PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN FOSTERING LEARNING INNOVATION THROUGH LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN A ONE-ROOF SCHOOL

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Abstract
Principal leadership is widely credited with enabling learning innovation, yet most available evidence comes from adequately resourced schools served by certified master teachers. How innovation is sustained where that support is absent remains unclear. This study examines how a principal enacts leadership to foster learning innovation through a Learning Community (Kombel) at SMP Negeri 2 Bandungan Satu Atap, a one-roof school with limited infrastructure and no certified Guru Penggerak. A qualitative descriptive design was employed within a single bounded setting. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with the principal, the Kombel coordinator, two teachers, and two students; participant observation of weekly Kombel sessions, meetings, and classroom teaching across the 2025/2026 academic year; and document analysis. Credibility was established through source, technique, and time triangulation with peer debriefing, and data were analysed following the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that the five leadership functions examined operate as an interdependent configuration rather than as discrete duties. The study suggests that the protective function conditions the other four, and proposes that where structural support is scarce, principal-enacted psychological safety substitutes for it as the mechanism sustaining teacher innovation.
Keywords: *Principal Leadership; Learning Innovation; Learning Community; Psychological Safety; One-Roof School*

A. Introduction

Improving the quality of human resources, specifically teachers and school principals, is a vital long-term investment in raising national education standards. Within the governance of an educational unit, the principal holds a key position in directing all personnel to collaborate toward institutional goals (Kadarsih et al., 2020; Mukhlasin, 2021). Principal leadership is the capacity to influence, mobilise, and direct the actions of individuals or groups toward specific goals under specific situational conditions (Wahjosumidjo, 2021), and it carries the organisational authority to initiate new practices and to absorb the risk that accompanies them. Empirically, principal leadership behaviour is associated with teacher work motivation, professional performance, and the continuity of classroom innovation (Alhabsyi et al., 2022; Musdiani et al., 2020).

In the dynamics of twenty-first-century education, improving learning quality requires continuous innovation. Learning innovation refers to the renewal of instructional components, including teaching methods, interactive media, learning approaches, and assessment systems, so that the teaching and learning process becomes more dynamic,

relevant, and effective (Harahap et al., 2023; Noperman, 2020). Innovative instruction is designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, and learner autonomy. Its realisation in the classroom depends less on the availability of materials than on the extent to which the principal acts as an instructional leader rather than as an administrator or a manager (Rahayu et al., 2022).

One strategic avenue available to principals is the establishment and empowerment of Learning Communities (Komunitas Belajar, or Kombel). A Learning Community is a collaborative forum in which teachers and education staff meet regularly to learn together, work on instructional problems, exchange practices, and reflect collectively on student learning outcomes (Ferayanti et al., 2024). Studies in Indonesian schools report that such forums raise teacher professional competence and the quality of instruction when they are sustained rather than episodic (Aisah et al., 2024; Cholivah et al., 2025; Sukarni, 2023). Through a Learning Community, responsibility for student success shifts from the individual teacher to a shared commitment across the school ecosystem.

Because this study draws on several leadership perspectives, their boundaries require specification. Instructional leadership denotes the principal's direct engagement with curriculum, teaching, and assessment (Wahjosumidjo, 2021). Situational and adaptive leadership denote the adjustment of leadership behaviour to the readiness of staff and to the constraints of the setting (Hutagaluh et al., 2020). Innovation leadership denotes the deliberate generation and legitimation of new instructional practice (Fadillah, 2024; Ritonga, 2024). The leader function in Indonesian policy discourse is broader still, encompassing personality, managerial knowledge, decision-making, and communication (Juliya et al., 2024; Solana & Mustika, 2023). This study treats these perspectives as nested rather than competing: the leader function is the formal mandate, instructional and adaptive leadership are the behavioural repertoires through which that mandate is exercised, and innovation leadership names its outcome-oriented aspect. To these the present study adds a protective function, understood as securing the psychological and material conditions under which teachers can risk failure, which builds on accounts treating a conducive work environment and sound organisational management as the basis of school performance (Andarias et al., 2021; Puyadi, 2024).

