

The Role of Talent Management Mediated by Incentives in Improving the Principals Performance in Vocational or High School in Aceh

Chaidir^{1*}, Marzuki², Akmal³, Afrizal⁴, Ijal Fahmi⁵

¹²³⁴Doctoral Student of Management Science, Faculty of Economics and Business,
Universitas Syiah Kuala, Indonesia

⁵Faculty of Economics, Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: chaidir_se.mm@yahoo.com

Abstract. *This research is an explanatory study that uses a qualitative approach in assessing the role of talent management in improving the performance of principals in high schools / vocational schools in Aceh, focusing on managerial skills, leadership, communication, and innovation. This research is based on a review of related literature involving an in-depth analysis of concepts related to talent management, talent identification, talent development, talent retention, performance measurement, organizational culture development, and the role of incentives as mediating elements. The results of this study provide deeper insight into the role of talent management in the context of education in Aceh and can be the basis for improving talent management policies and practices in an effort to improve the leadership quality of school principals in SMA/SMK.*

Keywords: *talent management, incentives, principal performance, high school, vocational school*

1. Introduction

Education has a very important role in the development of a country (Widiansyah, 2017), and one of the main elements in the education system is the school principal. The principal has a very big duty and responsibility in maintaining the quality of education in a school. They are leaders in the educational environment and are responsible for various aspects of school management from administration and resource management to efforts to improve the quality of teaching. In Aceh, as in many other regions, vocational high schools (SMK) and high schools (SMA) play an important role in producing young people who are ready to contribute to regional and state development. Therefore, improving the performance of school principals in SMK/SMA in Aceh is very important and strategic.

Talent management is one of the key aspects in ensuring that school leaders have the necessary qualities and capacities to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Talent in this case includes a wide range of abilities, knowledge, and resources needed by the principal to lead the school effectively. However, there have not been many studies examining the relationship between talent management and the performance of school principals in Aceh, as well as the incentive role as mediators in these relationships.

Aceh, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, has various challenges in the education sector. To overcome these challenges, qualified and competent school leaders are key. Talent management is a strategic approach that focuses on the identification, development, and use of talent within organizations, including in the school context. Effective talent management can help ensure that school leaders have abilities that match their duties and responsibilities.

Talent management in education involves the process of identifying talents,

developing them through training and experience, as well as deciding appropriate placement to maximize their contribution in achieving school goals. The implementation of good talent management will enable the principal to have a strong management team, skilled teachers, as well as school staff who can support the effective management of the school. In accordance with Noho et al. (2022) opinion, interest and development planning training talents can be applied through making work program plans, giving direction regarding the implementation of assigned work, and giving instructions instructions for evaluating activities that have been implemented.

In addition to talent management, intensive also has a significant role in improving the performance of principals. Incentive in this context can be in the form of financial rewards, recognition of good achievements, or various other incentives that can motivate principals to improve their performance. Incentive can be a powerful driver to increase the motivation and commitment of principals in carrying out their duties. This is in accordance with the opinion of Josiah (2021), stating the importance of an intensive role in improving the performance of an organization's employees.

This study aims to explain and analyze the role of talent management mediated by incentives in improving the performance of school principals in SMK/SMA in Aceh. In this context, talent management includes the process of identifying, developing, and using existing talents in schools. Incentive is one of the components that can motivate principals to make performance improvements, and can be an intermediary that strengthens the relationship between talent management and principal performance. This research is expected to provide significant benefits in various aspects of education in Aceh.

2. Method

The research approach used in this study is based on a literature study relevant to the topic "The Role of Talent Management Mediated by Incentives in Improving the Performance of School Principals in Vocational / Senior High School in Aceh". The literature study becomes the basis for detailing the methodological framework to be used. The research methodology in this paper was explanatory research design. This design was very suitable because this study aimed to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables studied. The relationship includes the role of talent management on the principal's performance mediated by incentive.

The methodology also includes data analysis that is based on concepts and techniques that have been outlined in related literature. Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to provide an overview of talent management practices, incentives, and performance of principals in vocational schools in Aceh.

