BUILDING PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP ORIENTED TO IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Journal info	Abstract.
	This study aims to identify and develop a principal leadership model oriented towards improving student learning outcomes at SDN Pembina Luwuk. The main problem raised was the low student learning outcomes caused by the less than optimal role of the principal in building a conducive and collaborative learning environment. This research approach used descriptive qualitative methods with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Respondents included principals, teachers, students and school committees. The results showed that effective principal leadership is characterized by open communication, participatory decision making, and strengthening achievement-based school culture. In addition, supervision and teacher professional development programs are consistently the main supporting factors in improving teaching quality. The implication of these findings is the need for structured and continuous leadership training for principals, as well as increased involvement of all stakeholders in supporting the teaching-learning process. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of an educational leadership model that is oriented towards student learning outcomes.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of high quality and competitive human resources. In the context of formal education, primary schools play a fundamental role as the initial foundation in the formation of students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities. However, in reality, improving the quality of basic education in Indonesia still faces various complex challenges. One of the main issues faced is the low achievement of student learning outcomes, which not only impacts on the quality of education itself, but also on the nation's global competitiveness. According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (2020), Indonesia's student learning outcomes, especially at the primary education level, show a lag behind other countries in Southeast Asia.

These low student learning outcomes, as reported by the Program for International Student Assessment (Leithwood, K., 2019), are

often attributed to the weak leadership of school principals as the central figure in school management. Principals have a strategic role in creating a conducive learning environment, empowering teachers and ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in the education process. According to (Leithwood, K., 2019), effective principal leadership is one of the key factors in improving student learning outcomes, especially at the basic education level. In Indonesia, the importance of principal leadership in determining educational success has been regulated in (Permendikbud 6 Tahun 2018, n.d.) on the Assignment of Teachers as Principals.

Although regulations and policies have been established, the implementation of principal leadership oriented towards improving student learning outcomes still faces various obstacles at the local level. Based on the results of an initial survey at SDN Pembina Luwuk, it was found that principals face challenges in building a school culture that supports learning. Some of the factors identified include a lack of leadership training, poor supervision of teachers, and a lack of parental and community involvement in supporting teaching and learning activities. This is in line with the findings of (Supriyadi, A., 2021), who stated that principals in remote areas often face limited resources and adequate support.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to address these challenges through the development of a principal leadership model that focuses on student learning outcomes. In the context of SDN Pembina Luwuk, the role of the principal as an agent of change is all the more important given that the school is one of the reference primary education institutions in the region. Therefore, this study aims to identify effective leadership strategies that are relevant to the needs of the school and provide practical recommendations that can be implemented to improve student learning outcomes.

The rationale for this study is based on the premise that the success of an educational institution is not only determined by the quality of teacher teaching, but also by the visionary and participatory leadership of the principal. Previous research, such as that conducted by (Hallinger, 2020), shows that principals who are able to integrate a collaborative approach in school management can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. However, in Indonesia, the literature on principal leadership is still limited to normative studies without prioritizing applicative models that suit local needs. Thus, this research is expected to fill this gap by presenting a leadership model that is contextualized and based on empirical data.

The main objective of this research is to develop a principal leadership approach that is oriented towards student learning outcomes. This approach includes three main aspects: first, strengthening principals' competencies in academic supervision and school management; second, developing a culture of collaboration between teachers, students and parents; and third, optimizing school resources to support

learning. By integrating these three aspects, principals are expected to maximize the school's potential in improving student learning outcomes.

Specifically, this research has several practical and theoretical contributions. The practical contributions include providing policy recommendations for the development of principals' leadership training, developing learning outcome-based supervision guidelines and strengthening community involvement in education. Meanwhile, the theoretical contribution lies in developing a conceptual framework that can be used as a basis for further research on educational leadership in Indonesia.

In an effort to achieve these objectives, this study used a descriptive qualitative approach that allowed for an in-depth exploration of the principal leadership phenomenon at SDN Pembina Luwuk. This approach was chosen because it provides flexibility in understanding the dynamics and complexities of principal leadership in a specific context. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with principals and teachers, observation of the learning process, and analysis of related documents, such as student learning outcome reports and school work plans.

The results of this study are expected to not only provide new insights into principal leadership, but also provide concrete solutions to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, especially at the basic education level. Thus, this research has a high relevance, both from an academic and practical perspective, in supporting the government's efforts to improve the quality of national education.