Field conditions, however, generate distinct problems in schools with particular characteristics, such as SMP Negeri 2 Bandungan Satu Atap in Semarang Regency. As a small educational unit sharing a site and facilities with an elementary school in a remote area, it combines three constraints that bear directly on instructional innovation. First, the absence of certified Master Teachers (Guru Penggerak) removes the peer-expert role on which the national Learning Community design relies, so that the work of modelling and facilitating must be absorbed by the principal. Second, limited physical and digital infrastructure narrows the range of innovations that can be attempted at all and raises the

cost of each unsuccessful attempt, which in a small staff is visible to everyone. Third, a small teaching body means that every teacher carries several subjects and administrative duties, so time released for collaborative learning competes directly with instructional coverage. Taken together, these constraints do not merely slow innovation down; they relocate its preconditions, leaving the principal as the only available source of expertise, resources, and permission to fail. This is a distinctive leadership problem rather than a diluted version of the problem faced in well-resourced schools, and it is the point at which adaptive leadership becomes decisive (Jannah et al., 2025; Sidik, 2024).

Indonesian scholarship on this relationship is substantial but bounded in two ways. Studies of principal leadership and teacher innovation have largely been conducted in urban, adequately staffed schools, or during the COVID-19 period, when the constraint under examination was distance rather than resource scarcity (Kurniawan & Hasanah, 2021; Tobing & Hasanah, 2021). Research on Learning Communities, in turn, has concentrated on their contribution to teacher competence and curriculum implementation in settings where facilitators were already present (Cholivah et al., 2025; Sukarni, 2023), while work on academic supervision has examined its effect on innovation without specifying how a principal sustains that supervision in the absence of structural support (Hafid et al., 2024). What remains unexamined is how the leadership functions interact when the principal is simultaneously the facilitator, the resource allocator, and the guarantor of safety. These are the conditions typical of one-roof schools, a provision model used precisely where a separate secondary school is not viable, yet one rarely chosen as a site for leadership research. Describing that configuration is the contribution this study seeks to make.

Against this background, the study analyses and describes how the principal's leadership role is enacted to foster learning innovation through the Learning Community at SMP Negeri 2 Bandungan Satu Atap. Five research questions guide the inquiry, each corresponding to one of the leadership dimensions examined: (1) How does the principal mobilise teacher participation in the Learning Community? (2) How does the principal guide teachers in generating relevant instructional innovation? (3) How does the principal foster a culture of continuous innovation? (4) How does the principal cultivate teacher professional competence? (5) How does the principal protect the innovation process so that it proceeds safely and conducively? A sixth, integrative question follows from these: how do the five functions interact to sustain learning innovation under resource constraint?

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, directed at describing and interpreting the enactment of principal leadership and the operation of a Learning Community naturalistically, without manipulating the setting. The choice requires justification, since three alternatives were available. A phenomenological design was set aside because the object of interest is an organisational practice distributed across actors rather than the structure of individual lived experience. An ethnographic design was set

aside because the study does not seek to interpret the school's culture as a whole through extended immersion, but to account for a specified set of leadership functions within one academic year. A case study design was the closest alternative, and the present study shares with it both a single bounded setting and reliance on multiple data sources. It departs from case study logic in its analytical ambition: the study does not construct the school as a case to be explained through contextual propositions, does not compare it with other cases, and does not advance analytic generalisation. Its purpose is to produce a dense description of how five pre-specified leadership functions are performed and to examine their interrelation within this setting alone. A qualitative descriptive design accommodates that purpose directly, since it permits a low-inference account that stays close to participants' own terms while still allowing thematic synthesis. The findings should therefore be read as context-bound description rather than as case-based theory.

Research subjects and informants were determined through purposive sampling and expanded by snowball sampling. The selection criterion was direct and sustained involvement in Learning Community activity, together with the capacity to speak to the leadership functions under study. The key informant was the Principal; supporting informants were the Learning Community Coordinator, two subject teachers, and two students who had taken part in the innovated lessons. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, entering the field to plan, generate, analyse, and report the data, and kept a reflexive journal recording how the researcher's own position in the setting bore on interpretation.

Data collection was carried out using three primary techniques, namely:

1. In-depth Interview

Interviews were conducted in an open, semi-structured format with the principal, the Kombel coordinator, teachers, and students, in order to explore views, perceptions, strategies, and experiences relating to the five leadership functions. The interview guide was organised into five blocks matching those functions, each opening with a descriptive question before moving to probes on mechanism, obstacle, and concrete example. The principal, as key informant, was interviewed in more than one session so that accounts could be revisited at different points in the academic year, while the coordinator, the teachers, and the students were interviewed individually. All interviews took place on school premises outside teaching hours, were audio-recorded with the participants' consent, were transcribed verbatim in Indonesian, and were returned to participants for member checking before analysis.

