

# PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION

## AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

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## Elementary School Principals Development Program in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to analyze development program for elementary school principals in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A sequential explanatory design was used in this study, by combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. The Interactive Analysis Model was used in data analysis. The results showed that the current development program for elementary school principals involved the making of regulations, setting up of standards, providing block grants, and improving professionalism. The success of a development program was influenced by the performance of the education office, school supervisor and principal's positive response, financial support, and fulfillment of minimum service standards in school programs. However, some factors contribute to limitation of success such as complexity of school administration, bureaucracy, demands for compliance with the National Education Standards, lack in principal's performance monitoring, and interpersonal relationships between the principals and school supervisors.*

### Introduction

Indonesian human resources are currently less competitive compared to other countries. Education is viewed as a main tool to overcome this problem through the improvement of development components. Principals or headmasters are key components that affect school development. Principals are charged with the responsibility to manage and improve school quality within the complex system Wahjosumidjo (2005, p. 83) noted that a principal's primary task is to lead a school where teaching-learning processes and student-teacher interactions occur. A principal plays a pivotal role in elevating the school's development and performance, and enhancing the teaching-learning environment, and its impact on society.

According to the Indonesian government regulations, there are some requirements for a principal, including academic and non-academic staff. To be appointed as a principal, one must go through certain procedures, including evaluation of his/ her educational background, experiences, age, incumbency, and integrity. The government lists these requirements in the *Regulations of Minister of Education Number 28 (2010)*, about the designation of teachers as a school (*madrasah*) principal. The designation is the authority of the regent or the mayor of certain region. Such policy could lead to some mismatch on the competence of principal candidate and ideal principal required for a school. Some findings were generated from initial interviews for this study.

The designation of a principal has not regarded the *Regulations of Minister of Education and Culture Number 13 (2017)*, about the standards for school (*madrasah*) principals, including standardized qualifications and competences. Sustained professional development or *Pengembangan Keprofesional Berkelanjutan (PKB)* of a principal should contain the competencies as stated and followed in the Regulations of the Minister of Education and Culture. Such findings can be derived from the interview with the Chief of Board of Principal Development and Empowerment (*Lembaga Pengembangan, dan Pemberdayaan Kepala Sekolah, LPPKS*). This board is responsible to monitor, prepare and guide principals to improve their instructional and evaluation competences. However, data shows that guidance as one important tool to improve principals quality is still not optimized. And, there is a lack of follow-up activity with this program.

School principals require good human relations. Such skills are critical and contribute to positive impact and effective leadership on the school. Hadi (2014, p. 78) stated that an effective principal's leadership should empower teachers in teaching-learning process, build a harmonic relationship with the society, work in team and achieve school's goals based on designed criteria. Thus, a principal must demonstrate effective leadership practices to optimize school performance and be a good role model.

This study investigated a previous development program to improve principals leadership performance at a regency level. The aim was to analyze implementation of program along with leadership factors that contribute to school improvements. This section introduced the problem and purpose of the study. Part two reviews relevant works on the topic. Research method is described in part three. Part three describes results of the research, discussion and final the part concludes the study.

### **Literature Review**

Cheney and Davis (2011) reviewed and found that one-quarter (25%) of incumbent principals contribute to effective student achievements. The principal plays a significant role in the development and empowerment of teachers who are closely involved with their students. Valdez and Budge (2012) evaluated and reported that some school staff, teachers, principals, and counselors, in the United States were depressed in their training. The result of this research shows that the professional training increases the awareness and knowledge about the depression that occurs at school and resolutions of the problem.

Pont (2014) stated that the responsibilities of the principal are getting more challenging and complicated due to globalization. He further suggested some policies to ensure principals can improve the quality of the school. Some strategic key policies are continued assessment and evaluation of principals performance, and provided "professional development" programs, essential for personal and professional improvements, and its impact on school improvement.

Heißenberger (2016) reported that the relationship between the *innovative principal* and the *innovative school* was found in the following areas of the school's leadership: 1) instructional development; 2) classroom management, school organization; 3) social interaction; 4) personnel development; 5) cooperative; 6) infrastructure, and; 7) school marketing. Peters et al. (2016) conducted a survey of the effectiveness of educational leadership development in the United States, and the research showed enhanced preparation assisted ideal principals. Grigsby and Vesey (2011) found that the responsibilities for administrators, including principals, has shifted from "primary" managerial leadership to required instructional leadership, which requires more special knowledge, education, and skills.

Staub and Bravender (2014), regarding principal preparation programs, showed that supporting policies for potential principals to prepare them for future leadership in schools is critical. Versland (2013) indicated that the conditions related to the recruitment of the principal candidates, social isolation, changing peer relationships, and the lack of guidance contributes negative effects on the principal's trustworthiness and leadership.

Tobin (2014) explained that principals face numerous problems related to their leadership and school organizations. The evidence shows that a successful leader is affected by teacher's support and development, as well as positive and supporting organizational practices. Financial support plays a significant role in principal development programs. As noted by Lochmiller (2014), principal professional preparation, and continued development adequate financial and supporting development programs.

