



# The Role of Principal to Realizing Merdeka Curriculum in Vocational High Schools

Agustin, Amarlian Bilqisthi<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Kunta<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Sayuti<sup>3</sup>, Fitri Nur Mahmudah<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Pramuka No. 42, Sidikan, Yogyakarta, 55166, INDONESIA

\*Corresponding author email: rafif.lian@gmail.com

Received 26 February 2023; Accepted 06 June 2023; Available online 03 July 2023

**Abstract:** Curriculum changes often occur in Indonesia. The role of the principal is the key to the successful implementation of the curriculum in schools. The scope of this research discusses the role of the principal as a policy maker in schools. This research method uses Literature Review with a Systematic Review approach. This study uses a variety of approaches to the results of previous studies. Based on the results of the study, there are seven findings that need to be played by school principals in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools, including educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, entrepreneurs, and climate creators. This study identified 25 codes from 31 citations. These codes are categorized based on the role of the principal into seven categories of findings.

**Keywords:** The Role of Principal, Merdeka Curriculum, Vocational High School

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is a member of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Changes in economic and social demands are one of the challenges that must be faced by Indonesia. As a member of MEA, Indonesia's human resources (HR) must be qualified. The key to answering the demands of MEA is through education (Tobari, 2018). The world of education reflects current conditions and anticipates future conditions (Pacheco, 2021). Education must be able to ensure that the learning experiences students receive will provide unlimited opportunity benefits (Alda, Boholano, & Dayagbil, 2020). In order to become human beings who develop in the digitalization era, it is important for students not to compete with digital (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Instead, students remain more humane. This means that high morals are also needed in society.

In addition, given the very significant changes in the times, career tracks and several types of jobs are disappearing. Some jobs change a lot and the changes are very fast. That is, we cannot guarantee knowledge and skills to meet future needs. Where the future is unknowable, uncertain, and can always change. Therefore, education needs to be changed. Education policies have been strengthened to ensure that the euphoria of the new freedom does not multiply excessively through the commitment of all levels of society. Democratization and educational development show a mutually reinforcing relationship (Shaturaev, 2021).

A new curriculum that addresses this need has to do a number of things. First, new competencies for a new era for students (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Education must teach students to be creative, entrepreneurial and globally competent, to help students develop in the era of smart machines and a globalized world (Zhao, 2012a, 2012b).

Curriculum does not always focus on content and knowledge. The curriculum needs to focus more on developing students' abilities. The curriculum must pay attention to the social and emotional well-being of learners as well. In addition, the curriculum needs to ensure that students have educational experiences that are connected to the environment.

Second, the curriculum prioritizes student personalization. Even though the learning that is carried out is quite difficult to understand in the literature, personalized learning must be able to adapt to the needs of students (Pane, Steiner, Baird, & Hamilton, 2015). That is, the curriculum can give students to follow according to their passion and strengths. This requires students to find their own learning path without being too limited by a predetermined curriculum, in addition to requiring a flexible curriculum so students can choose what they want to learn. Thus the national curriculum for all

students must be a minimum set of essential knowledge and skills. Learners can develop the most basic competencies and learn the most common social norms, expectations, and organizations of a jurisdiction.

Third, the curriculum as something that develops (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Although system-level curriculum frameworks must be developed, they must accommodate changing times and contexts. Any system level curriculum should allow for the school's capacity to contextualize and make changes as deemed necessary. The change must of course be justified but the system-level curriculum framework must not use national or state-level accountability assessments to limit change. Curriculum changes have both good and bad impacts on the quality of education, where the appropriate impact is that students can learn by keeping up with increasingly advanced times but supported by school principals, teachers, teaching staff, students, even the institution itself (Fathurrahman, Muhyi, & Huda, 2022). The curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim is "Freedom to Learn" or independent learning, which is a philosophy that is considered the most appropriate for changes to current learning methods. In the process of independent learning, students must be able to learn independently, not depending on the educational environment, and determine the method to be used for the learning process. Students need free learning, but in this curriculum change, teachers and school management must adapt and study it so they can be more active in helping students and innovating in learning as expected.

Of course, in changing this curriculum, school principals must consider the appropriate form of application and strategy if they decide to take the "Independence Curriculum" or an independent curriculum for learning in their schools. School management must be prepared for curriculum changes so that the expected educational goals can be achieved and not to repeat the confusion from stakeholders and parents in implementing this independent curriculum because proper preparation is needed so that complaints that occurred in the previous curriculum were that the curriculum was no longer independent. Principals have a substantive impact on school policies, working conditions, and student outcomes (Böhlmark, Grönqvist, & Vlachos, 2016). Despite the rich background information on principals, it is difficult to characterize successful management, suggesting that innate skills are predominant. It cannot be separated from the fact that parents place their trust in the school if they have confidence in the leadership of the school principal. In addition, the Principal must also be able to collaborate with the local community to develop and build a conducive school environment for the teaching and learning process in creating students as first-class human capital in schools. (Manan, 2014). To determine the effectiveness and success of a school, the leadership of the school principal has always been the main focus of the community.