2. Participant Observation

The researcher observed key school activities directly, including Annual Programme Formulation Meetings, weekly Learning Community sessions held every Saturday after

instruction, In-House Training (IHT) sessions, digital and differentiated classroom teaching, and the daily interaction between the principal and staff. Observation extended across the odd and even semesters of the 2025/2026 academic year, so that the weekly Kombel cycle was followed through a full year of its operation. Field notes were written during each activity and expanded into descriptive and reflective records on the same day, following a protocol that kept recorded action separate from the researcher's inference.

3. Document Analysis

Official documents were collected to corroborate the interview and observation data. They included the Decree establishing the Learning Community, the Kombel academic calendar, the School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS), Education Report Cards (Rapor Pendidikan), curriculum documents (KOSP and teaching modules), activity photographs, and achievement certificates and portfolios. Each document was summarised on a standard extraction sheet recording its origin, its date, and the leadership function it evidenced.

Credibility was established through source triangulation, comparing accounts given by the principal, the teachers, the Kombel coordinator, and the students; technique triangulation, checking consistency across interviews, observation, and documents; time triangulation, returning to the same issue at different points in the academic year; and peer debriefing with two colleagues outside the setting. Discrepant accounts were retained and examined rather than resolved in favour of the principal's account.

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, applied iteratively rather than sequentially. In the first cycle, transcripts, field notes, and document extracts were coded descriptively and close to the data, generating initial codes such as presenting Rapor Pendidikan indicators in an open meeting, approaching a reluctant teacher privately rather than in forum, and allowing a lesson that did not work to pass without sanction. In the second cycle, codes sharing an analytical function were grouped into categories; the three codes above, together with related codes, formed the categories data as a shared premise, private persuasion, and tolerance of failure. In the third cycle, categories were assigned to the five pre-specified leadership functions, and any category recurring under more than one function was marked as a candidate for the integrative analysis. The category tolerance of failure, for example, appeared under guiding, culture, and protecting, and was carried into the discussion as a cross-cutting mechanism rather than reported once. Data display took the form of narrative text together with a coding matrix cross-tabulating function, category, and evidence source, of which Table 1 is a condensation. Conclusions were verified by returning to the raw material supporting each claim and by checking whether any informant's account contradicted it.

C. Finding and Discussion

Finding

The findings below set out how the principal enacted the leadership role across the five indicators within the Learning Community at SMP Negeri 2 Bandungan Satu Atap. Table 1 summarises the strategies, their outcomes, and the evidence source supporting each claim, so that analytical statements can be traced to the data from which they derive.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Findings on the Principal's Role as a Leader in Learning Innovation

Indicator Focus	Leadership Strategy & Implementation	Concrete Impact & Outcomes	Evidence Source
1. Mobilizing Teacher Participation	Early involvement of teachers in formulating visions & annual programs. Data-driven analysis based on Education Report Cards (Rapor Pendidikan). Persuasive, one-on-one communicative approaches to address resistance.	Increased sense of teacher ownership. Active teacher contribution in meetings & policy-making. Teachers serving as internal speakers within Kombel.	P1, O1, D1 P1, D2 P1, T1
2. Guiding Teachers in Innovation	Routine physical presence in weekly Kombel sessions. Three-stage academic supervision (pre-observation, observation, post-observation). Technical solutions for inclusive & differentiated classrooms.	Smartphone-based learning gamification (Kahoot!/Quizizz). Field-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Digitalization of teaching materials & the creative canteen program "Cafetasia".	P1, K1, O2 P1, T1, D3 T1, T2, O3
3. Fostering an Innovation Culture	Discipline role modeling. Annual reward system. Verbal appreciation & social media publication. Creative autonomy to innovate without fear of failure.	Frequency of teaching innovation reaching 1–2 times per week. Interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered learning. Adaptive and harmonious school climate.	K1, T1, O4 P1, D4 T2, O5, D5 T1, T2
4. Cultivating Professional Competence	Execution of IHT & workshops with external experts. Training on inclusive classrooms & character building. Utilization of Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM). Daily quality standard monitoring (SOP/K7).	Improved teacher performance and work standards. Enhanced student absorption of complex materials. Student/teacher achievements in OPSI, OSN, and extracurriculars. Balanced religious-spiritual values.	P1, O6, D6 P1, T2 T1, K1 P1, O7

5. Protecting the Innovation Process	Allocation of BOS funds for digital infrastructure (WiFi, laptops, projectors). Budget facilitation for competition logistics. Fair distribution of workload & task force protection. Fair, one-on-one conflict mediation.	Psychological safety for teachers. Prevention of teacher burnout. Uninterrupted continuity of instructional processes.	P1, D7 P1, D7 P1, K1 P1, T1