### **Research Method**

This study was conducted in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The subjects were principals of state elementary schools, school supervisors, Chief of Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture, and Chief of Board of Principal Development and Empowerment. Principals from 190 state elementary schools were participants in this study. Data were collected by in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The analysis techniques in this study included an interactive model, including data collected, data condensation, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. All process was interactive and continuous so that it creates a cycle (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, pp. 12–13).

### **Results and Discussion**

#### *Development Program for Elementary School Principals*

In general, development program for teachers, including principals and supervisors, consist of four main activities. The first is through a regulations arrangement as an operational umbrella to direct teacher professionalism training. The second is through the design of teacher competency standards, as the reference of the professionalism competency improvement and certification to

manage and confirm quality. The third is through advocated research, to give technical guidance, supervision, and evaluation regarding teacher training in formal education. The fourth is by providing financial assistance—block grant-related activities to professional training and improvements for teachers, in both formal and non-formal education.

The four activities are aimed/directoed to improve teacher ability in: 1) creating meaningful (teaching and learning), enjoyable, creative, dynamic, and dialogic educational environment; 2) having a professional commitment to improving the quality of education; and 3) being a *role model* and keeping up the credibility of the institutions, profession, and position based on the mandate given to them. A principal is also a supporting teacher role model. A principal must serve as a teacher for at least six sessions. According to the Regulations of the Government Number 19, Article 38 (2005), a teacher can be a principal if he/she fulfills some requirements such as: 1) working as a teacher; 2) having the competency and academic qualification as a teaching agent based on the regulations; 3) having at least 3 years experience; and 4) having the leadership and entrepreneurship ability in the educational field. The importance of some skills and qualifications has also been found in previous works (Gumus, 2015; Morten & Lawler, 2016; Samriangjit, Tesaputa, & Somprach, 2016).

A principal or a teacher can also become a school supervisor, whose job is to do supervision based on his/her discipline/sub field. According to the Regulations of the Government Number 19, Article 39 (2005), a supervisor should fulfill the following requirements: 1) being a teacher for at least eight years or a principal for at least four years in which the educational background is linear to the school as supervision subject; 2) having a functional education certificates as a school supervisor; and 3) passing the fit and proper test.

The local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture selects an instructive “coaching model” because it is more accessible and applicable to develop teachers’ capacity. The Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture, as a local government agent, formulates the vision, mission, and aims, which are elaborated in Regency programs, including specific program for principals. Coaching as an assistive program to achieve goals for principals, has been found, and is viewed among best practice in improving teacher capacity (Tanzeh, 2009, p. 144).

A principal holds both an academic and political position so that he/ she should follow the regulations of Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture. Therefore, in the Sleman Regency, development program for the elementary school principals is performed with instructive patterns. In this case, the school supervisors, as Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture agents, visit the schools, supervise, and create activities in the regency/municipality/district about the “coaching” of elementary school principals. This mechanism is effective because of the limited numbers of the

supervisors. It requires well-arranged scheduling, with the supervisors and school agendas.

Wright (2008) focused and reported the importance of the principal leadership experience in addressing the principal's responsibilities. His research suggested further investigations to discover the proper leadership experiences that affect school improvement. Wright's (2008) suggestion for sustainable competence development is in line with current research finding. Ennest (2010) suggested seven dimensions in professional development for principal. This current research is in line with his report on the importance of effective communication and coordination skills and knowledge.

#### *Factors Supporting the Success of Development Program*

In application, the principal development program is conducted mainly by the school supervisor following an instructive pattern. The school supervisor visits the schools or creates some structured activities for principal. There are several factors supporting the success of the development program in Sleman Regency such as 1) good performance of the school supervisors and Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture; 2) the principal's positive responses to development programs in schools, Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture office or other locations; 3) the financial support from school and Local Office of Ministry of Education and Culture; 4) the need for the completion of the National Education Standard by schools which requires upgraded school performance; and 5) the support from the board of education, school committee, and school society in supporting the school programs. ..

The school supervisor's main responsibility is to assess and guide the implementation of education in some schools. Therefore, the supervisors function as the guarantor of the teaching/learning process at schools. This function is written in the Regulations of the Ministry of Empowerment of State Apparatus Number 118, Article 4 (1996). The correct response to school supervision is among the main functions of principal (Sudrajat, 2004, p. 112). Thus, principal response to programs carried out by school supervision is critical for school success.

In doing supervision as part of development program for principals, school supervisors can take direct and indirect approaches. In the direct approach, school supervisors meet principals face to face in the principal's office or in other forum. The direct approach can be conducted through discussions, meetings, questions and answers, field visits, home visits, etcetera. In the indirect approach, school supervisors provide training through mass media such as written instruction, correspondence, bulletin spreading, and electronic media such as radio, cassettes, or internet. Both the direct and indirect approaches can be used in the principal training to make the program run as what it has been planned and decided.

The indirect approach is commonly used by school supervisors when principal training is carried out in collective meetings. In this situation, the



indirect approach is usually applied through the structured-training mechanism, in which program is conducted in stages based on organizational structure. A school supervisor is the closest component to the principal so that the training might be more effective if it is conducted directly. It allows the supervisor to give some note and feedbacks for the next processes.

