
School principal leadership style in improving teacher performance of the junior high school in Banda Aceh

Musriadi^{1&2}

¹Lecturer Faculty of Teacher Education Biology, University Serambi Mekkah

²Doctoral Student Management Education Program, State University of Medan

e-mail: musriadi.unimed@gmail.com

Abstract: *The leadership style of the school principal is one of determinants factor in improving teacher performance and education success in the school. This research study is aimed at describing the leadership of principals toward improving teachers' performances reflected on their responsibilities, discipline, and commitment as the performance indicators. The study uses a qualitative descriptive method. Data are collected by observation, interview and documentation. The subjects of the study are school principal and teachers. Findings show the following. 1) In improving teacher responsibilities, the principal of Junior High School in Banda Aceh maintains togetherness and socializes vision and mission of the school through discretionary leadership style and consultative leadership style. 2) In improving teacher disciplines, the principal of Junior High School Banda Aceh uses the discretionary leadership style such as acting in ways that have been agreed upon and achieving goals set more by subordinates. 3) In improving teacher commitment, the principal of Junior High School in Banda Aceh is being fair in distributing the duties or welfare which is directed to the regulation and program through discretionary leadership style which has the ability to influence another to work together in achieving goals set by various activities which is much more given to the subordinate.*

Keywords: *school leadership style, discretionary style, consultative style, participative style, teacher competence*

1. Introduction

Globalization era is the era of advancement of science and technology that has led one to the competition in various fields. This requires the people of Indonesia to establish itself in the improvement of the quality and superiority of the human resources, capability, competitiveness, and

mastery of science, technology, and work ethics.

For this reason, the school must carry out the duties and functions to achieve national goals as is set in Law of the Republic Indonesia No. 20 Year 2003 on National Education System and an explanation in Chapter II Article 3 that:

“National Education serves to develop the ability and character development and a dignified civilization in order to achieve the life of the nation, aims at developing the potential of students to be religious and devoted to God Almighty, noble, healthy, independent, and become democratic and accountable citizens”.

To be successful in achieving these goals, the principal has a very important role in coordinating, directing, and aligning the available educational resources. The principal’s leadership is one factor that can encourage the school to be able to realize the vision, mission, goals, and the objectives through the program of the school carried out in a planned and phased process.

The Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 13/2007 on standard principals is that principals must have: (a) personal competence, (b) managerial competence, (c) entrepreneurial competence, (d) supervision competence, and (e) social competence. The principal’s role as a leader is expected to realize the functions and processes of leadership in the overall school education. School educational success is determined by his ability to influence, mobilize, and motivate individuals (teachers) to be involved in the educational goals that have been set.

The school principal is a leader who must be able to provide a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates. In this case, the targets are the teachers who are expected to enhance the work after receiving the influence of his superiors. A leadership style is a pattern of behavior that is applied consistently through the leadership of others through behavior that is shown when the leader is to influence others, as perceived by others. A style is not about a leaders’ opinion, but it is about his/her own behavior in leading

in the perceptions of others, especially the those of the subordinates about leadership behavior (Hersey & Blanchard, 1995).

Winardi (2000: 47) argues that leadership is “an ability that is inherent in a person who leads and depends on a variety of internal and external factors”. Leadership is a series of planning activities such as the ability to influence others’ roles in certain circumstances to be willing to work together.

Tilaar (1992: 63) argues that: “leadership is the activity of influencing people in order to work together to achieve the desired goal”. Furthermore, Lipham (1984: 66) sees leadership as follows: “Leadership is the behavior of an individual that initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system by changing the goals, objectives, configurations, procedures, inputs, processes, or output of the system”.

Leadership is the behavior of individuals in social interactions with the system to achieve a goal. Either this goal is achieved or not depends on the leadership of a leader. This is consistent with the views Fiedler and Chermier (1974: 107) that defines the behavior of leadership as follows:

“With the leadership behavior which is meant in general are some specific actions, in which the leader was involved with directing and coordination the members of work group”.

Participation in these actions can be structured working relationship in the face of members of the group, and shows the consideration to the feelings and welfare of their members. Leadership here comes to work together so that problems arising in group can be identified quickly.

General leadership provides a foundation of understanding of leadership specifically in the field of education. As one of the many opinions about leadership, Daryanto (2005:

9) points out that educational leadership is the entire effort to influence the activities of personnel in the educational and environment in certain situations through cooperation that will work with a full sense of responsibility and sincerity to achieve educational goals that have been set.