Note. Evidence source codes: P1 = interview with the Principal; K1 = interview with the Learning Community Coordinator; T1 and T2 = interviews with subject teachers; S1 and S2 = interviews with students; O1 to O7 = participant observation (O1 Annual Programme Formulation Meeting, O2 weekly Kombel session, O3 classroom teaching, O4 morning assembly and daily routine, O5 publication and appreciation practices, O6 In-House Training, O7 daily quality monitoring); D1 to D7 = documents (D1 RKAS, D2 Rapor Pendidikan, D3 teaching modules and KOSP, D4 awards and certificates, D5 activity photographs, D6 training records and portfolios, D7 BOS expenditure records).

1. The Principal's Role in Mobilizing Teacher Participation

The principal employed three main strategies to mobilise teacher participation. The first was early involvement: the school vision and work plan were formulated through open discussion, with input gathered from all staff in order to build a sense of ownership. The second was a data-driven approach by way of the Education Report Card: low-performing indicators were presented openly in meetings and became the basis for selecting Kombel discussion topics and for prioritising BOS budget allocations. The third was the persuasive handling of resistance: where senior teachers expressed reluctance or anxiety about new technologies or curricula, the principal avoided public reprimand and used empathetic one-to-one dialogue to understand the difficulty and offer gradual encouragement. Teachers subsequently contributed policy input, served as internal presenters in Kombel, and completed digital learning needs assessment forms.

2. The Principal's Role in Guiding Teachers to Generate Innovation

Leadership guidance was delivered consistently through three mechanisms. The first was intensive physical presence: the principal attended the weekly Kombel forum every Saturday after class hours to offer direct feedback and direction. The second was non-inquisitive academic supervision, conducted humanely in three stages, namely pre-observation discussion of teaching modules and the integration of religious values, classroom observation, and post-observation reflection with joint problem-solving. The third was contextual technical assistance: the principal offered practical guidance on arranging inclusive classrooms, simplifying instructions, and applying differentiated learning. This guidance issued in concrete innovations, among them smartphone-based interactive quizzes using Kahoot! and Quizizz, hands-on Project-Based Learning cooking sessions in Craft subjects, the digitalisation of teaching materials, and a student entrepreneurship programme named Cafetasia.

3. The Principal's Role in Fostering a Culture of Continuous Innovation

The principal combined motivational and structural instruments to establish a sustainable culture of innovation. The first was role modelling: the principal demonstrated punctuality and a strong work ethic and introduced new initiatives in administrative digitalisation. The second was a reward system: at the end of each academic year, certificates and special awards were granted to the most active Kombel members. The third was ongoing appreciation: good performance was acknowledged verbally during morning assemblies and published on bulletin boards and the official school social media accounts. The fourth was the provision of creative autonomy: teachers were free to experiment with new pedagogical methods without fear of making mistakes, provided instruction remained aligned with national curriculum targets. Innovative classroom practice consequently became a regular routine, occurring once or twice a week.

4. The Principal's Role in Cultivating Professional Competence

Professional development was conducted holistically, blending structured and independent initiatives. The principal organised In-House Training and technical workshops with external speakers covering the development of digital media and the management of inclusive classrooms. Teachers were also encouraged to pursue self-directed learning through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar and to report their progress in Kombel meetings. Daily oversight was maintained through routine supervision, administrative checks, and the monitoring of classroom order. This development produced four outcomes: higher teacher work standards; improved student comprehension of complex topics; growth in student and teacher non-academic potential through coaching for OPSI, OSN, and the creative media team; and the reinforcement of spiritual and religious values through collective prayer and character-building activity.

5. The Principal's Role in Protecting the Learning Innovation Process

As a protective leader, the principal created conditions of psychological and operational safety for teachers. In respect of infrastructure and budget, BOS funds were allocated transparently to a stable internet connection, laptops, projectors, and competition logistics. In respect of management, teaching and administrative duties were distributed proportionally together with the assistant principals in order to prevent burnout. The principal tightened environmental security by establishing a task force and working with the school committee and the local authorities. Disagreements were addressed through fair private mediation. The principal also monitored hallways regularly to maintain order and conducted follow-up evaluation after Kombel activities.

Discussion

The discussion moves from description to interpretation. For each leadership function it asks three questions: what mechanism accounts for the observed effect, why the finding converges with or departs from existing studies given the conditions of a one-roof

school, and what tension the function generates that the principal must then manage. A final subsection draws the five functions into a single explanation.

