

Workshop on Capacity Strengthening of Innovative and Dedicated School Principals at The Work Deliberation Forum for High School/Vocational Schools in West Manggarai with Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM)

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Abstract

This research describes the implementation of the Workshop on Strengthening the Capacity of Innovative and Dedicative Principals in the Forum of Senior High School/Vocational High School Principals in West Manggarai using the Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM). This activity was designed to address the gap in education quality in West Manggarai. The objectives of the workshop were to improve principals' leadership skills, develop contextual solutions to educational problems and build collaborative networks among principals. The workshop was conducted through four systematic stages: Problem Identification, Reflection, Evaluation, and Follow-up. Through the PSSM approach, the principals analyzed problems, developed contextual solutions, and simulated their implementation. The workshop successfully increased the capacity of 42 principals with a 68% increase in understanding of transformational leadership. Participants produced 10 innovative action plans based on the local context and formed five peer mentoring groups for program sustainability. The level of participant satisfaction reached 87% based on the end-of-program evaluation. The collaboration with Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng plays a strategic role in providing academic assistance and creating a sustainable learning ecosystem to improve the quality of education in West Manggarai.

Keywords: workshop, capacity strengthening, high school/vocational school principals, innovative and dedicative, principal work deliberation, problem-solving simulation model.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation of national development that plays a strategic role in shaping quality human resources. Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2023, the quality of education in Eastern Indonesia, especially East Nusa Tenggara, still needs special attention, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 65.28, still below the national average of 72.29 (Salesman, 2017) (BPS 2023). West Manggarai Regency, as one of the regions in NTT Province, faces similar challenges to improve the quality of education. The results of the 2023 National Exam show that the average score of high school/vocational high school students in West Manggarai is still at 65.4, lower than the national average of 71.8. This gap in education quality requires systematic intervention, especially in strengthening school leadership capacity as the spearhead of educational transformation (BPS 2023) (Kunda et al., 2023).

Recent research by Leithwood and Sun (2018) confirms that principal leadership contributes up to 25% to student learning success. This is reinforced by a World Bank study (2022), which found a significant correlation between the quality of school principals' leadership and students' academic and non-academic achievement (Akbar et al., 2024). In West Manggarai, based on a survey by the NTT Provincial Education Office in 2023, out of 47 principals at the high school/vocational level, only 32% have participated in comprehensive educational leadership training in the last three years. In addition, 78% of school principals admitted to facing difficulties in implementing the latest education policies and learning innovations in the digital era. This competency gap has a direct impact on the quality of school management and the learning process (Salesman, 2017).

Data from the 2023 Regional Education Balance shows that the participation rate of secondary schools in West Manggarai reached 78.6%, lower than the national average of 85.4%. Meanwhile, the ratio of S1-qualified teachers in this region has only reached 82.3%, with uneven distribution between schools (Himpi, 2022). Further analysis shows that schools with principals who have good managerial competence and supervision can show significant improvement in learning quality, even though they are in areas with limited infrastructure. A study by the OECD (2022) emphasizes the importance of adaptive and innovative educational leadership in the face of learning disruption, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally changed the educational landscape (Regus & Tapung, 2020). In West Manggarai, limited internet access (penetration is only 65%) and lack of learning technology training for educators are challenges that require creative solutions from school principals (Nabal, 2024).

The School Principals' Working Conference (MKKS), as a forum for professional collaboration, has strategic potential to become a catalyst for educational leadership capacity development. Based on research by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2019), professional collaboration can increase the effectiveness of educational change by up to 70% compared to an individualized approach (Tapung, 2024). In West Manggarai, MKKS SMA/SMK was formed in 2015. However, based on the Evaluation of the Education Office in 2023, the activities carried out are still administrative and have not maximally touched the aspect of developing transformative leadership capacity. Of the 8 MKKS meetings scheduled each year, the average attendance only reached 65%, and the meeting agenda focused more on coordinating routine activities than developing a long-term educational vision. This indicates the need to revitalize the role of MKKS as a professional learning community that can encourage innovation and dedication of school principals.