At this time there are still many teachers who are confused about implementing the independent curriculum, teachers always need to know what readiness is needed when implementing the Independent Curriculum in the learning process at school, to what form of assessment it is (Ihsan, 2022). Apart from that, socialization factors that still lack teacher understanding, reference support and lack of preparation for an independent curriculum also make schools unprepared in implementing an independent curriculum. (Tari, Lao, Liufeto, & Koroh, 2022). Curriculum changes that occur cannot be separated from the leadership contribution of the Principal (Nurwiatin, 2022). Based on other studies that have been conducted, it shows that the transformational leadership of school principals can contribute to change readiness. Transformational leadership is a leader who inspires his followers to put aside personal interests for the good of the organization and has a tremendous influence on his followers. (Kustini & Habibi, 2018). Based on this background, this study explores the discussion of the role of the principal in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools.

## **2. Method**

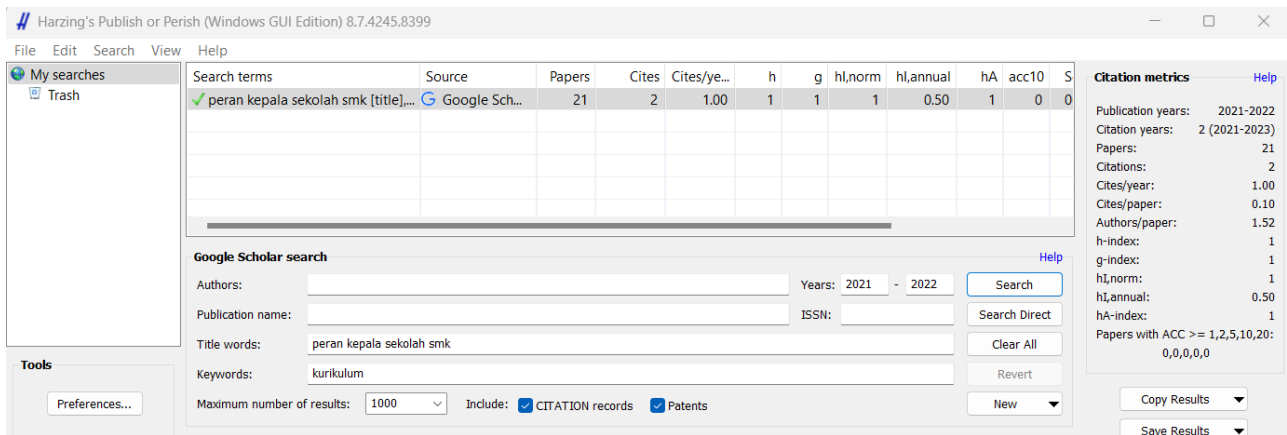
This research method uses Literature Review with a Systematic Review approach. This study uses a variety of approaches to the results of previous studies. That is a literature search both international and national which is carried out using the Scholar database through Publish or Perish (PoP).

In the early stages of searching for journal articles, twenty-one articles were obtained from 2021 to 2022 using the keywords "peran kepala sekolah smk" and the title words "kurikulum". The search results for twenty-one articles, the articles were then reduced by adjusting the relevant themes so as to produce ten articles described in Table 1. Data analysis was carried out with the help of Atlas.ti version 8 software. This data analysis was used to compile a research concept map so as to produce novelty related to The Role of Principal to Realizing Merdeka Curriculum in Vocational High Schools.

## **3. Results and Discussions**

### **3.1 Planning Review Stage**

Determining research objectives and knowing the role of the principal, then focusing on research objectives using Publish or Perish as shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1: Searching Format Using Publish or Perish**

Figure 1. shows a search using Publish or Perish. Done on December 28, 2022 against sources indexed in Google Scholar. The search uses the keywords "the role of the high school principal" and the title words "curriculum" with a limit of 2021 to 2022. The total number of articles is 25 papers.

### 3.2 Conducting the Review Stage

This stage sorts articles based on the inclusion criteria provided. The 21 papers were sorted into 10 articles that met the criteria. The articles were then analyzed using Atlas.ti. 8. The order in table 1 is used in coding description.

**Table 1: The Selection Result Using Inclusion Criteria**

No	Author & Year	Title
1	Kholik, Farhana, dan Ritonga (2022)	Analisis manajemen SMK Negeri 43 Jakarta
2	Komariah, Kartika, Rahayu, dan Johardi (2021)	Implementasi kebijakan kurikulum di SMKN 1 Kempas
3	Priantini, Suarni, dan Adnyana (2022)	Analisis kurikulum merdeka dan platform merdeka belajar untuk mewujudkan pendidikan yang berkualitas
4	Qomariyah dan Maghfiroh (2022)	Transisi kurikulum 2013 menjadi kurikulum merdeka: Peran dan tantangan dalam lembaga pendidikan
5	Rahayu, Rosita, Rahayuningsih, Hernawan, dan Prihantini (2022)	Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar di sekolah
6	Ratsyari (2021)	Kesiapan sekolah pada implementasi merdeka belajar
7	Sari dan Gumindari (2022)	Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar pasca pembelajaran daring di SMKN 2 Cirebon
8	Sihaloho (2022)	Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam mewujudkan merdeka belajar di SMK Negeri 1 Patumbak
9	Suhartini, Muchlas, dan Kuat (2022)	Kompetensi kewirausahaan kepala sekolah dalam mengembangkan edupreneurship di sekolah menengah kejuruan
10	Sulastri, Nellitawati, Adi, dan Syahril (2022)	Analisis kebutuhan kepemimpinan pembelajaran kepala sekolah di sekolah menengah pertama