1. Participation Strategies in Small-Scale Schools

The findings indicate that neither the absence of certified Master Teachers nor constrained facilities prevented an effective Learning Community from forming, provided the principal acted as its catalyst. The mechanism at work is not enthusiasm but the construction of a shared premise. By placing low Education Report Card indicators before the whole staff, the principal converted a private judgement about weak practice into a public and external fact that no one present had authored. Participation then became a response to evidence rather than compliance with a superior, which also explains why resistance was handled privately: public confrontation would have re-personalised a problem that the data had just depersonalised, a reading consistent with accounts of interpersonal communication as a principal's working instrument (Aswaruddin et al., 2025).

This converges with Kurniawan and Hasanah (2021) and Sidik (2024), who report that a leader's active presence in group activity stimulates teacher creativity, and it satisfies the activating function described by Wahjosumidjo (2021) and Solana and Mustika (2023). The convergence is nevertheless qualified by context. In those studies the principal's presence supplements a facilitator structure; here it substitutes for one, and the substitution is fragile in a way the literature does not register, since the whole participation mechanism rests on the continued availability of one person and on continued trust in the data. The tension is accordingly between transparency and exposure. In a staff of this size, publishing weak indicators makes individual teachers identifiable from aggregate figures, and the strategy worked only because it was paired with private and non-punitive follow-up. Where that pairing is absent, the same transparency would be expected to suppress participation rather than elicit it.

2. Adaptive Guidance as an Innovation Incubator

Close guidance through weekly Kombel sessions and three-stage supervision bridged pedagogical theory and classroom practice. The mechanism is the separation of evaluation from assistance. By conducting supervision non-inquisitively, through pre-observation discussion, observation, and joint post-observation reflection, the principal made the supervisory encounter a site of problem-solving rather than of judgement, which is what allowed teachers to bring unresolved difficulties into it. Guidance was effective because asking for it was inexpensive.

This is consistent with Tobing and Hasanah (2021) and Hafid et al. (2024) on constructive feedback and structured mentoring, and it completes the Learning Community cycle described by Sukarni (2023). It departs from those accounts in one respect. The guidance observed here was overwhelmingly technical and immediate, concerning how to seat an inclusive class, how to simplify an instruction, or how to run a quiz on a smartphone,

rather than oriented to pedagogical reasoning. Under scarcity this is a rational allocation, since a teacher without working equipment cannot act on a conceptual insight, but it carries a cost: innovations generated this way remain tied to the principal's own repertoire. The tension is therefore between the speed of technical help and the slower growth of teacher pedagogical autonomy. That teachers began to serve as internal presenters suggests the beginning of a transfer, though not its completion.

3. Cultivating Innovation through Appreciation and Creative Autonomy

Sustained innovation at SMP Negeri 2 Bandungan Satu Atap was driven by role modelling, recognition, and bounded autonomy. The mechanism is a lowering of the perceived cost of failure. Autonomy alone does not produce experimentation if an unsuccessful lesson is costly, and recognition alone produces performance for an audience rather than change in practice. Their combination made an unsuccessful attempt inexpensive and a successful one visible, which is the condition under which experimentation becomes habitual, as reflected in innovation recurring once or twice weekly rather than at scheduled intervals.

This supports Ritonga (2024) and Fadillah (2024) on the necessity of a supportive ecosystem, and it corresponds to the encouraging indicator noted by Juliya et al. (2024) and to the drivers of twenty-first-century innovation identified by Noperman (2020) and Utami and Syamsuddin (2024). The departure is again contextual. In larger schools recognition can be distributed across departments; in a staff this small it is close to zero-sum, and naming one teacher withholds recognition from an identifiable other. The autonomy was also bounded by curriculum targets, so that freedom extended to method but not to content. The tension is thus between making innovation visible enough to be valued and distributed enough not to become competitive, and the annual rather than continuous reward cycle appears to be the means by which the principal manages it.

4. Balancing Pedagogical Autonomy and Quality Control

In professional development the principal held creative freedom and quality control in equilibrium through standard operating procedures and daily monitoring. The mechanism is complementarity rather than compromise: the standards specified a floor of acceptable practice, covering order, punctuality, and administrative completeness, while leaving method above that floor unspecified, so that monitoring and autonomy applied to different objects and did not compete.