3. Results and Discussions

Principal's Managerial Ability

Talent management is a key element in improving the performance of school principals in high schools in Aceh. In this context, talent management encompasses a set of practices designed to identify, develop, and utilize individual talents and abilities in schools. Effective principal performance in talent management can have a positive impact on the efficiency, productivity, and quality of education in their institution.

While managerial ability refers to skills in managing operations, including planning, organization, supervision, and assessment. This managerial ability is closely related to the success of the programs implemented in the school. This is because every program in the school depends heavily on the principal's ability to plan and manage school

operations. Strong managerial skills can produce optimal results in the implementation of school programs (Kefi, et al., 2022). Teacher performance can improve along with the improvement of the principal's managerial ability, teacher motivation, and better working environment conditions. Conversely, if the principal's managerial ability, teacher motivation, and working environment conditions decrease, teacher performance will also decrease (Cahyaningrum, 2020).

The use of talent management practices, such as employee talent recognition, talent relationship management, talent development, and career development is a key factor in maintaining employee engagement levels (Mende & Dewi, 2021). Talent Identification is the first stage in talent management. Talent identification involves the introduction of individuals in the school who have leadership potential and superior managerial abilities. A smart principal will observe and assess his staff to identify these talents. This includes their ability to manage resources, overcome challenges, and lead effectively. By identifying existing talents in the school, the headmaster can initiate steps to develop this potential.

Talent Development is the next step in talent management. Talent development involves the process of selecting and coaching individuals who are considered to have potential in the organization, intending to develop them into valuable assets for the company. Individuals who have this potential are often classified as a talent pool. After identification, the principal needs to provide appropriate support and training to develop these talents. This could involve specialized training in resource management, school finance, strategic planning, and leadership skills. Training programs that focus on developing managerial abilities can help staff to improve their competence in managing administrative, human resources, and financial tasks in schools.

To retain employees, companies must improve the physical, mental, and attitude of employees so that they remain productive and loyal, even in stressful work situations, with the aim of achieving company goals (Rahmawati, 2019). Hence, talent retention is also an important factor in talent management. Principals who successfully identify and develop talent within their schools need to ensure that talented staff remain at the school. This involves creating a positive work environment, recognizing of staff contributions, as well as offering enticing incentives and career opportunities. When talented staff feel valued and have opportunities for growth, they are more likely to stay and contribute sustainably to the school.

In addition, based on Rifai, et al., (2021), talented employees tend to be more interested in companies that recognize their value and provide opportunities for growth. By using continuous feedback throughout the year, both top-down and bottom-up, based on performance, companies can address mismatches in business capabilities. Performance measurement is a way to evaluate the impact of talent management practices that have been implemented. Performance measurement includes evaluating school performance in various aspects, such as student academic results, management of school resources, and relationships with staff and parents. Objective performance measurement helps principals to assess the extent to which talent management efforts have affected their leadership effectiveness. When performance improves, it is a positive indication that talent management practices have been successful.

The development of organizational culture is also very important in talent management. Applied talent management has a focus on performance and growth, and this is done collaboratively. In Belgium, universities describe talent inclusively, which includes all staff and faculty members as part of the organization's talent (Zulkarnain,

2021). Principals need to create a culture in schools that supports talent development, cooperation, and innovative thinking. A positive and inclusive organizational culture creates an environment where managerial capabilities can develop optimally. In addition, an organizational culture that encourages recognition and cooperation between staff can strengthen team work and facilitate individual growth.

In this context, incentives act as an element of mediation. Incentives can provide additional impetus for staff to continually improve their managerial abilities. Financial incentives, such as bonuses or special benefits, can recognize improved managerial ability and be an encouragement for staff to continually improve their performance. Incentives provided fairly and transparently can motivate staff to achieve better results and maximize the influence of talent management practices. This is supported by the research findings of Sugiarto et al., (2023) that the implementation of training to improve the competence of school principals and the provision of incentives together have a positive impact on the work motivation of school principals. Through the provision of incentives to school principals, it is hoped that it will contribute significantly to improving the overall quality of education. This incentive is expected to provide positive benefits in material terms to school principals (Noviyanti & Paraniti, 2019).