### 3.3 Reporting and Outreach Stage

Before analyzing using the atlas.ti coding, the researcher read it first to ensure the suitability of the article based on the coding. The statements in the article and code are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: The Role of The Principal**

Statement in The Article	Code
<p>Peran kepala sekolah dan guru menjadi andalan kurikulum Merdeka untuk lebih meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia yang selama ini belum memenuhi syarat mutu yang jelas dan stabil berdasarkan hasilnya. Karena selalu berubah, tidak tetap.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● planner</li> </ul>
<p>“Meskipun anak kelas 12 tidak menggunakan kurikulum merdeka, akan tetapi dalam pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka di kelas 10 dan 11 dilakukan secara maksimal sesuai dengan kebijakan yang berlaku, jadi sebelum proses pembelajaran di kelas aktif, para wali kelas dan guru mata pelajaran diberi pengarahan tentang implementasi kurikulum merdeka, yang diadakan pada saat rapat mengenai kurikulum merdeka”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● organizer</li> </ul>
<p>Penyediaan narasumber yang mumpuni dalam pelaksanaan edukasi Kurikulum Merdeka, penyediaan berbagai sumber belajar untuk guru dalam bentuk buku elektronik, podcast, dan sejenisnya yang dapat diakses secara daring dan dapat disalurkan melalui perangkat penyimpanan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learning resource provider</li> </ul>
<p>Kurikulum merdeka ini memancing kepala sekolah untuk menciptakan inovasi baru dalam mengatur sekolah tersebut. Kelengkapan sarana dan prasarana dapat menunjang terhadap keberhasilan penerapan kurikulum merdeka di sekolah dengan mengacu pada kelengkapan buku atau sumber belajar yang sesuai dengan tujuan kurikulum merdeka.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● planner</li> <li>● infrastructure provider</li> </ul>
<p>Dalam proses pelaksanaannya, kurikulum merdeka belajar harus didukung penuh dengan kesiapan sumber daya yang berupa fasilitas, infrastruktur, dan tenaga kependidikan yang sesuai dengan kualifikasi yang dibutuhkan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● resource provider</li> </ul>
<p>Kepala sekolah adalah nahkoda terbesar dalam memajukan sekolah atau kegiatan yang akan dilakukan dalam sekolah tersebut. Kepala sekolah beserta wakil kepala sekolah telah menerapkan kebijakan kurikulum merdeka tersebut agar para majelis guru menyediakan bahan pokok ajar yang akan diajarkan kepada siswa nya dikelas, supaya lebih kreatif lagi dalam pembelajaran di sekolah.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● influencer</li> <li>● learning activity examiner</li> </ul>
<p>Sehingga seluruh komponen dalam manajemen kurikulum dan pembelajaran di SMKN 43 Jakarta menjadi tanggung jawab besar bagi kepala sekolah.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learning monitor</li> </ul>
<p>Dalam proses berjalannya manajemen pendidik dan tenaga pendidikan, seorang kepala sekolah pasti akan mengutamakan sebuah kualitas dalam membentuk pendidik dan tenaga pendidikan yang mempunyai keahlian dan skill yang baik dalam memiliki rasa etos yang tinggi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● stimulant</li> </ul>
<p>Kepala sekolah tidak hanya berfikir saat ini atas apa yang dilakukan tetapi berfikir untuk masa depan peserta didik setelah lulus dari SMK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● innovation</li> </ul>
<p>Kepala sekolah harus mempunyai kemampuan membuat pemikiran yang baru menjadi kenyataan dan kemampuan membawa gagasan kedalam kehidupan nyata.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● creative</li> </ul>