In the context of educational leadership, a leader who understands all those responsible for process improvement is at the amount level of educational institutions. Thus the existence of such personnel is important in a school. Kouzes & Posner (1993: 94) explain that “there is no leadership without someone obeying”. This means that the school leadership will not run without the role of supporting personnel. A leader is no exception with the managerial leadership in organizations; in achieving a goal, it does not work alone.

Leadership styles and behaviors are born by the nature of someone who has the soul of leadership. So leadership styles can be seen in terms of the behavior and properties that arise. The term (style) of leadership is a norm of behavior that is used by a person when he tries to influence the behavior of others, namely with the term leadership is by itself the person who claims to act as a subordinate leader has the advantages either in terms of experience education or emotional maturity. So, unconsciously, the subordinates will honor the leader (Thoha, 2002: 49).

Fattah (1996: 93) states that different styles of leader behavior focuses on two basic styles of task-oriented or “concern for production” and relationship-oriented style with subordinate or “concern for people”. So, each institution/organization uses or generates different styles which are directed by different leaders.

Mangkunegara (2007: 67) describes performance as job performance or work performance, or achievement of the work or the work/job performance. In interpreting a

performance, various experts have different opinions, depending on the each angle of view and interest. However, their formulations essentially have the same meaning as efforts to increase both the achievements of teachers and students. In connection with this problem Castetter (1981: 320) suggests that such an effort can be reached through “Lectures, conference, seminar, guided discussion, work-shop, position rotation, program instruction, meeting, special assignment, written materials, courses, case studies, assistantship, special study, exchange program individualized activity, corporate study, role playing, in basket technique, brainstorming institute, and travel”.

Castetter (1981: 321) further explains more about the effort in increasing the ability of teachers by writing on the form of courses, training and capacity building activities and also on the teaching staff as follows:

“Improving of teaching staff comprises those techniques and procedures that are designed to exchange the teacher’s performance and effectiveness, classroom visits, observation and individual conferences constitute the care of staff improvement program. Other components include associations, using the professional library, student teaching supervision, and in services training programs.”

In relation to indicators that lead to performance, Dharma (1984: 211) suggests that the performance is indicated, among other things, by discipline, strong commitment, and responsibility. Discipline and commitment support the human actors in order to work and be eager to achieve optimal results. It is not easy for a leader to foster a sense of discipline, commitment, and responsibility for his subordinates; this is caused by various beliefs and attitudes of

each person and changeable situation which are affected by the condition.

Wahjosumidjo (2003: 110) states that a principal as a leader must be able to provide guidance and oversight, improve the ability of teachers, open two-way communication and delegating tasks. The principal as a leader must have a special character which includes personality, basic skills, experience and professional knowledge, and knowledge of administration and supervision.

Finally, according to Sagala (2000: 70), the principal must fulfill the needs of the teacher such as the work space, the opportunity to participate in decision making, eliminating barriers to the professional, and others. A principal must be wise to take a policy in administrative tasks, as an effort to minimize risks or losses in the implementation of education management under his responsibility as a leader.

2. Method

This study is a qualitative research using the descriptive method involving the principal and two teachers of the Junior High School Banda Aceh. Data are collected by way of observation, interview and documentation. Data verification is conducted by using the triangulation technique. Data analysis is done continuously from beginning to the end, both in the field and outside. Analysis of field data includes data reduction, organizing and processing, interpretation, and verification. To satisfy the validity and reliability, credibility checks are done by extension of observation, triangulation, and member check.

3. Findings and Discussion

First, in improving teachers' responsibility, the school principal creates a

harmonious situation and cooperation among teachers, tries to give the needed equipment to the teachers in performing their duties, and gives rewards and punishment. He applies harmonious situation and cooperative relationships in the school; every teacher is given the right to express his/her opinions and desires for the development of the school. When there is a problem, he makes sure that it will be solved together. He involves teachers in the various activities and gives explanation of the goals to be achieved by doing the activities.

In relation to goal setting, the principal provides an overview of the objectives and targets that must be achieved by the school in order that teachers share the responsibility of achieving the goals. According to the principal, responsibility for the achievement of the learning outcomes is the main responsibilities of teachers. Usually, teachers carry out the learning activities well, although there are some teachers who are not optimal in achieving the goals of the learning processes. In the interviews, the majority of the teachers state that teaching and carrying out other school tasks are their primary responsibility at the school.

The principal gives award to the teachers who have successfully completed the duties well; the appreciation is not material but more of mental support. Mental support is stronger than material support since it is more lasting. Penalties are given to teachers who are not disciplined and do not obey the school regulation. Penalties are given gradually, starting from a warning, giving fewer teaching hours, to moving the teacher to a nonteaching position or to another school.