Society, as an inseparable instrument from educational activities, contributes as a school improvement. The synergy between the schools, government, and society is an effective media to support the education process in schools. There are also some mediators such as a school committee and an education board which link the school and society. If those elements work optimally and proportionally, then the education process in the school level may run following the vision and mission. The importance of environment to success of program may be good indicator for school as previously described by many researchers (Farver & Holt, 2015).

#### *Factors Inhibiting the Success of Development Program*

There are some obstacles in development program faced mainly by school supervisors: 1) the complexity of school's administrative problems that require more attention, time, and energy from the principal, 2) the abundant school requirements to fulfill the National Education Standard, and 3) the minimum of principal performance instrumental monitoring, and 4) the interpersonal problems between the principal and the school supervisors.

The success of the principal development program is affected by both internal and external factors. The internal factors are related to the principal motivation as well as his moral and academic responsibility as the learning, organizing, and managing leader. The principal will show good performance when he has dedication and service spirit for the school and society. Thus, he will receive the program from school supervisors more easily than apply what he gets in the field. However, the low dedication will affect the success of the development program. Moreover, the external factors are the factors coming from outside which affect the success of the principal development program. For example, sometimes, principal may fully participate only in programs which he or she think provide more benefit and avoid other program. Djibat's (2017) findings in different region also emphasize leadership and commitment of principal for successful schools. This implies the importance of principal characters to ensure good leadership in school.

Another factor that inhibit the success of development program is the weak monitoring from the school supervisor to the principal due limited time available. Moreover, the success of the principal development program is also affected by the monitoring from the society to the principal performance. So far, the social control both from the society and education board as facilitation between the government and society is less optimal. The education board tends to touch normative things rather than the practical ones so that its existence merely

becomes a complementary instrument rather than a connecting agent of the government, school, and society. The other factor is the school committee's roles which should be an agent of change to control the principal performance improvement rather than merely focused on the administrative things. According to Djibat (2017), school evaluation also play critical role for principal success and in this context, monitoring from related stakeholders should be considered for further development program.

### Conclusion

Based on previous results and discussion, the conclusion of this study can be summarized as follow. There are four main development programs for principals of elementary schools in Sleman Regency: (1) arrangement of regulations as the basis of principal development; (2) standardization of teachers competency; (3) providing block grant for many activities about development; and (4) improving school professionalism. Current practice in supervision shows the instructive model in which supervisor visits school, manages structured activities and others to improve principals quality.

A successful development program for principals in Sleman Regency is based on many factors: (a) performance of local office and school supervisors; (b) principals positive response to development program; (c) financial supports; (d) fulfillment of minimum service standard in school; and (e) support from the school committee. Above all, principals become important component to maintain school quality.

Some factors impact and contribute to limitation of program success: (a) complexity in school administration and bureaucracy; (b) high demand for school to achieve minimum service standards; (c) limited instrumental supervision for principals; (d) interpersonal problem due to a misunderstanding between principals and school supervisors.

This study provides several positive insights on development program for elementary school principals, as currently practiced in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The results should be considered for a specific area, although some findings can also be concluded from research in different regions. Furthermore, this study has identified successful key elements for program improvement and further direction for research can be aimed to analyze or create a more relevant development program for region context.

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## *Psychology and Education: An Interdisciplinary Journal*

### **Call for Papers Special Issue on Educational Leadership in the Arab World: Contemporary Perspectives**

*Psychology and Education* (ISSN 0033-3077 & ISBN 16-1121407) is a quality peer-review journal devoted to basic research, theory, and techniques of practice in the general field of psychology and education. *Psychology and Education*, recently celebrated its *50th Anniversary, Vol. 50 (Dec. 2013)*. Publications are circulated to colleges and university libraries, individuals, *Library of Congress* in the U.S., and over 170 in 43 countries overseas. Articles are submitted to *EBSCO*, *PsycINFO*, *psychologyandeducation.net*, *Scopus* and other indexing databases.

This “call” for a *Special Issue* focuses on leadership. Leadership is the backbone of society-at-large, of technological advancements, in education, business systems and government. We invite contributors from the fields of education, psychology, social work, and business to submit papers on *leadership topics*: Educational leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; education in the Arab World; preparing educational leaders for academic and business organizations; ethical and legal considerations for effective leadership in education; business leadership skills essential for effective educational leadership; communication skills essential for effective educational Leadership in the Arab World; considerations for adapting global – smart practices in educational leadership in the Arab World; and effective educational leaders are competent evaluators. Other related topics are welcomed.

Papers should be emailed no later than **November 15, 2019** to Guest Editor Prof. Abdulmuhsen Ayedh Alqahtani at [abdulmushen.alqahtani@ku.edu.kw](mailto:abdulmushen.alqahtani@ku.edu.kw). Papers submitted should be prepared according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). And, must be formatted in *MSWord*, typed, Times New Roman font #12, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Papers preferred 8-12 pages; 15 pages maximum. Any charts, graphs, figures or tables to be included in the article need to be within 4.5 x 7.5 inches. All articles will be blind-reviewed. Articles accepted for publication will be copyrights of *Psychology and Education*.

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