In the last five years, the study of principal leadership has undergone significant development, especially in the global context. For example, research conducted by (Bush, T., & Glover, 2019) underscores the importance of principals as instructional leaders who have a clear vision of educational goals. In Indonesia, some research, such as that conducted by (Mulyasa, 2020), also highlights the role of principals in teacher professional development as part of efforts to improve student learning outcomes. However, there are still gaps in understanding how principals can address specific challenges in schools with local characteristics, such as those at SDN Pembina Luwuk.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to deeply understand the phenomenon of principal leadership oriented towards improving student learning outcomes at SDN Pembina Luwuk. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the experiences, perceptions and strategies of principals and other educational actors in a specific context. (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018), a qualitative approach is suitable for research that aims to understand social and behavioral dynamics in a particular environment.

The research design used is a case study. (Yin, 2018) mentions that case studies are suitable for exploring phenomena in real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clear. SDN Pembina Luwuk was chosen as the single case as it is considered representative in facing the common challenges faced by primary schools in Indonesia.

Data were collected through three main techniques (1) In-depth Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers and school committee to explore their views and experiences regarding the principal's leadership. This technique allows for rich and in-depth data collection (Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, 2015). (2) Participatory Observation: The researcher directly observed the principal's interaction with teachers and students during the teaching-learning process. This technique aims to understand leadership practices contextually (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, 2016). (3) Document Analysis: Documents such as school work plans, supervision reports, and student learning outcomes were analyzed to understand school management patterns.

Data were analyzed using thematic methods with (Braun, V., & Clarke, 2019) six-stage approach: familiarization, initial coding, theme search, theme review, theme definition, and reporting of results. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of data sources and methods (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2018).

This approach is expected to generate in-depth and comprehensive insights into effective principal leadership models in improving student learning outcomes.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aims to identify principal leadership oriented towards improving student learning outcomes at SDN Pembina Luwuk. The research findings are summarized in several main themes, namely (1) characteristics of the principal's leadership, (2) strategies to improve student learning outcomes, (3) challenges faced, and (4) supporting factors for success. Each theme was analyzed based on interview data, observations, and documents collected.

1. Principal Leadership Characteristics

The results show that the principal at SDN Pembina Luwuk has leadership characteristics that can be classified as transformational leadership. Based on interviews, the principal actively inspires teachers and staff to achieve a shared vision of improving student learning outcomes. This is reflected in the principal's efforts to motivate teachers through participatory approaches, such as inviting teachers to contribute to the preparation of school learning plans.

In addition, the principal has good communication skills, which help to create a harmonious atmosphere of cooperation between teachers, students and parents. One teacher stated, "The principal always opens a space for discussion, so we feel valued and supported in teaching." This finding is in line

with the transformational leadership theory proposed by (Bass, B. M., & Riggio, 2014), where transformational leaders tend to encourage innovation and collaboration.

2. Strategies for Improving Student Learning Outcomes

The principal regularly supervises teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Based on observation data, this supervision not only focuses on assessment but also provides constructive feedback to teachers. One of the supervision documents shows specific recommendations regarding more interactive teaching methods, such as the use of technology-based learning media.

This academic supervision is considered effective by the teachers. They feel assisted in improving their teaching competencies. As expressed by one teacher: "The principal's supervision really helps us to understand how to teach more in line with students' needs."

The principal encourages the strengthening of a culture of achievement through programs that involve students and parents. One of the flagship programs is "Student Achievement Week", which aims to increase learning motivation through academic and non-academic competitions. Observations of this activity showed students' enthusiasm in participating, while parents appreciated the school's efforts in supporting their children's potential.

The research also found that the principal pays great attention to teachers' professional development. Based on interviews, the principal regularly organizes internal training facilitated by external resource persons. These trainings focus on competency-based learning approaches, which are considered relevant to the current curriculum.

3. Challenges Faced

Limited resources, both in terms of finance and infrastructure, are a major obstacle in implementing school programs. Based on the interview, the principal stated that the school budget allocation is often insufficient to fulfill modern learning needs, such as the provision of technology devices. One teacher added, "We still often use manual methods due to limited tools, although students are more interested in technology-based learning."

The research findings also show that parents' participation in supporting school activities is still relatively low. One of the reasons for this is the lack of time that most parents have due to work demands. As a result, communication between schools and parents is less than optimal.

The high administrative burden is another challenge that hampers principals in carrying out their strategic role. Principals revealed that administrative tasks often take up time that should be used for academic supervision and interaction with students.

4. Faktor Pendukung Keberhasilan

The principal has the full support of teachers, staff and students, which creates a strong culture of cooperation. Based on observations, the relationship between actors in the school environment is very good, making it easier to implement school programs.

Leadership training attended by the principal is one of the important factors that improve the principal's ability to manage the school. Based on the documents analyzed, the principal has attended several trainings facilitated by the regional education office, which focused on education management and transformational leadership.

School principals use student learning outcome data as a basis for developing strategies to improve education quality. For example, the analysis of students' test scores is used to identify subjects that need more attention so that teacher training programs can be focused on these needs.