---

*advanced*

- Pekerjaan dan tanggungjawab kepala sekolah sebagai seorang manajer membutuhkan waktu dan target yang terukur, untuk mencapai itu membutuhkan waktu lebih dan kerja keras untuk mewujudkannya. ● work hard
- Pimpinan sekolah harus memiliki motivasi yang kuat untuk sukses dalam melaksanakan tugas pokok dan fungsinya. Kemampuan menumbuhkan motivasi kerja yang kuat. ● motivator
- Komunikasi bisa menjembatani beberapa pemikiran yang berbeda menjadi satu saling melengkapi dan focus menuju visi atau keberhasilan yang diinginkan. ● communicator
- Kegigihan kepala sekolah untuk menumbuhkan jiwa wirausaha bisa diimplementasikan melalui kegiatan pengembangan unit produksi sebagai tempat berlatih peserta didik sebelum benar-benar berwirausaha. ● entrepreneurial developer
- Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah mampu menciptakan keunggulan komparatif dan kompetitif untuk meningkatkan pendapatan unit produksi sekolah. ● creative
- Kebaruan lain yang dilakukan kepala sekolah adalah akan membuka konsentrasi keahlian baru yang benar-benar diperlukan oleh kaum muda milenial yaitu konsentrasi cyber meskipun belum ada dasar hukumnya di Kemendikbudristek atau di struktur kurikulum. ● innovation
- Ngayomi adalah sikap melindungi, tidak menyalahkan apa yang dilakukan bawahannya tetapi membina/mengedukasi secara halus, memotivasi semua warga, menerima kritik dan masukan demi perbaikan sekolah, juga yang terpenting bagaimana memajemen roda sekolah supaya visi tercapai sesuai target. Pemimpin yang memiliki sifat ngayomi, ngayemi dan berkomunikasi yang baik akan memotivasi guru, karyawan juga peserta didik untuk mencapai visi sekolah. ● work ethic
- Kepala sekolah sebagai penanggung jawab sekolah perlu mengadakan pembinaan khusus kepada guru-guru mengenai kebijakan merdeka belajar, agar guru-guru mempersiapkan pembelajarannya sesuai dengan kebijakan merdeka belajar. ● mentor
- Kepala sekolah juga perlu rutin melakukan monitoring mengenai kekurangan yang kemungkinan terjadi dalam pelaksanaan merdeka belajar di sekolah. ● learning monitor
- Langkah awal kepala sekolah dalam mempersiapkan guru untuk membuat RPP adalah diadakannya sosialisasi tentang adanya perubahan RPP beserta komponennya. ● administration manager
- Kepala sekolah dikatakan sebagai pemimpin maka kepala sekolah dapat memperhatikan apa yang menjadi kebutuhan sekolah. Seperti, menyesuaikan kompetensi keahlian dengan IDUKA, memberikan dukungan bagi lingkungan sekolah, dan sebagainya. ● decision maker
- Kepala sekolah mendorong kreativitas guru dalam menciptakan karya dengan memanfaatkan potensi dan peluang yang ada di sekolah. ● mover
-

---

*advanced*

- Dengan adanya komunikasi cukup baik yang dibangun oleh kepala sekolah dapat memberikan arahan yang baik pula dalam merumuskan program sekolah. ● communicator
- Disamping itu juga, kepala sekolah memberikan kepada guru-guru kesempatan dan memberikan dukungan penuh dalam melaksanakan kolaborasi untuk mengembangkan kualitas pembelajaran di sekolah. ● motivator
- Pekerjaan dan tanggungjawab kepala sekolah sebagai seorang manajer membutuhkan waktu dan target yang terukur, untuk mencapai itu membutuhkan waktu lebih dan kerja keras untuk mewujudkannya. ● planner
- Berdasarkan penelitian yang dilakukan peneliti, didapati bahwa kepala sekolah mempunyai kemampuan dalam menjalin komunikasi kepada masyarakat di lingkungan sekolah, kemampuan dalam bersosialisasi dan juga mempunyai pengetahuan dan wawasan yang luas terkait pendidikan dalam memahami merdeka belajar. ● community liaison
- Kepala sekolah dapat mengembangkan dan meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di sekolahnya seperti dengan menciptakan suasana kerja yang menyenangkan bagi para guru dan staf, lingkungan kerja yang aman dan tenang. ● work environment creator
- Setelah adanya supervisi yang dilakukan kepala sekolah, langkah selanjutnya yang dapat dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah dalam rangka pengembangan para pendidik adalah dengan mengadakan dan ikutserta dalam webinar dan seminar-seminar yang dapat menunjang kompetensi dari para guru dan staf. ● teacher professional developer
- Di bawah kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang baik sekolah kecil akan menjadi maju, bahkan sekolah yang peneliti kunjungi boleh dikatakan sekolah yang kecil dengan sarana dan prasarana terbatas dan tidak mempunyai lahan yang luas bahkan perpustakaan pun tidak ada tetapi sekolah tersebut mampu menjadi agen perubahan yang tentunya memacu orang tua untuk menyekolahkan anak-anaknya ke sekolah tersebut. ● influencer
-

Based on the above codes, further categorization is made as in Table 3.

**Table 3: Categorization of the Principal's Role**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Categorization</b>
learning resource provider	educator
mentor	educator
organizer	manager
planner	manager
infrastructure provider	manager
resource provider	manager
stimulant	manager
mover	manager
administration manager	administrator
learning activity examiner	supervisor
learning monitor	supervisor
teacher professional developer	supervisor
influencer	leader
decision maker	leader
community liaison	leader
innovation	entrepreneur
creative	entrepreneur
work hard	entrepreneur
entrepreneurial developer	entrepreneur
work ethic	entrepreneur
motivator	climate creator
communicator	climate creator
work environment creator	climate creator

Based on the above, it is then analyzed to create a concept map. The analysis was carried out using Atlas.ti version 8 software. The results of the concept map can be seen in Fig. 2.