In this overall context, effective talent management in the identification, development, retention, performance measurement, and development of organizational culture can play a role in improving the managerial capabilities of principals. These practices, when combined with the right incentives, can help create an environment where principals can be more effective in leading and managing their schools. Thus, good talent management practices can contribute significantly to improving the performance of principals in high schools in Aceh.

Leadership Ability

Talent management has a very significant role in improving the leadership ability of school principals in high schools / vocational schools in Aceh. In this context, talent management refers to a set of practices designed to identify, develop, and utilize individual talents and abilities within an educational organization. The principal's performance is strongly influenced by how talent management is applied in this context. The influence of the principal's leadership on teacher performance is related to his or her ability to create a school environment that can encourage or hinder the effectiveness of teacher work. As a leader in the world of education, school principals have a very important role in leading and encouraging the smooth process of education (Juniarti et al., 2020). Thus, the success of a school basically depends on the effectiveness of its leader, namely the principal (Tonich, 2021). Therefore, the principal needs to have strong leadership qualities to ensure the success of the school. In fact, according to De Bruyn and Mestry (2020), the Advanced Certificate in Education (School Leadership and Management), which will soon be replaced by the Advanced Diploma in Education, is a good example of the theoretical foundation required as a foundation for principal leadership.

Talent identification is the first step in talent management. Talent identification includes the introduction of individuals in the school environment who have strong leadership potential and leadership abilities. Wise principals will actively seek out and assess their staff to identify these talents. This includes assessing their ability to inspire, direct, and lead effectively. By identifying these talents, principals can initiate steps to develop existing leadership potential within their organizations.

Talent development is a very important next step in talent management. After identification, principals need to provide appropriate support and training to develop these talents into effective leaders. This involves developing competencies such as good communication, conflict management, decision making, and adaptability in changing situations. Training programs that focus on developing leadership abilities can assist staff in improving their leadership qualifications.

Talent retention is also a very important factor in talent management. Principals who have successfully identified and developed talent within their organization need to ensure that talented staff remain in the school. This involves the creation of a positive work environment, recognition of staff contributions, as well as the offer of attractive incentives and career opportunities. When talented staff feel valued and have exciting growth opportunities, they are more likely to continue contributing sustainably to the school.

Performance measurement is another important step in evaluating the effectiveness of talent management practices that have been implemented. Performance measurement includes evaluating school performance in various aspects, such as student academic results, educational program progress, as well as better relationships between staff and students. Objective performance measurement helps principals to assess the extent to which talent management efforts have affected their leadership abilities. When performance improves, it is a positive indication that talent management practices have been successful.

The development of an organizational culture that supports talent management and leadership capabilities is a key factor in talent management. Principals need to create a culture in schools that encourages talent development, cooperation, and innovative thinking. A positive and supportive organizational culture creates an environment where leadership capabilities can develop optimally. Facilities for the exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as support for new initiatives and innovative ideas, will help in creating an environment that supports strong leadership capabilities.

In addition, based on research by Miller and Grobe (2013), most principals interviewed believe that some components of teacher performance incentive criteria provide benefits to their schools. Incentives as mediation serve as a very important element in linking talent management with improved leadership capabilities. Incentives can provide additional encouragement to staff to continuously improve their leadership capabilities. Financial incentives, such as performance bonuses or rewards, can recognize improved leadership skills and be an encouragement for staff to continually improve their performance. Incentives provided fairly and transparently can motivate staff to achieve better outcomes and maximize the influence of talent management practices in enhancing principals' leadership capabilities. In addition, based on Ilyana and Sholihin (2021), an empowering leadership style produces greater creative performance than a directive style. The results showed that under tournament incentive conditions, empowering leadership was able to produce higher creative performance compared to directive leadership.