Discussion

1. Effective Principal Leadership in Improving Student Learning Outcomes

Principals play a strategic role in creating a supportive environment for improving student learning outcomes, particularly through academic supervision, teacher training and strengthening a culture of collaboration. As stated by (Hallinger, 2020), effective instructional leadership involves the principal's ability to direct attention to teaching practices that have a direct impact on student learning outcomes.

The findings show that the principal of SDN Pembina Luwuk consistently implements collaboration-based academic supervision, where teachers are involved in open discussions about teaching strategies. This approach reflects the principle of instructional leadership, which according to (Leithwood, K., 2019), is critical in improving teacher performance and

student learning outcomes. In the Indonesian context, the importance of academic supervision is also emphasized by (Mulyasa, 2020), who highlights the need for school principals to be facilitators in supporting teachers' competency development.

2. Supervision Strategy and Strengthening the Culture of Achievement

The results revealed that principals actively use academic supervision as a tool to evaluate and improve teaching quality. In this supervision, principals not only provide feedback but also encourage reflection from teachers. This reflective approach has proven effective in improving teachers' understanding of best practices in teaching, a supervision approach based on constructive feedback can help teachers identify areas of improvement and adopt more effective teaching techniques.

Principals also play an important role in building a culture of achievement in schools through various innovative programs, such as the Student Achievement Week. This program provides additional motivation for students to achieve the best results, while involving parents in supporting the learning process. In this context, parental involvement is a key factor. Research by (Goodall, J., & Montgomery, 2019) shows that active participation of parents in school activities can increase student engagement in learning, which in turn has an impact on improving learning outcomes.

3. Challenges in Implementing Learning Outcome-Oriented Leadership

Although the principal at SDN Pembina Luwuk has demonstrated effectiveness in her

leadership strategies, there are some challenges that affect the implementation of school programs. These challenges include:

a. Limited School Resources

As identified in the research results, limited resources are a major obstacle in implementing technology-based programs. This is in line with the findings of (Supriyadi, A., 2021), who stated that budget constraints often hinder schools' efforts to adopt technology in learning. Therefore, principals need to develop fundraising strategies or partnerships with external parties to overcome this obstacle.

b. Low Parent Participation

The low level of parental involvement in supporting school activities is also a significant challenge. In the interview, the principal stated that some parents find it difficult to attend school activities due to work reasons, which shows that parental participation is often influenced by social and economic factors. Therefore, principals need to adopt more flexible approaches, such as the use of technology for remote communication with parents.

c. Principal's Administrative Load

Principals often face administrative burdens that reduce their time to focus on strategic roles, such as academic supervision and interaction with students. which states that principals in many countries are often burdened by administrative tasks that do not directly support educational goals.

4. Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Results-Oriented Leadership

In addition to the challenges, this study also identified several factors supporting the success of the principal's leadership, among others:

a. Teacher and School Community Support

A harmonious relationship between principals and teachers is one of the main factors that support the success of school programs. This support is not only limited to professional aspects, but also includes emotional aspects, where teachers feel supported in facing teaching challenges. Research by (Robinson, V., Lloyd, C., & Rowe, 2020) highlights the importance of a supportive relationship between principals and teachers in creating a positive learning environment.

b. Relevant Leadership Training

The principal has attended relevant leadership trainings that helped improve her competence in managing the school. These trainings include change management, school culture development and conflict management. According to (Bush, T., & Glover, 2019) leadership training that focuses on local needs can help principals in dealing with the specific challenges faced by their schools.

c. Use of Data for Decision Making

Principals use student learning outcome data as the basis for formulating school policies and programs. This data-driven approach is in line with research by (Schildkamp, K., 2020), which states that effective use of data can assist

principals in identifying priority areas and allocating resources optimally.

This study provides initial insights into principal leadership at SDN Pembina Luwuk. However, further research is needed to explore how this leadership model can be applied in other schools with different characteristics. In addition, longitudinal research can also be conducted to measure the long-term impact of the principal's leadership on student learning outcomes.

D. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of principal leadership oriented towards improving student learning outcomes at SDN Pembina Luwuk. Principals play a strategic role in creating a conducive learning environment through planned academic supervision, strengthening a culture of achievement and continuous professional development of teachers. The research findings show that the transformational leadership approach, where principals encourage collaboration, innovation and reflection, has a positive impact on learning quality and student learning outcomes. Based on the results, it is recommended that principals continue to improve their competencies through relevant and innovative training. Government and policy makers are expected to provide support in the form of adequate funding and administrative burden reduction policies. In addition, parental involvement needs to be improved through a flexible and participatory approach. For future researchers, it is recommended to explore the long-term impact

of principals' leadership on student learning outcomes in various other school contexts, to enrich insights and solutions in effective education management.

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