



The Competence of Beginner Principals as Instructional Leaders in Primary Schools

Ibrahim Bafadal¹, Ahmad Nurabadi², Ahmad Yusuf Sobri³, Imam Gunawan⁴
Department of Educational Administration, State University of Malang, Indonesia
Email: 1ibrahim.bafadal.fip@um.ac.id, 2ahmad.nurabadi.fip@um.ac.id,
3ahmad.yusuf.fip@um.ac.id, 4imam.gunawan.fip@um.ac.id

The purpose of this study is to describe the competence level of beginner principals as instructional leaders in primary schools. The aspects measured are: (1) personal competence; (2) professional competence; and (3) social competence. The research approach used is quantitative. The instrument used was a questionnaire. The research sample was 34 beginner principals, from 3 regions namely Malang City, Kediri Regency, and Pamekasan Regency; East Java, Indonesia. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive analysis. Based on the results of data analysis, it was concluded that: (1) personal competencies faced by beginner principals; (2) professional competencies faced by beginner principals in; and (3) social competencies faced by beginner principals in the excellent category.

Keywords: *competence, beginner principals, learning leader, primary school*



INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership is basically almost the same as leadership in other fields, but the difference is the field of work and its purpose. Educational leadership is carried out at educational institutions, with the aim of influencing all school members to carry out their duties and work properly and correctly in accordance with their respective responsibilities; which ultimately aims to develop all the potential possessed by students. Leadership applies in all areas of the organisation; education is no exception. Educational leadership is leadership that takes place in an educational situation or environment; which means that educational leadership should display educational leadership characteristics (Kusmintardjo, 1989; Gunawan, 2017a).

Educational leadership as an ability and process of influencing, coordinating, and mobilising other people or groups that are related to the development of science and the implementation of education and teaching is so that the activities carried out can be more effective and efficient in achieving the goals of education and teaching. This was confirmed by Gunawan (2018) who argued that the word education behind the word leadership should also show the special traits or characteristics of leadership that are educative and seductive, not coercive or repressing in any form. Educational leadership is the action or behavior between individuals and groups that causes them to move towards the achievement of educational goals. Based on this description it can be concluded that educational leadership is all activities that attempt to influence others, both individuals and groups of people, in the educational environment or situation so that they are willing and willing to voluntarily jointly achieve the stated educational goals.

Educational leadership is an effort to influence all school residents to play an active role in achieving the educational goals that have been set. Educational leadership in this case is the leadership displayed by the school principal. The role of the principal in displaying leadership traits and behavior is a determining factor in the success of the school in achieving its goals. The principal is a key figure in developing the school. So that if the principal is good, then the school will also have good teachers, staff and students. Vice versa, if the principal is not good, then the teachers, staff, and students do not want to be good. The leadership displayed by the school principal is a role model for all school residents. School principals as educational leaders must be empowered (Knezovic and Musrati, 2018; Lonati, 2019).

The effectiveness of a school in reaching its vision, carrying out its mission, fulfilling its goals and targets, and in carrying out learning activities has the requirement for a school principal to display effective leadership. The presence of an effective school principal is an organic component, because no matter how many educational facilities and infrastructure the school has, no matter how large the funds available to finance school operations, and however many human resources are available to operate school activities, everything will be wasted whenever they are not utilised effectively and efficiently by reliable and professional school principals.

The role of the principal as a factor that determines the success of improving school quality and overall school success was also raised by Lunenburg (2010). Many research results conclude that the

effective leadership of a school principal has a positive relationship with student achievement (Bafadal, et al., 2018a); and even more than just student achievement (Gunawan, 2017b; Suminah, et al., 2018; Hardika, et al., 2018). Various studies also show that effective school leadership has a significant influence on student attendance, student engagement with the school, student academic self-efficacy, staff satisfaction, and collective teacher efficacy. Principals with their very strategic roles must be able to seek effective leadership. Lunenburg (2010) asserts that the principal responsibility of a school principal is to improve the quality of learning and student success.