Fig. 2: Results of Data Analysis of the Role of Principals in Vocational Schools

#### 4. Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis above using Atlas.ti Software version 8, the novelty of this study is that the role of the principal in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools has important components, namely educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, entrepreneur, and climate creator. . Each component of the research findings has indicators.

The novelty of this research is in accordance with the results of research that has been done. The role of the principal is one of the factors that can influence school success. The role of the school principal includes the principal as educator, managerial, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator and motivator (Dharmiastuti, Murniati, Miyono, & Hidayat, 2022). The school principal as the person in charge of administrative and technical management of learning is expected to be able to act as a manager in an effort to develop teacher competence through empowering teacher competence through forms of appreciation such as providing opportunities for teacher certification, professional education and training, provision of learning support facilities, equal study hours, provision of incentives based on their duties and responsibilities as well as fulfilling guarantees of comfort and security in carrying out their answers and learning (Yunita, Supardi, & Dimiyati, 2022). The principal as an educator, supervisor, motivator who must carry out coaching to employees and teachers in the school he leads because the human factor is the central factor that determines the entire movement of an organization's activities (Yunita et al., 2022).

The role of the principal in improving the quality of education, which includes educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators (Fitrah, 2017). Its role is very complex, so the principal must really monitor and evaluate the vision, mission and programs that are implemented. So as to be able to formulate and analyze for subsequent programs to the maximum. On the other hand, the principal as



the highest leader always evaluates the performance of teachers, staff and the school environment to attract the attention of the community. The principal as educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (Mistrianingsih, Imron, & Nurabadi, 2015). Based on this discussion, it can be concluded that the role of the principal in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools is the key to the success of these schools. In detail, the discussion is as follows.

#### **4.1 Educator**

The role of the principal as an educator. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the principal's role as an educator are learning resource providers and mentors. The principal as an educator, the principal is tasked with guiding teachers, education staff, students, keeping abreast of science and technology developments, and setting a good example (Fitrah, 2017). The role of the principal as an educator is (1) procurement of teacher IT training, (2) granting rights and freedom to increase knowledge such as learning, (3) providing evaluation of learning and learning in the form of insert and report card values (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). The role of the principal as an educator has a strategy in increasing the professionalism of teaching staff by encouraging educators to take part in training or workshops on education and encouraging educators to continue their education so that the quality of learning increases (Supartilah & Pardimin, 2021). Where the principal must provide resource persons in accordance with their fields for the training or workshop (Priantini et al., 2022). In addition, school principals need to hold special training for teachers, in order to prepare learning according to the provisions (Ratsyari, 2021). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as an educator includes learning resource providers and mentors.

#### **4.2 Manager**

The role of the principal as a manager. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the principal's role as a manager are organizer, planner, infrastructure provider, resource provider, stimulant, and mover. The principal understands his role as a manager, this can be seen in utilizing all school resources in realizing the independent learning program through these activities (Sihaloho, 2022). To carry out their roles and functions as managers, school principals must have the right strategy to: a) empower educational staff through collaboration; b) provide opportunities for educational staff to improve their profession; and c) encourage the involvement of all educational staff who support school programs. Because if you refer to the view of modern management, collaboration is very basic in an organization (Fitrah, 2017).

The role of the principal as a manager can be seen from the ability or potential of the principal in controlling or empowering the potential of human resources owned by the school (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). The things that are done by the principal as a manager are (1) empowering parents by involving all components of the community to take part in every school activity, (2) establishing intensive communication with the school committee and parent association, (3) the head schools provide IT training so that teachers can create learning media, (4) to improve the teaching profession, principals involve teachers to participate in seminars and workshops, (5) skills in managing the pillars of SBM, and (6) principals apply the principle of openness in managing school funds. The principal as a manager is able to solve problems and solve them appropriately (Supartilah & Pardimin, 2021). Problems will be discussed together and decisions will be made by discussion together. This can create conducive school conditions. In addition, school principals must be able to create school activity programs that suit industry needs (Sihaloho, 2022). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as a manager is an organizer, planner, infrastructure provider, resource provider, stimulant, and mover.

#### **4.3 Administrator**

The role of the principal as an administrator. Based on the results of data analysis, an important finding that can be used from the principal's role as administrator is administration manager. The role of the principal as an education administrator is essentially that the principal has sufficient knowledge of the real needs of the community as well as the willingness and skills to continuously study the changes that are taking place in society so that schools through the educational programs presented can always adapt to new needs and new condition (Rudiatna, 2022). The principal as an administrator, the principal is responsible for the smooth running of all work and administrative activities in his school (Fitrah, 2017). The role of the principal as an administrator does the following things, (1) financial management is carried out carefully and thoroughly, (2) Documenting of the work program is carried out by the Principal not only in the form of paper or sheets, but

also stored on a computer (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). The role of the school principal as an administrator carries out his role by managing administration properly so that program implementation is carried out effectively and efficiently (Supartilah & Pardimin, 2021). In addition, the principal conducts socialization regarding the preparation of learning administration (Ratsyari, 2021). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as an administrator is related to school administration, from planning to preparing teacher needs for preparing learning administration.