The Workshop on Strengthening the Capacity of Innovative and Dedicated School Principals at the Working Deliberation Forum for High School/Vocational School Principals in West Manggarai was carried out using the Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM). This workshop model is comprehensively designed to facilitate the capacity building of school principals' leadership capacity in the region by integrating a contextual problem-solving simulation approach according to educational challenges in

West Manggarai. The model provides a structured set of activities that enable principals to identify critical institutional issues, collaboratively analyze root causes, develop evidence-based solutions and local contexts, and simulate the implementation of these solutions in controlled yet realistic situations so that principals can reflect, evaluate, and refine strategies before implementing them in the field (Angelini, 2024). Through the PSSM approach, this workshop not only equips school principals with technical problem-solving skills but also strengthens professional networks between schools, builds a collaborative and data-driven leadership culture, and fosters innovative and dedicative attitudes in facing the complexity of educational challenges with the hope of creating a more responsive, adaptive, and oriented educational ecosystem that improves the quality of learning in West Manggarai.

In the era of education that continues to develop, the Senior High School Principals' Working Meeting (MKKS) in West Manggarai Regency faces various challenges to improve the quality of education. One of the main problems faced is the limited leadership capacity of innovative and dedicated school principals (Winarti, 2025). School principals, as the main drivers of educational institutions, often find it difficult to develop learning strategies that are relevant to today's needs, especially in areas with limited access to information and technology, such as in several areas of West Manggarai.

Another challenge faced is the lack of effective collaborative forums to share best practices among school principals. Although MKKS has been formed, the implementation of professional development programs for school principals has not been optimal. Many school principals still carry out school management with conventional patterns and are less adaptive to changes in global education dynamics (Fadli & Darmono, 2023). This has an impact on the low innovation in the development of curriculum and learning methods in schools in West Manggarai.

Limited resources, both financial and infrastructure, are also a serious obstacle for school principals in developing excellent programs in their schools. School principals are often faced with a difficult choice between meeting the school's operational needs or developing innovative programs that require additional budgets. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of systemic support from various education stakeholders, including local governments and the private sector (Warju, 2016).

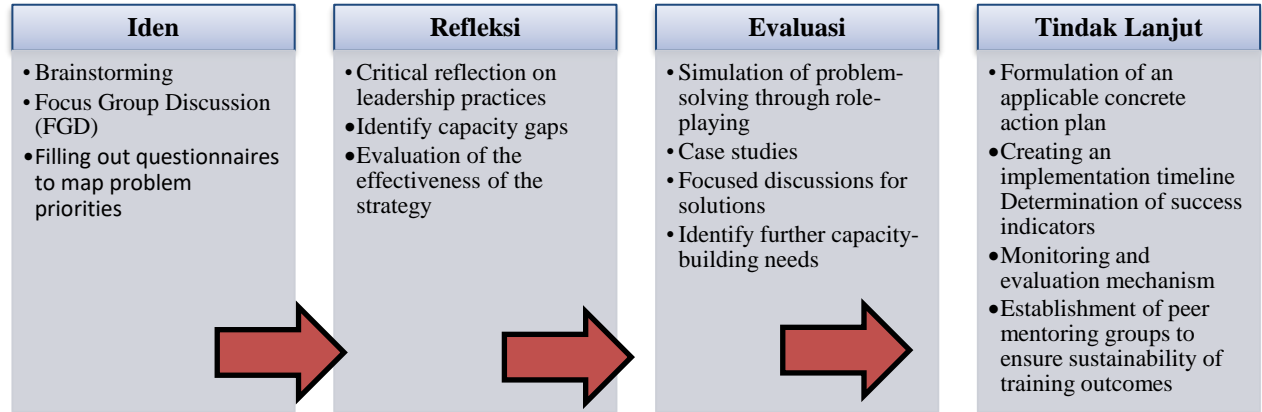
In addition, school principals in West Manggarai also face difficulties in building effective communication and networking with educational institutions outside the region. Geographical isolation and limited communication access make it difficult for school principals to obtain the latest information on educational developments and best practices that can be adapted in their schools (Rofiah et al., 2024). This has an impact on lagging educational innovation and professional development in schools in the region.

In the context of strengthening innovative and dedicative school principals, the collaboration with the Catholic University of Indonesia St. Paulus Ruteng has a strategic and important role. As a leading higher education institution in the Manggarai region, Unika Indonesia St. Paulus Ruteng can be an ideal partner in providing academic assistance, educational leadership training, and school management capacity building.