However, the principal's performance so far has not yet focused on learning leadership. Some of the visible indicators are: (1) so many schools do not have a clear and correct vision, mission, goals, and target schools (shared vision); (2) the principal has not paid much attention to efforts to create a learning culture; and (3) the principal does not pay enough attention to his leadership in creating an effective learning environment for learning and student growth (learning environment).

The principal is a leader in his school. School principals must be able to play their role as leaders to mobilise all school members in order to achieve school education goals (Gunawan and Benty, 2017). So that effective leadership of the principal is needed to sustain the successful implementation of effective school programs as well. Principal's leadership is the key to school success. Increasing the competency of school principals can be done through formal education, such as undergraduate or graduate programs for school principals in accordance with their fields of expertise; so that it cannot be separated from the corridors of their respective disciplines.

The principal as the highest leader has a great influence in determining the progress of the school (Gunawan, 2018). Therefore, a school principal must have administrative skills, high commitment and flexibility in carrying out their duties. The principal must also increase professionalism in accordance with their leadership style, departing from intention, willingness, to be initiated and based on mature considerations, more subordinate oriented, democratic, more focused on relationships rather than tasks as well as considering the maturity of subordinates.

As a formal leader (titular leader), the principal is responsible for the achievement of educational goals through efforts to move subordinates towards the achievement of educational goals that have been set. Principals in this case are tasked with carrying out leadership functions, both functions related to the achievement of educational goals and the creation of a school climate that is conducive to the implementation of teaching and learning processes effectively and efficiently (Anwar, 2004). Responsibility also relates to the risks faced by a leader, whether in the form of sanctions from superiors or other parties relating to the actions carried out, as well as those carried out by subordinates, teachers, employees, and education personnel.

A leader's responsibility must be proven that at any time he must be prepared to carry out the task. He must remain on standby when there is an order from higher up. Therefore, according to Mulyasa (2006), the principal must be a hard worker (hard worker); dedicated (dedicated employer); and a merchant (has a thousand minds). At the most operational level, school principals are at the forefront



who coordinate efforts to improve quality learning. School principals are appointed to hold positions that are responsible for coordinating joint efforts to achieve educational goals at the respective school level.

The opportunity to develop a school to become a truly effective school requires adequate leadership creativity. Such leadership creativity can be seen or can emerge when school leaders are able and willing to make changes in the ways and methods, they use to manage schools. This ability will emerge when school leaders can open themselves widely to seek and absorb resources that can drive managerial change, and presumably the basic concepts for making these changes are widely available in fields outside the field of education itself.

DeRoche (1987) revealed that there is no good school without a good headmaster. Therefore, the principal is the key person to the success of improving the quality of education in the school. Without ignoring the collaborative role of teachers who are members of the school management process system, Sergiovanni (1982) also revealed that there are no students who cannot be educated, there are teachers who have not been able to educate and there are no teachers who have not been able to educate; what there is, is a school principal who is unable to make the teacher successfully educate. Therefore, there needs to be an in-depth study of the problems in improving the competency of beginner principals as learning leaders in primary schools. These problems include: efforts to improve the competency of the principal independently, so that they can quickly and effectively display a good personality as a beginner principal, entering the social environment of the new school; and begin its performance as an effective learning leader. So, it is necessary to map the competency of beginner principals as learning leaders in primary schools. The mapping was taken into consideration in developing the professionalism of school principals in the future.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach. There are three aspects examined, namely: (1) personal competence, which includes indicators of honesty, openness, integrity, responsibility, confidence, and talent and interest in the position; (2) professional competence, which includes indicators of learning vision, learning culture, learning climate, and school relations with the community; and (3) social competence, which includes indicators of communication, cooperation, social sensitivity, participating in social activities, and providing assistance to other parties. Beginner principals who became the sample of this study include as many as 34 people, namely: 11 beginners principals in Malang; 10 beginners principals in Kediri Regency; and 13 beginners principals in Pamekasan Regency; East Java, Indonesia. The instrument used was a questionnaire. Analysis of the data is descriptive.