In this overall context, effective talent management, with the identification, development, retention, performance measurement, and development of a supportive organizational culture, can play a role in enhancing the principal's leadership capabilities. These practices, when combined with the right incentives, can help create an environment where principals can be more effective in leading and managing their schools. Thus, good talent management can contribute significantly to improving the leadership ability of school principals in high schools / vocational schools in Aceh.

Communication Skills

Talent management plays an important role in developing the communication skills of high school principals in high schools in Aceh. In this context, talent identification is a very important first step. Smart principals will actively seek out and assess their staff to identify communication talents. This includes their ability to communicate with staff, students, and related parties.

The principal's ability to communicate interpersonally, when combined well, can have a positive impact on teachers' performance. The principal not only provides direction and supervision to teachers, but is also able to convey important information to create a productive and dynamic work environment. This atmosphere can increase teachers' enthusiasm for work, which in turn will improve their performance (Ulfa et al., 2021). The success of teachers in carrying out their main duties and functions depends largely on the ability of the principal to apply leadership style, communication skills, motivational skills, creativity, innovation, discipline, as well as interest and attention to his staff (Yuneti et al., 2019). The results of Amen's research (2022) show that the principal's communication behavior that plays a role in improving teacher performance is considered effective when it has the following roles: 1) as a guide to improve teacher performance (instructive); 2) as a source of information that helps improve teacher performance (informative); 3) as suggestions that affect the improvement of teacher performance (affect); and 4) as an evaluation process aimed at improving teacher performance (evaluative).

After talent identification, talent development becomes a crucial next step. School principals need to provide appropriate support and training to develop communication talents. Training programs that focus on developing communication skills can assist staff in improving public speaking skills, verbal and non-verbal communication, and good listening skills.

However, talent retention is a key factor in talent management success. Principals who have identified and developed communication talent within the organization need to ensure that talented staff remain in the school. This involves the creation of a positive work environment, recognition of staff contributions, as well as the offering of attractive incentives and career development opportunities. That way, talented staff feel valued and have attractive growth opportunities, which increases their likelihood to still contribute sustainably within the school.

Talent management is fraught with ethical risks and dilemmas. These ethical implications arise from the way talent is defined, as well as from the way talent management practices affect an individual's ability for ethical reflection (Painter-Morland et al., 2019). Performance measurement is the next step in assessing the effectiveness of talent management practices in improving the communication skills of principals. Performance measurement includes evaluating the principal's communication skills and their impact on relationships with staff, students, and related parties.

Lewis and Heckman (2006) as cited in Hartmann et al., (2010), identify three distinct research streams: (1) talent management as a collection of typical human resource management practices, (2) talent management as a general classification of employees into various talent groups, and (3) talent management as an internal talent pool concept. Finally, the development of an organizational culture that supports communication skills is a key factor. A supportive organizational culture creates an environment where communication skills can develop optimally. By supporting open communication, cooperation, and strong understanding, principals create a strong foundation for better

communication skills in schools. Thus, effective talent management in identifying, developing, and nurturing communication talent, coupled with the right incentives, can contribute significantly in improving the communication skills of principals, which in turn will improve the quality of education in the region.

Innovative Capabilities

Talent management plays an important role in improving the innovative capabilities of high school principals in high and vocational schools in Aceh. In this context, indicators such as talent identification, talent development, talent retention, performance measurement, and organizational culture development can contribute to the enhancement of principals' innovative capabilities, with incentives acting as mediation.

Innovation is creating new and extraordinary things, new services, new organizations, and process improvements. The creativity and innovation of students needs to be realized in school management through several strategies. School principals and related parties must be committed to implementing the principles of learning organizations (Ariyani & Zuhaery, 2021). Support for innovation is reflected in individual perceptions of the organization's level of openness and support for new ideas, as well as the tolerance of differences among its members (Da'as et al., 2023).

