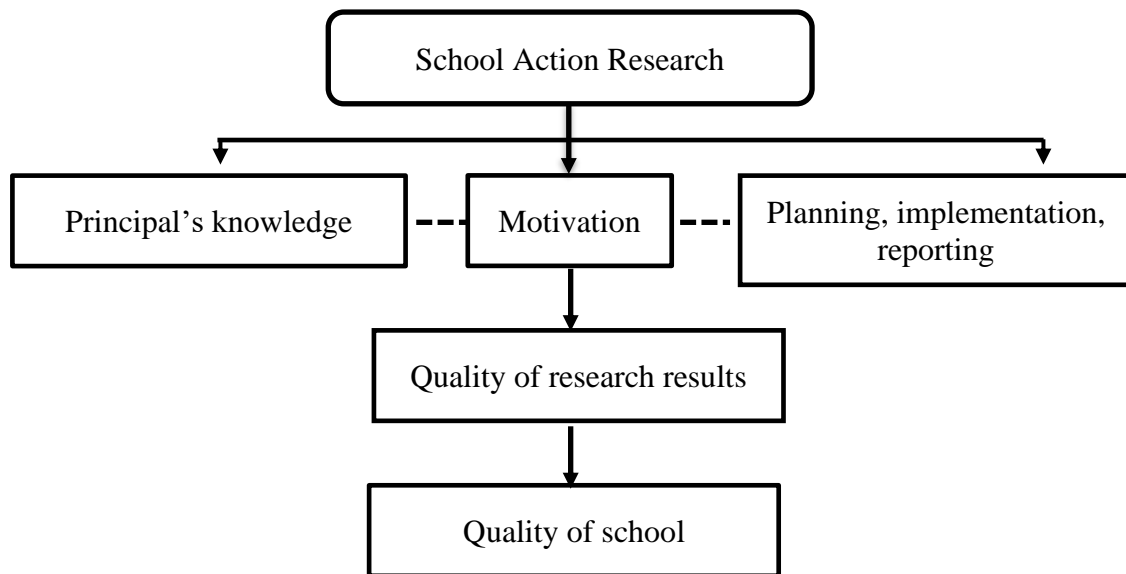

Figure 1
School action research targets
Source: Personal Documents

Figure 1 shows that in implementing school action research, it is important to have the core competencies: knowledge of basic research methodology, ability to analyze problems, research design skills, and no less important is motivation to carry out research.

CONCLUSION

This research has identified the root causes of difficulties in school research and their impact on schools. It can be concluded that school action research needs to be carried out by school principals regularly. This will encourage school principals to make improvements in school management through school action research. The impact of this research will be able to provide solutions and solutions to problems in schools. School principals must increase their motivation to conduct research based on their ability to design study. Age, physical and mental fatigue, and general lack of experience and competence can be inhibiting factors in implementing school action research. Apart from these factors, a deeper understanding of the benefits of research for schools needs to be improved. Apart from that, the need for outreach and training to school principals regarding investigations and the limited facilities for publishing research results also require activities to overcome this.

The results of this research can serve as a guide for developing subsequent analyses with the same theme. Apart from that, it can also be a basis for school principals who design and carry out school action research.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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