This collaboration allows for the transfer of knowledge and best practices from the academic world to schools, as well as creating a sustainable learning ecosystem. (Andriani & Kamaruddin, 2024). Through this strategic partnership, principals can gain access to the latest educational research, innovative learning methodologies, and a broader academic network, which in turn will improve the quality of education throughout the West Manggarai Regency.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Community Service Method (PKM) implemented in the Innovative and Dedicated School Principal Capacity Strengthening Workshop at the Working Deliberation Forum for High School/Vocational School Principals in West Manggarai, adopts the Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM) approach, which consists of four systematic and integrated stages (Legault & Frejinger, 2024). The first stage, Problem Identification, involves school principals analyzing specific challenges faced in the management of educational institutions in West Manggarai through brainstorming techniques, *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD), and filling out questionnaires to map the priority of problems. The second stage, Reflection, facilitated principals to conduct critical Reflection on their current leadership practices, identify capacity gaps, and evaluate the effectiveness of previously implemented strategies. The third stage, Evaluation, focuses on simulating problem-solving through role-playing, case studies, and directed discussions to measure the suitability of the proposed solution to the local context as well as identify further capacity-building needs. The last stage, Follow-up, involves the formulation of an applicable concrete action plan, the creation of an implementation timeline, the determination of success indicators, monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms, and the formation of a peer mentoring group to ensure the sustainability of the results of this training in improving the quality of school leadership in West Manggarai district. In the process, these four stages were facilitated and moderated by four Lecturers of Unika Indonesia St. Paulus Ruteng.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Workshop on Strengthening the Capacity of Innovative and Dedicated School Principals at the Senior High School/Vocational School Principals' Work Meeting (MKKS) in West Manggarai began with the Problem Identification stage, which took place dynamically and participatory. The principals, who numbered about 47 people, were actively involved in the brainstorming session facilitated by the service team from the Catholic University of Indonesia, St. Paulus Ruteng. The seminar room, which has a rectangular table formation, allows maximum interaction between participants. At this stage, there was much enthusiasm when school principals began to express the various challenges they faced, ranging from the limitations of digital infrastructure (as shown by internet penetration data of only 63%), low secondary school participation (74.34% compared to the national average of 85.4%), to difficulties in implementing the latest education policies. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session was divided into 12 groups based on the geographical cluster (Komodo, Boleng, Sano Nggoang, Mbeliling, Lembor, Welak, South Lembor, Kuwus, Ndosso, Macang Pacar, West Kuwus, Pacar), resulted in a comprehensive mapping of the priority problems in each region. The facilitator team used the problem tree analysis method to help participants identify the root of the problem, not just the symptoms that appear on the surface. Through the completion of a structured questionnaire, it was revealed that 76% of school principals experienced significant difficulties in implementing learning innovations in the digital era, and 75% faced challenges in building strategic collaborations with teachers and education staff in schools. In comparison, 66% faced challenges in building strategic collaborations with external stakeholders.

The documentation of the workshop activity process, as illustrated in the photos below:



Photo 1: Opening of the Activity by Korwas, Chairman of MKKS West Manggarai, and Rector of Unika St. Paulus Ruteng



Photo 2: The speakers are giving material to the Principals of High School/Vocational High School in West Manggarai Regency

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Photo 3: The speakers are giving material to the Principals of High School/Vocational Schools in East Manggarai Regency with a focus on Problem Identification.	Photo 4: The resource persons facilitated Reflection, Process Evaluation, and Follow-up Plan activities to the Principals of High School/Vocational High School/Vocational School in West Manggarai Regency

The Reflection Stage provides a space for principals to conduct deep introspection on their leadership practices over the years. The activity began with a contemplative leadership session where participants were asked to reflect on their leadership journey and take note of the critical moments that have shaped their current leadership style. An interesting dynamic occurs when several senior principals openly share their experiences of failure and valuable learnings, creating an atmosphere of constructive openness and vulnerability. The participants were then invited to analyze the competency gap using the leadership competency assessment instrument, which refers to the five key competencies identified by the Ministry of Education and Culture's IAARD: instructional leadership, change management, digital literacy, external collaboration development, and a culture of sustainable innovation. The results of the assessment show the largest gap in change management competencies (gap 41%) and culture of continuous innovation (gap 35%), in line with national findings. The reflection circles session guided by the facilitator encourages principals to evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership strategies they have implemented before. In small groups, participants provided each other with appreciative and constructive feedback, building a collective awareness of the importance of transforming the leadership paradigm from a transactional model to a transformative model that is more responsive to contemporary educational challenges.

