

Leadership of Women School Principals to Improve School Quality in the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Principal leadership is one aspect that determines the success of education in schools. The success because the principal has a vital role in carrying out continuous improvement and development of schools. Seeing the condition of women who were often demeaning in their dignity, women's emancipation appears. Women will more easily pursue their current position in academic leadership because of the equal right to pursue higher education. Despite these developments, women with ambitions for leadership still face formidable obstacles: primary if not sole responsibilities for childcare and household care; the lack of family-friendly policies in most workplaces; gender stereotypes perpetuated in popular culture. Various studies have conducted to determine the leadership of school principals, but there are still few that examine the leadership of female principals in developing their leadership in managing schools; gender issues in education still felt, especially the culture in Indonesia, which considers women to still seen as less able to lead. This study aims to analyze and find the strengths, barriers, and challenges of female principals in leading and implementing their leadership in schools. The study was conducted by semi-structured interviews with female principals in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and analyzed in a four-stage process - condensation, coding, categorization, Support from family are things that can help female principals to be able to carry out their duties well. The ability of female school principals to master digital technology must be further improved so that they can carry out their functions of providing guidance, assistance, supervision, and assessment on issues related to the technical implementation and development of teaching education in the form of improving teaching education programs and activities to create teaching and learning situations. Leadership during a pandemic by caring, good teamwork, developing trust, Creative leadership, and learning using digital platforms, Resilience, and a learning community can increase the effectiveness of the principal's leadership.

Keywords: Leadership; Headmaster; School Quality; Woman.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The principal's leadership is one aspect that determines the success of education (Wiyono, 2017). The principal has an essential role in carrying out continuous school improvement and development (Yang, 2014). Principals need adequate competence. The principal can carry out the school problem and school development. The competencies needed by school principals are personal, managerial, supervision, entrepreneurship, and social competencies (Wiyono, 2017). In addition, based on the research results of Ross and

Cozzens (2016), found the main competencies that must possess by school principals, namely Assessment, Instructional Leadership, Unity of Purpose, Visionary Leadership, Diversity, Learning Community, Reflection, Organizational Management, Professional Development, Collaboration, Curriculum and Instruction, Professionalism.

Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have researched principals to find instructional leadership (Hallinger and Wang, 2015). The essence of schools is to provide effective teaching and organization (Brazer and Bauer

2013, 650). According to (Hallinger 2011, Neuerski 2012 and Rigby 2014), leadership needs principles to focus their efforts on the school's core activities: teaching and learning. Top priority should be given to student learning, while everything else should revolve around improving learning. However, in reality, there is a fundamental problem: there are still many principals in Indonesia who do not know how to use their authority to manage the schools they lead for fear of making changes (Sofa, Fitzgerald & Jawas, 2012). It shows that the ability of principals in Indonesia is still weak in managing schools. Many schools are closed during the current pandemic, and teaching and learning processes carry out at home. So that principal are required to be able to regulate and manage schools with e-management.

Women are often identifying with tenderness and weakness. Therefore, discrimination often occurs because women consider no more capable of doing things that men can do. Seeing the condition of women who are often demeaning in their dignity, women's emancipation appears. Women will more easily pursue their current position in academic leadership because of the equal right to pursue higher education. Despite these developments, women with ambitions for leadership still face formidable obstacles: primary if not sole responsibilities for childcare and household care; the lack of family-friendly policies in most workplaces; gender stereotypes perpetuated in popular culture; and in some parts of the world, laws, and practices that prohibit women's education or opportunities outside the home.

Previous research has shown a small but statistically significant effect of gender, with female principals consistently ranking higher on instructional leadership when compared to their male counterparts (Hallinger, and Wang, 2015), Davis and Johansson (2005). Although, Franze'n (2005) have researched women's leadership in Sweden, Blackmore (1989, 2002) in Australia, Reynolds (2002) in Canada, Møller (2003, 2004) in Norway, Coleman (2000, 2003, 2007), only several researchers

who examined women's leadership and practices in schools.

However, research on gender differences in leadership should explore the extent to which female principals exhibit leadership and how they express it. In other words, women may differ in the degree to which they apply leadership and how they do so. Various studies have been conducting to determine school principals' leadership, but few examine the leadership of female principals in developing their leadership in managing schools.

1. Female Principal Leadership Concept

Measuring the effectiveness of principals' leadership based on gender, we first review the related concepts. The focus of this research refers to the leadership effectiveness of female principals.