RESULTS

Personal Competencies Beginner Principals Develop Personality as Instructional Leadership

Based on the data obtained, the frequency distribution of personal competencies faced by beginner principals in developing personality as learning leaders is presented in Table 1. Based on Table 1 it can be seen from the 41 respondents that: the number who have very good qualifications is 15



respondents (36.59%); have good qualifications is as many as 26 respondents (63.41%); and there are no respondents with sufficient and low qualifications. So, it can be concluded that the personal competencies faced by beginner principals are in either category.

Based on the data obtained, personal competencies that must be possessed by beginner principals are 6 factors. Factors that must be possessed by beginner principals have different values according to the situations and conditions faced by beginner principals in developing their personality as learning leaders. These factors are presented in Table 2.

Based on Table 2 it is known that the openness and responsibility factors both have the highest percentage and average value of 88.01% and an average value of 3.52. Thus it can be concluded that in the personal competency that must be possessed by the beginner principals so that they can effectively develop their personality as a learning leader, the openness and responsibility factors are most needed, then successively followed by factors of honesty, talents and interests in office, integrity, and the last one is self-confidence factor.

Professional Competence Beginner Principals Deliveries Himself as an Instructional Leadership

Based on the data obtained, the frequency distribution of professional competencies faced by beginner school principals in delivering themselves as learning leaders is presented in Table 3. Based on Table 3 it can be seen from the 41 respondents that: the number of respondents who have very good qualifications is 2 respondents (4.88%); have good qualifications is as many as 37 respondents (90.24%); have qualifications as many as 2 respondents (4.88%); and there are no respondents with low qualifications. So, it can be concluded that the professional competencies faced by beginner principals is in either category.

Based on the data obtained, the professional competencies that must be possessed by beginner principals is of 4 factors. Factors that must be possessed by beginner principals have different values according to the situations and conditions faced by beginner principals in delivering themselves as learning leaders. These factors are presented in Table 4.

Based on Table 4 it is known that the vision of the learning factor has the highest percentage or average value of 84.09% and the average value is 3.36. Thus, it can be concluded that the professional competencies needed most by the beginner principals, are about a vision of learning, then, successively proceed with the factors of culture of learning, learning environment, and school-community relations.

Beginner Principal's Social Competencies Start Their Performance as Instructional Leaders

Based on the data obtained, the frequency of social competencies faced by beginner principals in starting their performance as learning leaders is presented in Table 5. Based on Table 5, it can be seen

from the 41 respondents, that the number of respondents who have very good qualifications is 32 respondents (78.05%); have good qualifications is as many as 9 respondents (21.95%); and there were no respondents on sufficient and low qualifications. So, it can be concluded that the social competencies faced by beginner principals are in the excellent category.

Based on the data obtained, the social competencies that must be possessed by beginner principals are 5 factors. Factors faced by beginner principals have different values according to the conditions faced by beginner principals so that they can effectively begin their performance as learning leaders. These factors are presented in Table 6.

DISCUSSION

The success and achievement of the educational goals of an educational institution is very dependent on the principal's leadership role as an educational leader. The principal is an organisational leader in a school that is tasked with managing all organisational resources and cooperating with teachers in educating students (Gunawan, 2018). Professional school principals will easily develop the professionalism of teachers and staff. In accordance with its function, the principal must understand the needs of the school he is leading, so that teacher competence is not only focused on the competencies that are already possessed, but is expected to grow and develop properly so that teacher professionalism will be realised. The competencies that must be possessed by the principal are: (1) personality competence; (2) managerial competence; (3) entrepreneurial competence; (4) supervisory competence; and (5) social competence.