In the Evaluation stage, the workshop reached the highest intensity with a series of problem-solving simulation activities that challenged principals to apply new knowledge and skills in situations similar to their reality. The role-playing simulation "Principal Faces Crisis" presents complex scenarios such as a drastic decline in student achievement,

internal staff conflicts, or budget constraints in the implementation of flagship programs, which require quick response and creative solutions. School principals show progressive thinking when successfully proposing innovative solutions such as school-industry partnership models to overcome budget constraints, or the implementation of simple technology-based peer-teaching to address the shortage of qualified teachers. The case studies presented based on best practices from schools that have succeeded in improving the quality of learning in areas with similar characteristics have sparked in-depth discussions about the applicability of solutions in the context of West Manggarai. Through fishbowl discussion techniques, senior and junior principals exchange perspectives on innovation implementation challenges, with facilitators helping to identify critical factors of success (Cerqueira et al., 2022). The cross-evaluation session allows the principal group to evaluate the solution proposals of other groups using the rubric of feasibility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact criteria, resulting in a more comprehensive and contextual solution refinement.

The follow-up stage is the culmination of the entire workshop process, which involves the formulation of a concrete action plan that is structured and systematic. Using a specially designed action planning template, each principal develops an implementation plan for two priority initiatives: one focused on improving the quality of learning and the other on strengthening institutional capacity. The collaborative dynamic can be seen when school principals from neighboring regions form clusters of innovation to support each other in the implementation of similar initiatives while maximizing the use of limited resources (Kamal, 2024). The implementation timeline is prepared to take into account the academic calendar and other contextual aspects, complemented by measurable milestones and periodic evaluation checkpoints. Participants also set specific, measurable, and relevant success indicators to the context of each school, such as increasing the percentage of student involvement in learning, improving teacher qualifications, or expanding partnership networks with external parties. An important momentum occurred when all participants committed to forming a structured peer mentoring system, with the division of experienced senior principals as mentors for junior colleagues from schools with similar characteristics. The commitment to sustainability is strengthened by an agreement to integrate this leadership capacity-building agenda into the official work program of MKKS SMA/SMK West Manggarai, with the support of ongoing mentoring from the Catholic University of Indonesia, St. Paulus Ruteng.

The results of this workshop show a significant transformation in the perspective and leadership capacity of school principals in West Manggarai. Based on the Evaluation carried out at the end of the program, there was an increase in the participants' conceptual understanding of transformative educational leadership by 85% compared to the pre-test. In terms of practical skills, the Evaluation showed improvements in problem analysis skills (76%), innovative solution development (82%), and implementation planning (74%). More importantly, there was a shift in mindset from 66% of school principals who initially considered limited resources as the main obstacle to an asset-based approach that emphasized optimizing existing potential. The concrete products resulting from this

workshop include the West Manggarai Innovative and Dedicated School Leadership Development Blueprint 2025-2029 document, 47 specific and contextual action plans for school principals, the establishment of 5 innovation clusters based on geographical proximity and similarity of challenge characteristics, as well as the update of MKKS structure and working mechanism that is more oriented towards sustainable professional development. The commitment to program sustainability is manifested in the signing of a long-term cooperation MoU between MKKS SMA/SMK Manggarai Barat and Unika Indonesia St. Paulus Ruteng, which includes implementation assistance programs, periodic monitoring, impact evaluation, and systematic advanced capacity building activities. Through a comprehensive and contextual Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM) approach, this workshop not only succeeded in increasing the individual capacity of school principals but also strengthened a sustainable professional collaboration ecosystem for educational transformation in West Manggarai.

Philosophically, strengthening the capacity of innovative and dedicative school principals in West Manggarai represents a concrete manifestation of the transformative education principles rooted in the thoughts of Paulo Freire and John Dewey (Anri, 2024). School leadership is not just an administrative function but a manifestation of moral responsibility to create an emancipatory educational space and empower the community. In areas with an HDI of 65.28, which is below the national average of 72.29, school principals are agents of critical change who must be able to transcend structural and cultural limitations to bring about meaningful educational transformation. The philosophy of educational leadership in West Manggarai needs to be built on the foundation of social justice and equitable access, where every school principal understands that educational institutions are not only a place for knowledge transfer but also a catalyst for the development of a just society (Mardiyanto et al., 2023). Data showing that only 32% of school principals have participated in comprehensive leadership training indicates the urgency of building epistemological capacity that allows these education leaders to contextualize national policies with local wisdom, integrate technological advances with cultural values, and articulate a vision of education that is responsive to the specific needs of the people of West Manggarai while remaining oriented towards national standards and global (Sanjaya, 2024).