#### 4.4 Supervisor

The role of the principal as a supervisor. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the role of the principal as a supervisor are learning activity examiners, learning monitors, and teacher professional developers. Principal in improving teacher professionalism, namely by preparing supervision programs, supervision is carried out based on a predetermined schedule, supervision evaluation is carried out at the end of every semester (Ikon, Noviarti, Roberto, Marsidin, & Rifma, 2022). The school principal as the person in charge of the school needs to provide special guidance to teachers regarding the independent learning policy, so that teachers prepare their lessons in accordance with the independent learning policy. Principals also need to routinely monitor deficiencies that may occur in the implementation of independent learning at school (Ratsyari, 2021).

There is communication and discussion so that in carrying out their duties between the principal and the teacher where supervision is very pleasant and inspires teachers to be more advanced (Prasetyo & Hartati, 2022). The role of the school principal as a supervisor supervises supervision activities so that learning runs properly (Supartilah & Pardimin, 2021). The things done by the principal as a supervisor are (1) provide an RPP evaluation that has been compiled by the teacher, (2) conducting class observations during learning hours to see the teacher's ability to teach, (3) approach the teacher individually and in groups, (4) giving direction to parents when parents have problems with children's learning achievement and activities carried out by parents (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as a supervisor is related to the supervision of learning from planning, implementation, to evaluating learning by the teacher.

#### 4.5 Leader

The role of the principal as a leader. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the principal's role as a leader are influencers, decision makers, and community liaison. The school principal has a very strategic role in coordinating, mobilizing and empowering all educational resources available in schools. Principals are required to have sufficient role skills to be able to take initiatives and initiatives to realize school progress. The principal is able to carry out his role well as an executor of organizational communication as well as a leader, the role of the principal which includes being informative, regulative, persuasive, and integrative which is carried out vertically can affect the teacher's performance to participate in carrying out every rule and task in a professional manner (Dewi & Poernomo, 2022).

Collaboration with several partners in terms of school funding/donor assistance, collaboration in terms of conveying the aspirations of the surrounding community for school progress and all of this is inseparable from the intervention of the school committee which always plays an active role in the progress of the school (Shafiera, 2022). Principals who can build good relationships can have an impact on the success of implementing programs in schools (Sihaloho, 2022). The principal as a leader, the leadership of the principal is one of the factors that can encourage schools to realize the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school through programs that are implemented in a planned and gradual manner (Fitrah, 2017).

The role played by the school principal as a leader includes: (1) preparing the vision, mission and goals of the school involving teachers, committees, representatives of parents of students and alumni to hold deliberations, (2) in facilitating the work of the principal to realize the vision, mission, and school goals, the school principal compiles the school structure by looking at the potential of the teacher, and beforehand an analysis is carried out in advance, (3) the preparation of work programs both long term, medium and short term is prepared with a team, namely the curriculum management team, student management, managers of facilities and infrastructure, managers of manpower, financial managers, and public relations managers, (4) decision making, involving many parties, namely staff, teachers, parents, school committee, and supervisors, (5) the principal has a good personality, namely assertive in making decisions, smart and intelligent in finding solutions, very communicative, responsive to problems, likes to accept criticism, mah, and painstaking in

establishing co-workers with teachers, committee, and parents (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). The role of the principal as a leader is able to communicate well and make decisions so that they can interact positively (Supartilah & Pardimin, 2021). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as a leader is influencer, decision maker, and community liaison.

#### **4.6 Entrepreneur**

The role of the principal as an entrepreneur. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the role of the principal as an entrepreneur are innovation, creative, work hard, entrepreneurial developer, and work ethic. The success of vocational education institutions is judged by the percentage absorption of graduates in industry or entrepreneurship, but the current condition of SMK education is more directed towards preparing students to enter employment in certain fields, even though the number of industries with SMK graduates is not balanced, so that SMK graduates cannot all be accepted to work in the industry. The creative and innovative abilities of school principals can be measured by the ability and willingness to start a business (start-up), the ability to do something new (creative), the ability to seek opportunities (opportunity), the courage to take risks (risk bearing) and the ability to develop creative ideas to support the development of an effective production unit as a source of income as well as a source of learning for students to improve their skills, creativity and quality of graduates (Suhartini et al., 2022). The role of the principal as an innovator, namely creative ideas and ideas in making the school's flagship work program (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015).

The existence of the entrepreneurial competency of the school principal will indirectly instill an entrepreneurial spirit in students (Istiqomah & Munir, 2022). So, after graduation, students have an entrepreneurial spirit. If the entrepreneurial spirit is increasingly explored, creativity and innovation will increase and of course students will think about opening a business rather than looking for a job that is uncertain. That way, it also reduces the unemployment rate.