Various studies related to gender leadership do not reveal conclusive evidence of the superiority of male leadership (Eagly, AH, Karau, SJ, & Makhijani, 1995), but perceptual deviations from group members still exist (Eagly, A., Makhijani, 1999; (Rojahn, 1999). , Krystyna, 1994; Shackelford, S. & Worchel, 1996.) Men dominate in leadership styles than women, who gradually emerge as leaders on a small group scale (Bartol, KM, & Martin, 1986; Eagly, AH, & Karau, 1991). Female leaders perceive as less dominant than male leaders (Snodgrass, SE, & Rosenthal, 1984). Women receive lower evaluations in terms of promotion, and men are more dominant than men even when actual performance or behavioral data remain constant (Geis, FL, Boston, MB, & Hoffman, 1985), (Heilman, ME, Block, CJ, & Martell, 1995). Although public attitudes continue to experience overall changes towards women, the behavior of patriarchal groups constantly changes. Be biased towards women leaders.

According to Martin (2003), in the social system, men and women complement each other in terms of work by using two-sided dynamics, which often harm female workers; this is in line with the patriarchal culture in the social order. Although there is an increase in

women's leadership in the public sphere, the fact is that women are constantly criticized for using the stereotypical female leadership approach (Grogan, 2014).

Other data show that in the United States, women make up almost 85% of primary school teachers; they still hold slightly higher primary principal school positions than men (58.9%), secondary schools, women hold less than a third of principal positions (28.5%). Meanwhile, in supervisory positions, the level is even lower: women only hold almost 24% male supervisors (Kowalski, 2011). Similarly, in OECD countries, the average percentage of female principals in lower secondary education is 44.6 (OECD 2016a), and the percentage of female principals has been increasing in recent decades at a languid pace (Hill, & DeRoche, 2016), (Krüger, 2008)

Other studies have demonstrated the impact of leader prototypes on perceptions of leader effectiveness, the gender role of leaders as a type of leadership cue, with exceptions. In addition, when leaders behave in ways inconsistent with their gender roles supporting the prototype dimension, they must receive subjective evaluations according to their leadership (Anderson, 2006; Howell, J. M., & Frost, 1989). Women tend to focus on interpersonal relationships, communication, employee motivation, task-oriented, and more democratic than men, focusing more on strategy design and analysis. The study confirmed that at the evaluation stage, women's leadership scores higher in terms of job appraisal than men's (Sharpe, 2000; Chappell, D. S., & Schermerhorn Jr, 1999).

Selasi Priatiningsih's research (2018) shows the dominant type of leadership of female principals who are 'personal' and 'feminine' and 'transformational' leadership styles. However, other indicators also supported this style, each of which is closer to the masculine and transactional styles. Another fact shows that from women who are successful in leading, several similarities found, namely: 1) A clear vision of what they want to achieve, 2) Ability to balance strategy with tactics, 3) Willingness

to take risks, 4) Ability to influence others, 5) Ability to inspire and motivate others, 6) Ability to build groups to help them achieve their vision, and 7) High emotional intelligence. (Lois P. Frankel, 2007: xvi). On the part of femininity attached to women or the mother is a typical style of female leadership that encourages the level of success of the performance of organizational members (Khakimah, 2006).

2. Leader Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a leader was determined by the ability to influence and direct the school members. Leaders can influence work enthusiasm and enthusiasm, security, quality of work-life, and the level of achievement of an organization (Yumna & Conscience, 2019). According to Locke (1991), there are four crucial elements in achieving effective leadership: motives and traits, knowledge, skills and abilities, vision, and implementation of the vision. In addition, there are five other essential factors in achieving leadership effectiveness, including the selection and placement of leaders, leadership education, rewards, organizational management techniques to deal with environmental changes, and technology (Wibowo, 1998).

Leadership is one of the determinants of success in achieving quality standards for educators and education personnel to improve the quality and quality of education in an educational institution. A leader must have good managerial skills to systematically bring the institution's elements in the desired direction by the vision, mission, and goals of the institution he leads (Hidayati, 2015). Waddell (2004) argues that for "sustainability" (sustainability), a program needs the ability to implement improvement and transformation of change. It also demands organizational and management skills simultaneously in a mature market where cost, efficiency, and increased innovation are fundamental. Educational leaders are responsible for creating an organizational culture and a conducive climate for efforts to increase growth and enhance the development of educational institutions

following the required quality standards (Hidayati, 2015).

According to Bush & Coleman (2000) states that educational leaders are "Culture Creators. School effectiveness emphasizes the importance of what happens in the classroom and educational leadership that provides a culture in the teaching and learning process; therefore, educational leaders must create an organizational culture that enhances organizational development and growth. A leader can develop subordinates (the people he leads) by seeking various aspects, individually or in groups, psychologically and sociologically, implicitly, or explicitly (Salis, 1993). Effective leaders can build coalitions and maximize the use of personal and administrative power (Hidayati, 2015).