The effectiveness of quality learning requires the existence of a school principal who displays leadership learning (Lunenburg, 2010; Bafadal, 2016). Effective schools are schools that are oriented towards achieving their learning goals, both academic and non-academic (Townsend, 2002; Bafadal, et al., 2018b). Effective schools, too, emphasise the process of continuous improvement in order to deliver students to achieve maximum performance (Reynolds, et al., 1996). Scheerens (1990) states that effective schools have five important characteristics, namely: (1) strong leadership; (2) emphasis on achieving basic abilities; (3) a comfortable environment; (4) high expectations on student achievement; and (5) regular assessment of the programs made by students.

The main task of the principal is as a leader who is really focused on strengthening the school achievements. Effective schools are determined by the effectiveness of the principal's role as a learning leader. As a learning leader, the principal always strives to focus on efforts to improve the quality of learning (Blankstein, 2010; Bulach, et al., 2006), because school quality is largely determined by the quality of the results of the learning process itself. That is, the principal must be truly oriented towards learning, by emphasising their task on the main aspects of learning support. There is no doubt that the great task of the principal is to strengthen all aspects of the school in order to foster creation and innovation as much as possible in order to achieve learning objectives optimally. The task can only be carried out by the school head having sufficient competence in accordance with his task as a learning leader. However, not all school principals who have been appointed have been



able to carry out their duties well, smoothly, and without obstacles, especially new school principals, or even more, principals who have been appointed without the scientific background of the principal. The principal is appointed through clear and structured stages.

Teachers who get additional duties as school principals are basically considered to be eligible to become school principals. From the point of view of school principals' competencies, they are the people who have the capability to fulfill their duties as principals. Academically, the principal's certificate is proof that this capability is guaranteed. That is, there is no longer any doubt about the potential failure of principals in leading each individual to support the activities of achieving school goals (Sobri, et al., 2018; Pertiwi, et al., 2018).

Burton, et al., (2015) coined personality problems with the term personality disorder. Furthermore, Burton et al. (2015) stated that there are 9 personality problems experienced by each individual, namely: (1) paranoid personality disorder; (2) schizoid personality disorder; (3) schizotypal disorder; (4) borderline personality disorder; (5) histrionic personality disorder; (6) narcissistic personality disorder; (7) avoidant personality disorder; (8) dependent personality disorder; and (9) anankastic personality disorder.

Another major problem faced by beginner principals is social problems. Amoroso and Knight (2007) stated that there were several social problems that befell the teachers when they were appointed as principals in new schools, namely: ethics, culture, human relations, security, and facing differences. Hoy and Miskel (1987) stated that the development of principals' competency standards is the beginning of all principals' professionalism in improvement programs. Competency standards are the basis for recruiting prospective principals, principals' certification, principals' education and training, and evaluating principals' performance.

Personality is a dynamic organisation in each psychophysical system that determines unique adjustments to the environment. Human behavior is influenced by many factors, both from inside and outside. As a person, humans need to develop themselves, so that later they can appear as human beings who are steady and harmonious. Humans in developing themselves, must use feelings, culture, personal desires, and develop relationships in harmony with the environment. Principals in carrying out managerial tasks are required to have personality competence.

Professional competence must be possessed by the beginner principals so that they can effectively deliver themselves as learning leaders. The principal is the education component that has the greatest role in improving the quality of education. For this reason, the principal must know the tasks that must be carried out. The tasks of the principal as stated by Wahjosumidjo (2002) is that the principal works with and through other people. The principal behaves as a communication channel in the school environment (Sultoni, et al., 2018; Kusumaningrum, et al., 2018b).

Principals in carrying out their leadership, must know and understand their duties as leaders. Of no less importance than all that is the principal must understand and know its role. The role of principals

according to Wahjosumidjo (2002) is: (1) the role of relationships with individuals; (2) the role of information; and (3) as a decision maker.