The principal does not only think now, but thinks for the future of students after leaving the Vocational High School. The principal must have the ability to make new thoughts become reality and the ability to bring ideas into real life (Suhartini et al., 2022). The work and responsibilities of the principal as a manager require measurable time and targets, to achieve this requires more time and hard work to make it happen. The persistence of the school principal to foster an entrepreneurial spirit can be implemented through activities to develop production units as a place for students to practice before actually entrepreneurship. This shows that school principals are able to create comparative and competitive advantages to increase the income of school production units. Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as an entrepreneur is related to entrepreneurship that is developed in schools.

#### **4.7 Climate Creator**

The role of the principal as a climate creator. Based on the results of data analysis, important findings that can be used from the role of the school principal as a climate creator are motivators, communicators, and work environment creators. School climate can be seen as the school atmosphere, attitudes and interactions of school principals, educators and students that influence perceptions, attitudes towards other people in the school environment. School organizational climate is a distinctive characteristic in the form of feelings, attitudes, shared meaning and atmosphere felt by all school members and parents of students who interact with each other. A good and conducive school organizational climate for educational activities will result in effective interaction, provide space for creativity and innovation will encourage all human resources in schools so that school achievement efforts will run well (Dharmiasuti et al., 2022).

School work climate has a relationship that is quite influential on teacher performance. The teacher's teaching performance is in the pretty good category. Principal leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance but is insufficient to motivate teacher performance. The effect of school work climate on teacher performance is not good and can motivate teacher performance. Principal leadership and work climate have a significant positive influence on teacher performance (Carudin & Agus, 2022). The school principal seeks to foster a sense of kinship, build communication with each other and provide information and set an example through the exemplary role of the school principal (Lorensius, Hanim, & Warman, 2022). Efforts to develop school principals must be able to lead their subordinates by carrying out various activities, both interactions between leaders and subordinates as well as appropriate communication techniques and positive personalities,

so that what is desired can be followed properly and with direction. (Yunita et al., 2022). The activities carried out by the principal as a motivator include: (1) the principal provides motivation to parents at every meeting to urge parents to work together with the principal and teachers to improve school quality, (2) provide motivation in the form of words, (3) teachers are freed to study wherever they want (Mistrianingsih et al., 2015). Based on this discussion, it was concluded that the role of the principal as a climate creator is related to the principal's efforts to create comfort at school.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that there are seven findings that need to be played by school principals in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools, including educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, entrepreneurs, and climate creators. This study identified 25 codes from 31 citations. These codes are categorized based on the role of the principal into seven categories of findings. The role of the principal in realizing an independent curriculum in vocational high schools has a very important role. That is, the progress and success of the school depends on the role of the principal.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of rectors and heads of Muhammadiyah Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs).

## References

- Alda, R., Boholano, H., & Dayagbil, F. (2020). Teacher education institutions in the Philippines towards education 4.0. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(8), 137-154.
- Böhlmark, A., Grönqvist, E., & Vlachos, J. (2016). The headmaster ritual: The importance of management for school outcomes. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 118(4), 912-940.
- Carudin, C., & Agus, K. (2022). Pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan iklim kerja sekolah terhadap kinerja guru. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidik Indonesia*, 1(1), 30-37.
- Dewi, I. B. M., & Poernomo, M. I. (2022). Peran komunikasi organisasi kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di SMK Bina Rahayu Depok. *Jurnal Mahardika Adiwidia*, 2(1), 48.
- Dharmiastuti, D., Murniati, N. A. N., Miyono, N., & Hidayat, A. (2022). Analisis peran kepala sekolah dan iklim organisasi terhadap motivasi guru SMK swasta di kecamatan Taman Pemalang. *Jurnal Pendidikan, Sains Sosial, dan Agama*, 8(1), 65-84.
- Fathurrahman, F., Muhyi, A., & Huda, M. (2022). The influence of school management on the implementation of the merdeka belajar curriculum. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4), 1274-1286.
- Fitrah, M. (2017). Peran kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu*, 3(1), 31-42.
- Ihsan, M. (2022). Kesiapan guru terhadap implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar. *Tugas Mata Kuliah Mahasiswa*, 37-46.
- Ikon, M., Noviarti, N., Roberto, T., Marsidin, S., & Rifma, R. (2022). Supervisi kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme guru pada SMKN 1 Bintan Timur. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 6(2), 15119-15122.
- Istiqomah, A. N., & Munir, A. (2022). Kompetensi kewirausahaan kepala sekolah dalam program edupreneuership di SMPN 2 kecamatan Pulung kabupaten Ponorogo. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 3(1), 143-156.
- Kholik, M. F. D., Farhana, A., & Ritonga, M. (2022). Analisis manajemen SMK Negeri 43 Jakarta. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hospitality*, 11(2), 1409-1420.
- Komariah, N., Kartika, A., Rahayu, A., & Johardi, A. (2021). Implementasi kebijakan kurikulum di SMKN 1 Kempas. *Educational Journal of Islamic Management*, 1(2), 102-109.
- Kustini, K., & Habibi, M. (2018). Kesiapan perubahan dalam menerapkan teknologi informasi pada guru-guru SMA. *UNEJ e-Proceeding*.
- Lorensius, L., Hanim, Z., & Warman, W. (2022). Implementasi supervisi akademik kepala sekolah dalam peningkatan profesionalisme guru di SMK Katolik Kota Samarinda. *Attractive: Innovative Education Journal*, 4(2), 339-352.
- Manan, M. M. B. (2014). Leadership characteristics of excellent headmaster. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(23).
- Mistrianingsih, S., Imron, A., & Nurabadi, A. (2015). Peran kepala sekolah dalam implementasi manajemen berbasis sekolah. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 24(5), 367-375.
- Nurwatin, N. (2022). Pengaruh pengembangan kurikulum merdeka belajar dan kesiapan kepala sekolah terhadap penyesuaian pembelajaran di sekolah. *Edusaintek: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sains Dan Teknologi*, 9(2), 472-487.