The key to the success of an organization/agency essentially lies in the efficiency and effectiveness of the appearance of a leader. Effective leadership because women have the advantage in playing and creating organizational effectiveness. According to Halilah (2016), women's leadership builds consensus and good interpersonal relationships through communication and involvement (participation), has transformational leadership, and is a good negotiator compared to men. The effectiveness of women's leadership in careers can be interpreting as leadership that is oriented towards career development that can balance their activities as responsibilities in organizations, institutions, the wider community, and their responsibilities as housewives. The effectiveness of women's leadership in efforts to establish and improve careers will be successful if they are well organized/managed, through improving the concept of strategy by improving the conditions and positions of women (Yumna & Conscience, 2019).

3. School Quality

Quality is a complex concept. Sallis (2001, p. 33) suggests that quality is a philosophical and methodological approach that helps institutions to plan change and measure agendas in the face

of excessive external pressures that can reduce effectiveness and efficiency in achieving goals. According to Gasperz (2005, p. 4), many definitions of quality vary from conventional to modern. Conventional describes the characteristics directly from a product, for example, performance-performance or reliability, ease of use, beauty, or aesthetics. The definition of strategic/modern says quality is everything that can meet the desires or needs of customers (meeting the need of customers).

At the conceptual level, quality is defined by two quality management experts, namely Joseph Juran (1988) and Edward Deming (1988). They both make quality a mindset that develops continuously in management studies. Quality saw from the producer's point of view, and quality saw from the consumer's point of view. In the producer's view, quality means conformity to use.

Willborn and Cheng (1994: 323) define productivity in education as the level of achievement or knowledge acquisition (acquisition of knowledge). Therefore, it can interpret that whether or not an educational institution is productive can be measured by how much knowledge its students can receive. It is where the importance of quality assurance for educational institutions. The result of an education quality assurance process is the quality of graduates. It is no exaggeration to say that the results achieved by graduates are the leading indicators of the performance of educational institutions. The highest effectiveness and efficiency occur when there is a strong synergy between quality and productivity.

4. Leadership in crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed human activities and was recording as a "supernova" that disrupts human activities (Azorin, 2020). The key to a leader's success in overcoming it is to keep moving forward while avoiding hasty decisions (Kuhn, 2012). The ability of leaders to lead in times of crisis must act quickly and forward-looking but also with careful consideration of the choices, consequences, and side effects of the actions taken (Netolicky,

2020). So that effective leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic is Caring, Teamwork, Work on fostering trust, Creative leadership and learning using digital platforms, resilience, a learning community, and learning country (Alma Haris, 2020). As a leader, when many schools are closed, it requires the ability of the principal to carry out e-management, while e-management requires e-leadership.

II. METHOD

This study is qualitative with case studies in religion-based private schools. This method design provides a detailed textual description of the complexities of leadership, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview methodology and content analysis explored the meanings conveyed by respondents to their leadership roles. Principals' self-descriptions of themselves as leaders used to study how women's roles were expressing in their leadership. Respondents selected were female school principals, as many as six people. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, with the interviewer developing and using an 'interview guide' (i.e., a list of questions and topics to be covered), which also 'allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the respondent's emerging world view, and ideas. New on the topic' (Merriam 2009, 90). Key questions are pre-planned, but interviews are also conversational, with questions flowing from previous answers whenever possible.

Issues discussed during the interviews relate to practices adopted by principals to improve teaching and learning. In addition, interviewees were not explicitly asking about how gender might have influenced their leadership practices; instead, they asked about their involvement in improving teaching without referring directly to their gender. Some of the questions included in this interview are: As a principle, what are the priorities in the job? If you could, what would you eliminate from your job as principal? Who is responsible for improving teacher practice in your school - and how to do it? As principal, how do you supervise teaching among the various areas that

require your attention – and why? How do you do leadership during this pandemic, is there a significant concern when practicing leadership in schools?

All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality (fake names given) and asked to provide written informed consent based on their understanding of the purpose of the study. Interviews usually last an hour and are recorded for later transcription and analysis.

Data analysis in this study is a four-stage process, namely condensing, coding, categorizing, and theorizing. Initially, the necessary sorting and compaction carried out (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014), selecting the relevant respondents' sayings about leadership to see the influence of gender. In the second stage - coding - each utterance is coded according to its representation (Tracy 2013).