The principal provides motivation and guidance to teachers to increase responsibility by giving freedom to the teachers to state their opinions to make school improvement.

In the interview, the teachers state that they are empowered to select and assign the work in accordance with their respective expertise in order to increase their responsibilities, even they are required to follow the routine activities of the subjects. When there is a problem in the learning process, the principal and deputy will have a staff meeting in which the teachers given the opportunity to give an opinion, suggestion, criticism, and others related to problem solution.

Responsibility for carrying out the school tasks can be seen from the use of time, materials, facilities, and infrastructure in the process of teaching and learning in every activity. This is related to teachers' responsibility in planning the instruction, carrying out the instructional activities, and in assessing the process and outcome of the classroom instruction. The principal states that the execution of tasks can be categorized as fairly good. Teachers always try to carry out the task on time, in accordance with their responsibility and authority, and with a strong sense of responsibility.

Based on the observation, interviews, and documentations, the principal's leadership can be regarded as a discretionary instructive leadership style. In the implementing its leadership role, discretionary leaders believe that people tend to prefer to be directed, a worker who is determined and the procedure of solving the problem on their own should bear the responsibility over their actions and decisions taken. In his leadership style, the principal provides the opportunities and greater authority to the teacher in accordance with the respective field of study. As can be seen from the interviews, the public relations vice principal states that the principal delegates an opportunity to teachers in accordance with their respective expertise.

Second, in improving the teachers' sense of discipline, the principal has adopted the

steps of helping teachers to develop patterns behaviors, leading teachers in improving standards of behaviors, and carrying out all the rules that have been agreed upon. The first thing the principal does is coaching discipline; performing education activities effectively and efficiently. The next step is providing guidance which relates to the professional competence and capabilities of teachers.

There are certain things for government employees to comply with. For example, the instructions of *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2005* stipulates that each teacher must come and stay in the school on a daily basis, each teacher must be responsible to the duties and lessons on a regular basis, each teacher is obliged to support the effort to develop and establish the school work, and each teacher must obey the rules and regulations in carrying out duties. In this case, the principal does efforts to help teachers to develop patterns of behaviors, raise standards of behaviors, and implement the rules as a tool. He explains to the teachers that discipline is for the respect for the authority, efforts to build cooperation, needs to organize, and respects for self and others.

The observation shows that the enforcement of discipline emphasizes more in the provision of good modelling for every aspect of the school behaviors. The principle provides examples of disciplinary behaviours such as doing things punctually according to the schedules. The principle has the strong belief that modelling is the best method of teaching discipline. Discipline must be started from oneself from small things such as coming to school and starting classes on time. This then can be brought to the higher levels of discipline such as complying to the rules and regulations within the school that are compulsory to be run by all the school

personnel starting from the school principal to teachers and administrative staffs.

The reward and punishment system is also used. The teacher who ignores discipline will be given penalties in accordance with the provisions written and agreed upon based on the results of deliberations and decisions in staff meetings. Penalties are usually in the forms of advice or verbal warning and a written warning. Reward is also mostly in the form of verbal appreciation rather than material. Teachers very much feel obliged every time they are given appreciation for having high discipline.

The principal's leadership for improving teachers' discipline can be categorized as the instructive leadership style, based on common consensus and done according to the situation that arises at a certain time. In a more regular basis, it consists of the principal monitoring what the teachers do in everyday interactions such as making sure that teachers come and teach on time. One characteristic of the wise side of this leadership style is that, when a teacher is reprimanded by the principal because of an indisciplinary act, other teachers will not know. This is one of the factors that help keep the school atmosphere conducive for teaching learning processes.

Third, in improving teachers' commitments, the principal does several things. The principal starts by having the conviction that teachers as partners who can always be invited to exchange thoughts and are able to communicate wherever they are. The principal never assumes that being one is not a pride, but a trust that is given by God, the Almighty. It is a responsibility that, at the conclusion of the period, will be accounted for to man and God.

Another effort is by giving the opportunity to the teachers to improve their personal and professional competencies.

This is done by regular briefing sessions, facilitation to in-service education such as seminars and training, effort to continuing education, and participation in the Association of Subject-matter Teachers (ASMT). Briefing sessions are given periodically especially when there is a problem that needs to be solved. Trainings and seminars directed to improvement of teachers' knowledge and skills in instructional managements are given by the regional offices of the department of education and other institutions. Teachers are encouraged to update their qualifications by pursuing a higher academic degree. This can be done by scholarships that are offered by government or non-government institutions. ASMT is a professional organization that helps teachers supervise, give advice and suggestion, and solve problems in carrying out their instructional duties.