Social competence is the ability to communicate and interact effectively and efficiently, both with students, teachers, parents, guardians, and the surrounding community, so that someone who has social competence will appear attractive, empathetic, collaborative, helpful, being a role model, communicative, and cooperative. Sumardi (2007) and Gunawan (2018) state that social competence is the ability to communicate, build relationships, and collaborate, accept differences, assume responsibility, respect the rights of others, and the ability to benefit others.

Hidayat (2009) and Kusumaningrum, et al., (2018a) stated that social competence is the ability of a person to be a part of society that at least includes the competence to communicate verbally, in writing, and / or signaling, using information technology functionally, interacting effectively with fellow professionals, parents and guardians effectively. In the context of schooling, a principal is required to have social competence in carrying out their duties. The important role of social competence is in the personal role of the principal who lives in the community, to mingle with the community.

Professional school principals have the capacity to lead schools professionally as well. Professional leadership refers to the competencies that a leader must possess. Leadership is an activity in guiding a group in such a way as to achieve that goal (Indrafachrudi, 1995). Leadership is the ability possessed by someone to be able to influence others, so that he wants to do something that can help the achievement of a purpose and goal. Leadership is an activity to influence people to be directed towards achieving organisational goals (Terry, 1989). The headmaster is a functional teacher who is given the task to lead a school where teaching and learning is held, or a place where interaction occurs between the teacher giving the lesson and the student receiving the lesson (Wahjosumidjo, 2002). The principal is a teacher (functional position) who is appointed to occupy a structural position (school principal) in the school (Rahman, 2017).

Some criteria for professional principals include: (1) having the ability to carry out the responsibilities assigned to him; (2) having the ability to apply conceptual, human, and technical skills; (3) having the ability to motivate subordinates to work together voluntarily in achieving unit and organisational goals; (4) having the ability to understand the implications of social, economic, political and educational change; and (5) initiating and leading suitable changes within the unit based on broad social changes (Gunawan, 2018).

The criteria for success based on tasks undertaken by the principal according to Sergiovanni (1991) are successful in carrying out the following matters: (1) program development (curriculum, learning); (2) staffing (evaluation, guidance, conference, appointment); (3) school management (weekly calendar, office, budget, correspondence, memos); (4) student activities (meetings, supervision, planning); (5) regional office activities (meetings, tasks, reports); (6) activities with the community (advisory groups, parent conferences); (7) school planning (school development plans, activity plans



and school budgets); (8) professional development (reading, conferences, seminars, training, advanced studies); and (9) developing student behavior (discipline, attendance, meetings, intracurricular activities, extracurricular activities).

The standard criteria for successful principals can be used by school principals as a reference in developing schools. The principal is expected to be able to determine success criteria as a guideline in managing and achieving educational goals in schools. The principal should be able to meet the success criteria that have been developed together with stakeholders. Success criteria that will be used as a guide for school principals in managing schools should be determined based on the conditions and goals of the school.

The success of principals in carrying out their duties is largely determined by the leadership of the principal. Leadership is the most important factor in supporting the achievement of school organisation goals. The success of the school principals in managing offices, managing school infrastructure, fostering teachers, or managing other school activities is largely determined by the principal's leadership. If the principal is able to mobilise, guide and direct members appropriately, all activities in the school organisation will be carried out effectively. Conversely, if you cannot move members effectively, they will not be able to reach their goals optimally.

Dharma and Usman (2008) suggest that effective leadership causes an effective school, and conversely there are no effective schools without an effective headmaster/leadership. The effectiveness of the principal is influenced by the effectiveness and accuracy of the principal in applying his leadership style. In connection with this, the principal should always get used to or practice so that he possesses the qualities of an effective leader. To be an effective headmaster, the principal must know the level of maturity of his followers, so as to be able to apply the right leadership style. The principal should be competent in dealing with situations that occur in the school. Principals in increasing effective leadership competencies by looking at themselves as leaders, teachers and education personnel and students as followers, and the internal and external environment of the school as a situation.