Having captured the essence of speech in the second stage, the third stage - categorization - consists of assembling similar utterances into groups to generalize their meaning and derive a definition of the category. Finally, the theorizing stage aims to reach the conceptual construction of the categories derived in the previous stage and see how they relate to and influence each other as part of one abstract construct (Richards and Morse 2013).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

respondents revealed that female principals often rely on their knowledge and experience while they were in school. Female principals emphasize the centrality of their expertise gained through experience in leadership practice. As said by a principal with 15 years of work experience, "I often give directions according to my experience as a teacher and principal". In line with what was conveyed by the principal with seven years of work experience, "even though I have just become a principal, I follow what the previous principal

has done, and if it feels good, if something is not good then I will develop it according to my experience as a teacher".

The priority of the work carried out by school principals is to set an example and ensure the teaching and learning process runs well. Therefore, the principals provide a division of tasks according to the responsibilities and capacities of each teacher and employee. For example, making school operational standards (SOP) is carried out together in coordination meetings. As the principal said, "Our SOPs were carrying out at coordination meetings, both weekly and monthly meetings. Existing SOPs were evaluating and maximized their use".

As a woman, what I want to improve in my work is the support from my family, especially my children and husband. It is in line with what the principal said, "My husband and children are very supportive of my work. Indeed, when the children were young, dividing the work between school and home became an obstacle. Nevertheless, after being given understanding and blessing, finally, my job as a school principal is much better." Similarly, what was said by other school principals, "Before I accepted the challenge as principal, I asked for the support of my husband and children first. I explained that the duties and responsibilities would be more and more, so they were supportive."

It is the responsibility of the principal to improve learning in schools so that during this pandemic, the principal monitors all activities by conducting e-management. E-management is not just the use of ICT but a management step that can break down complexity into simpler ones to provide many opportunities for businesses to develop performance, develop themselves and the organization with transformative leadership. In terms of e-management implementation, leaders must also implement e-leadership (Roman et al. (, 2019). It states by the principal, "My responsibility is to ensure all learning activities run. I use IT to coordinate with the teachers. We use WhatsApp groups, zoom to be able to

evaluate learning. "In line with what other school principals said, 'Teachers hold coordination meetings and provide learning evaluations to schools. Likewise with their need to improve IT skills'".

Leadership during a pandemic.

Circumstances have suddenly changed, requiring school principals to synergize with teachers and stakeholders. The results of the interviews, the principals of these schools carried out leadership in line with what was conveyed by Alma Haris (2020):

a. Care.

During this pandemic, school principals care about the condition of teachers, parents, and students. Therefore, they make and implement policies that can help make the teaching and learning process run. It was stated by KS 2, "At the beginning of the pandemic, I heard more about the needs needed from teachers, parents, and students. Then input from them, close it and follow up on the problems that arise".

b. Teamwork.

The school principal conducts coordination every day during a pandemic. Determine an effective learning process, map the teacher's ability to use IT, coordinate with parents and students. In order for all of this to work, the school principals coordinate.

c. Develop trust.

During a pandemic, school principals give more trust than ever before. As stated by the AD teacher, "In the beginning of the school closing due to this pandemic, we teachers were giving the trust to learn from each other with our colleagues. The principal trusted us to be able to develop our way of teaching."

d. Creative leadership and learning using digital platforms.

All respondents admitted that their ability to use digital platforms was not good, so they tried to learn together with the teachers. It is

following what was said by Principal 4, "I am not very good at using digital platforms; therefore, I immediately mapped the digital skills of teachers. After the mapping, we shared learning together."

To improve creative learning, school principals conduct internal training pieces and attend webinars held by external parties.

e. Resistance

These female school principals also feel the need to do more because when they have to work at home, apart from coordinating with schools, they must also carry out their roles as mothers and teachers for their children.

In addition, the school's financial problems have been disrupted by a decrease in the number of students, many of which have not been paid for by parents, so that the principal has to look for other sources of funds or make efficiency improvements. This is following what Principals said, "the school's finances have been disrupting a lot, students have decreased a lot, we have to make efficiency."

f. A learning community

The current pandemic situation forces school residents to continue to develop competencies. The principal leads the school to become a learning community. As stated by principal 2, "we are required to be able to change quickly so that a learning community is creating in the school."

IV. CONCLUSION

Support from family is something that can help female principals to be able to carry out their duties properly. The ability of female school principals to master digital technology must be further improved so that they can carry out their functions of providing guidance, assistance, supervision, and assessment on issues related to the technical implementation and development of teaching education in the form of improving teaching education programs and activities to create teaching and learning situations. Leadership during a pandemic by

caring, good teamwork, developing trust, Creative leadership and learning using digital platforms, resilience, and a learning community can increase the effectiveness of the principal's leadership.

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