To support this innovation, a school principal needs to identify his talents. Based on McDonnell et al., (2011), talent management needs to adopt a contingency approach in identifying talent according to organizational strategies and goals. Talent identification is a very important first step in talent management. In terms of the principal's innovative abilities, talent identification includes the introduction of individuals who have the potential to think creatively, generate innovative ideas, and drive positive change in the school. Principals who are careful in identifying innovative talent among their staff can harness this potential to generate fresh ideas and innovative solutions to educational challenges.

With the same fit, companies have begun investing resources in the process of selection, attraction, and development of internal talent to create an internal path consisting of future leaders (Kaliannan et al., 2023). Talent development is an important next step. After identification, the school principal needs to provide appropriate support and training to develop these innovative talents. This includes providing a platform for idea development, facilitating creativity training, and supporting the development of problem-solving skills. This training program can assist staff in strengthening their innovative capabilities.

Talent management is part of the broader field of human resource management, defined as all policies, practices, and systems that influence the behaviors, attitudes, and performance of employee. It involves a number of selected human resource management practices with a focus on attraction and retention for a smaller target group of highly talented individuals (identified by the company) compared to various human resource stakeholders (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Talent retention is also an important factor in talent management to enhance the principal's innovative abilities. Principals who have successfully identified and developed innovative talent in their organizations need to ensure that talented staff remain in the school. This involves creating a work environment that supports the development of creativity and provides attractive incentives and career opportunities for talented individuals. When innovative staff feel valued and have opportunities for exciting growth, they tend to keep contributing on an ongoing basis.

Performance measurement is a way to evaluate the effectiveness of talent

management practices that have been implemented in the context of the principal's innovative abilities. Performance measurement includes evaluating the principal's ability to present innovative ideas, implement successful changes, and the results in improving the quality of education in schools. Using objective performance measurement, principals can assess the impact of talent management practices that have been implemented in improving innovative capabilities.

The development of an organizational culture that supports innovative capabilities is a key factor. Principals need to create a culture in the school that encourages creative thinking, exploration of ideas, and innovation. This supportive organizational culture creates an environment where innovative capabilities can develop optimally. Support for innovative projects, collaborations, and experiments is an important part of a culture that supports innovative capabilities.

In addition, based on Mizala and Romaguera (2004), a large number of existing incentive systems emphasize on educational input, and in some cases, especially on adherence to rules. Incentives as mediation play an important role in linking talent management with the enhancement of principals' innovative capabilities. Incentives, such as recognition of innovative ideas, awards or career opportunities, can be an added boost for staff to continually improve their innovative capabilities. Appropriate and fair incentives can motivate staff to create innovative solutions and contribute to the development of the school.

Thus, effective talent management with the identification, development, and retention of innovative talent, as well as performance measurement and the development of a supportive organizational culture, can contribute significantly to improving the innovative capabilities of principals in SMA/SMK in Aceh. With appropriate incentives as a liaison, school principals can become more innovative leaders in bringing positive change in education.

4. Conclusions

In the overall discussion above, talent management has a very important role in improving the performance of school principals in high schools / vocational schools in Aceh, especially in the fields of managerial skills, leadership, communication, and innovation. Indicators such as talent identification, talent development, talent retention, performance measurement, organizational culture development, and incentives serve as key elements in this process.

Talent identification is the first step in identifying leadership potential, communication skills, and innovation among school staff. Talent development involves training and support provided to individuals to improve their skills and competencies. Talent retention is an important factor to ensure that talented staff continue to contribute to the school, creating a positive working environment.

Performance measurement helps in evaluating the effectiveness of talent management practices and their impact on the principal's abilities in various aspects. The development of an organizational culture that supports managerial, leadership, communication, and innovation capabilities is essential in creating an environment that facilitates individual and collective growth.

Incentives act as a mediating element linking talent management practices to improved principal performance. Incentives provided fairly and transparently can motivate staff to achieve better results and maximize the influence of talent management practices.

By implementing effective talent management, principals can become more competent, innovative, and effective leaders in managing their schools. This in turn will improve the quality of education in high schools in Aceh, having a positive impact on students, staff, and the school community as a whole.

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