Research conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture's Research and Development Agency (2023) identified five key competencies of school principals in the era of digital education transformation: instructional leadership, change management, digital literacy, external collaboration development, and a culture of sustainable innovation. From the results of the competency assessment of school principals in 15 districts in Indonesia, including several districts in NTT, it was identified that the biggest gap lies in change management competence (gap 42%) and sustainable innovation culture (gap 38%). These findings are in line with the results of a McKinsey & Company study (2022), which shows that education systems that successfully carry out digital transformation are characterized by adaptive and innovative school leadership (Arifin et al., 2024). In West Manggarai, several pioneer schools that have succeeded in

significantly improving the quality of learning are led by principals who consistently develop innovations and build collaborations with various stakeholders. The Workshop on Strengthening Innovative and Dedicated School Principals through the MKKS forum is a strategic step to systematically expand these good practices to all schools in this district.

From a pedagogical perspective, strengthening the capacity of school principals through the MKKS forum with the Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM) approach reflects the evolution from an instructional paradigm to instructional leadership that focuses on improving the quality of learning processes and outcomes. With an average UN score of 65.4, which is still below the national average of 71.8, school principals in West Manggarai need to develop competencies to identify, analyze, and address learning problems systematically through an evidence-based practice approach (Farrukh et al., 2024). PSSM provides a pedagogical framework that allows principals to develop reflective and evaluative capacities so that they become not only school administrators but also learning leaders capable of guiding teachers in implementing learning strategies relevant to local contexts and global demands (Arnes et al., 2023). The four stages of PSSM (problem identification, Reflection, Evaluation, and follow-up) are parallel to the action research cycle that allows school principals to internalize the principle of continuous improvement in their leadership practices. Leithwood and Sun's research, which shows the contribution of 25% of principal leadership to learning success, emphasizes the importance of a pedagogical approach in developing the capacity of school principals, where they are not only trained in managerial aspects but also in understanding the complexity of the learning process, identifying the pedagogical needs of teachers and students, and facilitating contextual and transformative learning innovations amid limited internet access (65%) and lack of learning technology training (R et al., 2024).

From the perspective of professional management, strengthening the capacity of school principals is a strategic intervention that optimizes human resources as a key asset in educational transformation (Rofiah et al., 2024). The findings of the Ministry of Education and Culture's IAARD, which identified the largest gaps in change management competencies (42%) and the culture of continuous innovation (38%), indicate the importance of adaptive and innovative management approaches in the context of West Manggarai. Through the MKKS forum, strengthening the capacity of school principals can create economies of scale in professional development, allowing the optimization of limited resources to achieve maximum impact. The average attendance of only 65% in MKKS meetings and the dominance of the administrative agenda indicate the urgency of revitalizing MKKS into a professional learning community that focuses on developing leadership capacity, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem-solving (Susetyarini et al., 2021). The collaboration with St. Paulus Ruteng Catholic University of Indonesia creates a triple helix ecosystem (academics-practitioners-government) that is essential for accelerating educational innovation in the region. The PSSM approach provides a systematic management framework that allows school principals to develop strategic

thinking, adaptability, resource orchestration, and change management skills needed to overcome complex challenges such as low school participation rates and uneven distribution of teachers (Jatihayu, 2013). Through problem-solving simulations, school principals are trained to develop data-based decision-making skills, allocate resources efficiently, build collaborative networks, and create effective monitoring and evaluation systems; crucial managerial competencies are needed to transform structural challenges in education in West Manggarai into sustainable innovation opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The Workshop on Strengthening the Capacity of Innovative and Dedicated School Principals at the MKKS SMA/SMK Forum in West Manggarai has succeeded in transforming the perspective and leadership capacity of school principals through the four-stage approach of the Problem-Solving Simulation Model (PSSM). This will start with participatory problem identification, followed by in-depth Reflection on leadership practices, and then Evaluation through problem-solving simulations and the formulation of a concrete action plan. This activity not only improves the conceptual understanding and practical skills of school principals but also results in a shift in mindset from a limited-based approach to a potential-based approach. The workshop produced concrete products in the form of a Leadership Development Blueprint, a specific action plan, the formation of an innovation cluster, and an update of the MKKS structure. Philosophically, this program embodies the principles of transformative education that position the principal as an agent of change. From a pedagogical perspective, the program reflects the evolution of instructional leadership toward learning leadership. Meanwhile, from a management perspective, strengthening the capacity of school principals is a strategic intervention to create a more responsive and adaptive education ecosystem in West Manggarai.

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