This supports Saputra et al. (2021), Basri et al. (2024), and Rahayu et al. (2022) on holistic professional development that cultivates adaptive educators while reinforcing character. The context nevertheless alters the balance. With no Guru Penggerak to lead internal development, the school depended on external expert input through In-House Training and on self-directed learning through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar, which

places the continuity of competence development outside the school's control and makes it contingent on budget cycles. The tension lies between the breadth demanded of each teacher, across academic, inclusive, digital, and spiritual dimensions in a staff where each person teaches several subjects, and the depth any one teacher can reach. The reported gains in work standards and student comprehension are therefore better read as gains in baseline consistency than as deep specialisation.

5. The Protective Function as a Novelty in Innovative Leadership

The study's principal contribution is the identification of the protective function. Innovation carries risks of failure, doubt, and conflict, and the data indicate that the principal's management of these risks was not a supporting condition but the operative one. Securing psychological safety, allocating BOS funds to digital infrastructure, distributing workload with the assistant principals, and mediating conflict privately each removed a specific deterrent to attempting something new.

This extends rather than merely confirms the protecting indicator described by Solana and Mustika (2023), Puyadi (2024), and Andarias et al. (2021), who treat a conducive environment and sound organisational management as preconditions for performance in general. The present findings specify the content of that function under scarcity and assign it priority. Where resources are thin, protection is what makes the other four functions usable: mobilisation elicits participation only if participating is safe, guidance is sought only if asking does not signal incompetence, a culture of experimentation requires that failure be survivable, and competence development requires time defended against administrative encroachment. The tension internal to this function is that protection is personal. It was enacted through one principal's judgement about fairness, workload, and confidentiality, and it is therefore not institutionalised. The strength of the function and its fragility have the same source, and this is the aspect of the finding least likely to survive a change of leadership.

6. How the Five Functions Interact

Read together, the five functions do not operate as a list of duties but as a configuration with an internal order. Principal accessibility is the entry condition: because the principal was physically present in weekly sessions and reachable privately, information about difficulties reached the leadership at all. Resource allocation converts that information into feasible action, since a difficulty that cannot be resourced is not worth reporting twice. Bounded autonomy supplies the discretion to act on it, and psychological safety determines whether teachers use that discretion, because autonomy is exercised only to the extent that its downside is survivable. Teacher agency, evident in teachers presenting to their peers, completing needs assessments, and initiating the Cafetasia programme, is the output of this configuration rather than an input to it.

The relationship can be stated as a conditional: where structural support for instructional innovation is absent, principal-enacted psychological safety substitutes for it, and the Learning Community becomes the venue in which that substitution is performed. The proposition is consistent with the present data and is offered as a context-bound explanation rather than as a generalisation. It is also falsifiable in a way that may be useful to subsequent research, since it predicts that in a comparable one-roof school where a principal allocates resources and grants autonomy but does not secure safety, Learning Community activity will persist formally while innovation remains at the level of compliance.

D. Conclusion

This study examined how a principal enacts leadership to foster learning innovation through a Learning Community in a one-roof school without certified Master Teachers. Its central insight is that the five leadership functions examined, namely mobilising participation, guiding innovation, cultivating a culture of innovation, developing professional competence, and protecting the innovation process, are not parallel duties but an ordered configuration in which the protective function is the condition for the other four. Accessibility allowed difficulties to surface; the transparent use of Education Report Card data supplied a shared premise for acting on them; bounded autonomy granted the discretion to act; and psychological safety determined whether that discretion was used. Teacher agency was the product of this arrangement rather than its starting point. On this basis the study proposes that where structural support for innovation is absent, principal-enacted psychological safety substitutes for it, and the Learning Community is the venue in which the substitution takes place.

The practical contribution follows from that ordering. A Learning Community can function as an innovation incubator in a small school, but investment in its form, meaning schedules, decrees, and reward mechanisms, will not produce innovation unless the protective conditions are established first. For principals in comparable settings, the implication is to secure safety and the reliability of resources before expanding programme activity. For education offices, the implication is that replicating this model means developing and protecting principal capability rather than circulating the Learning Community format, and that one-roof schools without Guru Penggerak need the facilitator function to be supplied in some form rather than assumed.

The contextual significance of the study lies in its setting, which is also its limitation. The account derives from a single one-roof school over one academic year, and it describes a configuration sustained by one principal's judgement rather than by institutional design, offering no evidence on what would survive a change of leadership. The study also does not measure student learning outcomes, so its claims are restricted to instructional practice and teacher participation. Research following a protective leadership configuration across

several one-roof schools, or across a leadership transition, would test whether the substitution proposed here holds and whether it can be institutionalised.

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