- Pacheco, J. A. (2021). The “new normal” in education. *Prospects*, 51(1), 3-14.
- Pane, J. F., Steiner, E. D., Baird, M. D., & Hamilton, L. S. (2015). Continued progress: Promising evidence on personalized learning. *Rand Corporation*.
- Prasetyo, I., & Hartati, C. S. (2022). Peranan kepala sekolah untuk meningkatkan kualitas guru di SMK Ibnu Khaldun Balikpapan-Kalimantan Timur. *Jurnal Manajerial Bisnis*, 5(2), 145-155.
- Priantini, D. A. M. M. O., Suarni, N. K., & Adnyana, I. K. S. (2022). Analisis kurikulum merdeka dan platform merdeka belajar untuk mewujudkan pendidikan yang berkualitas. *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu*, 8(02), 238-244.
- Qomariyah, N., & Maghfiroh, M. (2022). *Transisi kurikulum 2013 menjadi kurikulum merdeka: Peran dan tantangan dalam lembaga pendidikan*. Paper presented at the Gunung Djati Conference Series.
- Rahayu, R., Rosita, R., Rahayuningsih, Y. S., Hernawan, A. H., & Prihantini, P. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar di sekolah penggerak. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 6313-6319.
- Ratsyari, S. D. (2021). Kesiapan sekolah pada implementasi merdeka belajar. *E-Jurnal Skripsi Program Studi Teknologi Pendidikan*, 10(1).
- Rudiatna, R. D. (2022). Kompetensi manajerial kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di SMK Negeri 14 Bandung. *JOEL: Journal of Educational and Language Research*, 2(4), 601-616.
- Sari, I., & Gumindari, S. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar pasca pembelajaran daring di SMKN 2 Cirebon. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 2(3), 1-11.
- Shafiera, D. (2022). Peran manajerial kepala sekolah dalam peningkatan mutu profesionalisme guru (studi kasus di SMK Kalijaga Mangunan Sampung Ponorogo). *Management of Education: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 49-62.
- Shaturaev, J. (2021). Indonesia: Superior policies and management for better education (Community development through Education). *Архив научных исследований*, 1(1).
- Sihaloho, B. (2022). Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam mewujudkan merdeka belajar di SMK Negeri 1 Patumbak. *JGK (Jurnal Guru Kita)*, 6(2), 35-41.
- Suhartini, Y., Muchlas, M., & Kuat, T. (2022). Kompetensi kewirausahaan kepala sekolah dalam mengembangkan edupreneurship di sekolah menengah kejuruan. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 4(5), 4833-4849.
- Sulastri, S., Nellitawati, N., Adi, N., & Syahril, S. (2022). Analisis kebutuhan kepemimpinan pembelajaran kepala sekolah di sekolah menengah pertama. *JPPi (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 8(4), 957-963.
- Supartilah, S., & Pardimin, P. (2021). Peran kepala sekolah di era revolusi industri 4.0 dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. *Media Manajemen Pendidikan*, 4(1), 138-149.
- Tari, E., Lao, H. A., Liufeto, M. C., & Koroh, L. I. (2022). Kesiapan sekolah dalam menerapkan kurikulum merdeka di Rote Ndao. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 4(6), 6469-6475.
- Tobari. (2018). The strategy of headmaster on upgrading educational quality in asean economic community (AEC) era (pp. 72-79).
- Yunita, N., Supardi, S., & Dimyati, M. (2022). Peran kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme guru smk (sekolah menengah kejuruan) di kecamatan Curahdami, Bondowoso. *RELASI: JURNAL EKONOMI*, 18(1), 68-79.
- Zhao, Y. (2012a). Flunking innovation and creativity. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 94(1), 56-61.
- Zhao, Y. (2012b). *World class learners: Educating creative and entrepreneurial students*: Corwin Press.
- Zhao, Y., & Watterston, J. (2021). The changes we need: Education post COVID-19. *Journal of Educational Change*, 22(1), 3-12.