An effective headmaster is influenced by the effectiveness of the principal in applying his leadership style. Principals must thus understand and be able to apply leadership theories in their schools; which includes nature theory, behavior theory, and situational theory (Gunawan and Benty, 2017). Principals in this case as users of a theory, have the burden of being able to apply leadership theory - they have ideal leader qualities - by observing the maturity of subordinates and the situation at hand. The theory of nature deserves attention by the principal; even though the theory of nature is a classical theory and is considered expired according to the view of academic intellectuals. However, the theory of the nature of its effects are still felt today, so that nature theory will still be alive.

The principal is the key person who determines the success or failure of a school. The principal can be said to be a song conductor who is able to guide and coordinate all of their members; accommodate the potential of the school; creating a harmonious school climate; and conditions of a dynamic school



culture. The principal can also be said to be a manager, who is able to manage the school system by regulating the performance of teachers, students and school residents. Rokhmaniyah (2009) argues that to be able to realise a successful school, the principal must have success criteria.

Principal's leadership is the key to school success. The opportunity to develop a school to become a truly effective school requires adequate leadership creativity. Such leadership creativity can be seen or can emerge when school leaders are able and willing to make changes in the ways and methods, they use to manage schools. This ability and will emerges when school leaders can open themselves widely to seek and absorb resources that can drive managerial change, and presumably the basic concepts for making these changes are widely available in fields outside the field of education itself.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the data it was concluded that: (1) personal competencies faced by beginner principals in either category; (2) professional competencies faced by beginner principals in either category; and (3) social competencies faced by beginner principals in the excellent category. Prospective principals who have been appointed as school principals, must be empowered in their abilities and competencies. A set of effective induction programs for beginner principals is needed in the form of a set of self-reflection mentoring modules that can be used by beginner principals in enhancing their competence independently, so that they can quickly and effectively display their good personality as beginner principals, entering the new school social environment, and begin its performance as an effective learning leader.

Table 1 Personal Competencies of Beginner Principals

No	Qualifications	Interval	f	Persentase
1	Very good	95 – 116	15	36.59
2	Good	73 – 94	26	63.41
3	Sufficient	51 – 72	0	0
4	Low	29 – 50	0	0
Total			41	100

Table 2 Average Personal Competency Values Needed by Beginner Principals

No	Personal Competence	Percentage	Average
1	Honest	87.80	3.51
2	Openness	88.01	3.52
3	Integrity	87.56	3.50
4	Responsibility	88.01	3.52
5	Confidence	87.40	3.50
6	Talent and interest with position	87.80	3.51

Table 3 Beginner Principal Professional Competencies

No	Qualifications	Interval	f	Persentase
1	Very good	69 – 84	2	4.88
2	Good	53 – 68	37	90.24
3	Sufficient	37 – 52	2	4.88
4	Low	21 – 36	0	0
Total			41	100

Table 4 Average Value of Professional Competencies Needed by Beginner Principals

No	Professional Competence	Percentage	Average
1	Vision of learning	84.09	3.36
2	Culture of learning	82.19	3.29
3	Learning environment	82.15	3.29
4	School-community relation	78.90	3.16

Table 5 Beginner Principal Social Competencies

No	Qualifications	Interval	f	Persentase
1	Very good	163 – 200	32	78.05
2	Good	126 – 162	9	21.95
3	Sufficient	88 – 125	0	0
4	Low	50 – 87	0	0
Total			41	100



Table 6 Average Scores of Social Competencies Needed by Beginner Principals

No	Social Competence	Persentase	Rata-rata
1	Communication	83.46	3.34
2	Work together	81.17	3.25
3	Sociality	84.02	3.36
4	Participate in social activities	78.14	3.13
5	Provide assistance to other parties	83.84	3.35



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