Comfort is another factor. The principal pays full attention on the school work environment since conducive work environment strongly influence teachers' commitments to their work. In addition to the sufficient provision of books and other teaching materials, the principal also gives guidance to the teachers in doing their duties. As far as the the study is concerned, there is no teacher found to be lazy and avoid work, no one feels happy if work is not done well, and very rarely does the principal feel upset.

This is another case when the school principal applies the discretionary leadership style. Fairness is important in considering the needs and obligations of the teachers in carrying out their duties. In this relation, the principal shows the awareness of individual differences among the teachers, but at the same time utilizes these differences as strength to work together for the well-being of the school. This can result in the optimum empowerment of teachers in performing

their duties, where the principal distributes the division of tasks fairly to avoid arousing suspicion in the other teachers. In addition to a fair division of labor, the principal is also very consistent in the giving duties, in this case, the principal always uphold the commitment that has been made together in staff meetings.

4. Conclusion

Leadership efforts of the principal in improving teachers' responsibilities to create harmonious cooperation among teachers consist in providing teaching facilities and giving reward and punishment. Some steps in improving teachers' responsibilities are providing harmonious school atmosphere, giving freedom of opinion, and solving problem together. Discretionary leadership style is used for socializing school policies such as school visions and missions. Instructive leadership style is used for in socializing rules and regulations from the government and educational institutions such as the implementation of the school curriculum.

In improving teachers' discipline, the principal uses the instructive leadership style and consultation. The instructive leadership style is used for such daily actions as punctuality of school and class attendance. The principal gives modelling, guidance, control, and monitoring, and reward and punishment. The discretionary leadership style is used for giving teachers the opportunity interact, advise, and supervise among each other. The principal gives fair treatment to all teachers and staff and pay full attention to their duties, responsibilities, and welfare. The principal is aware of the fact that discipline is needed for the effective running of the school especially in the learning teaching processes.

Teachers' commitments are devotes to their profession, school, organization, and classroom instruction. In improving teachers' commitments, the principal sends teachers to seminars and training in due fields, invites experts, gives teachers the chances to continue studying to the higher level of education, and urges teachers to participate in ASMT activities. Regular and periodical meetings are conducted to evaluate teachers' performances and guide them for better results. The principal always try to provide comfort in and outside school which is an important aspect in teachers' commitments.

Finally, suggestions can be proposed based on the findings of the study. *First*, both the fisuretionary and instructive leadership styles can be used by school principals in managing the school. Wisdom must be taken for which style is to be used for a certain purpose. *Second*, modelling is a strong mode for improving teachers' responsibility, disclipline, and commitment. This should be followed by continuous control, monitoring, and evaluation. *Third*, school principles zare to take due responsibilities for the effectiveness of the school management. Otherwise, the authority of the principal may vade, teachers are lazy and out of control, and the school educational visions and missions are not achieved. Lastly, is recommended that future researchers expand this study to cover more variables in the study of school leadership. For example, other types of school leadership can be found in other regions for teachers with different charactertistics. Such studies will give richer knowledge and practice in the school management field.

References

Castetter, W.B. (1981). *The personal function in education administration*.

- New York: MacMillan Publishing Co Inc.
- Daryanto. (2005). *Administrasi pendidikan*. Jakarta: Asdi Mahasatdya.
- Dharma, A. (1984). *Gaya kepemimpinan yang efektif bagi para manager*. Bandung: Sinar Baru.
- Fattah, N. (1996). *Manajemen berbasis sekolah (School based management)*. Bandung: CV. Aditra.
- Fiedler, F.E., & Chermier, M.M. (1974). *Leadership and effectives management*. Glen View: Scout, Foreman and Company.
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K.H. (1995). *Manajemen perilaku organisasi*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Kouzes, J.M., & Posner, B.Z. (1993). *Credibility*. San Francisco: Jose Bass Inc. Publisher.
- Lipham, J.M. (1984). *The principalship: Concepts, competence and casses*. New York-London: Longman.
- Mangkunegara, A.A.A.P. (2007). *Manajemen sumber manusia perusahaan*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sagala, S. (2000). *Administrasi pendidikan*. Malang: IKIP Malang.
- Thoha, S. (2002). *Interaksi dan motivasi belajar mengajar*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Tilaar, H.A.R. (1992). *Manajemen pendidikan nasional*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Wahjosumidjo. (2003). *Kepemimpinan dan motivasi*. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Winardi. (2000). *Kepemimpinan dalam manajemen*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.