

# Development of Relational Leadership Model for Kindergarten Principal

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## ABSTRACT

The research entitled *Development of Relational Leadership Model for Kindergarten Principal* was aimed to analyze the relational leadership behavior of kindergarten principals in the Bandung region. This reflective action research will be conducted for 3 (three) months from August to November 2018, involving 5 (five) respondents from the Kindergarten Principal who are determined by purposive sampling. The research data was collected by questionnaire instruments, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. This study will provide an overview of relational leadership behavior that is expected to appear in each respondent as described by Cooper & Sawaf, including affirming, supporting and challenging individuals; relating to relationality, honesty and integrity; respect emotional intelligence in others; use empathy and emotional intelligence to read the need to maintain confidentiality; speak patiently and kindly; managing impulsivity; and think flexibly.

**Keywords:** *Model Development, Relationship Leadership, Kindergarten Principals*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Educational quality is the demand of the Indonesian people to produce quality human resources that are able to compete locally, regionally and globally. The world of education as one of the main fields of human resource development is required to always improve the teaching and learning process in order to produce graduates who are superior and adaptive to the development of industrial technology so as to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that exist. Efforts to realize quality education are needed strategies, concrete steps and operations that are carried out sustainably. One concrete step to improve the quality of education is the empowerment of educational units to be able to play the subject of education providers, who are given the authority to design and implement education in accordance with their respective potentials and conditions while still referring to the National Education Standards.

The Principal is essentially a leader in the formal education pathway. Leadership can be interpreted as a process of influencing and directing employees to do the work assigned to them. Leadership is the process of directing and influencing members in terms of various activities that must be carried out (Northouse, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The ability of a school principal in building good relationships with teachers, education staff, parents and students is very necessary. But in reality, there is still a gap between the leadership of the school principal and the development of relations in the work environment.

This study aims to analyze the leadership behaviors of the kindergarten school principals in the Bandung region and describe the leadership behaviors of relations expected to appear in each respondent as described by Cooper & Sawaf (1998), including asserting, supporting and challenging individuals; relating to authenticity, honesty and integrity; respect emotional intelligence in others; use empathy and emotional intelligence to read the need to maintain confidentiality; speak patiently and kindly; managing impulsivity; and think flexibly.

Leadership through a long process is able to conjure up the passion of the people in it, or conversely become very depressed and anxious. Frost (2003) stresses that due to the crisis of leadership, many people suffer, those who experience burn-out, who cannot enjoy life in their jobs, and many costs incurred to treat emotional pain in the workplace. The importance of leadership for organizations is a very urgent need for leadership education for school managers.

This research was deliberately designed to find the best solution to the problems studied by producing recommendations on the implementation of the leadership of the kindergarten principals. The research objectives are limited to:

1. Kindergarten (TK) and *Raudhatul Athfal* (Islamic Kindergarten) units that have principals with a minimum bachelor background who are relevant to education, have attended training or training in school.
2. Respondents consisted of the Heads of Kindergarten, Teachers, and parents of students.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Principals as leaders are expected to create a "professional learning community" to respect teachers as students and leaders (Peters, Doldan & Carr; 2018).

A principal is not a manager but a relational leader. Because "schools are in the business of forming people" (Mullford, 2003), effective principals understand that at school, all leaders and followers - teachers and students, principals and teaching staff are in relationships and are in touch with many people every day and things things - themselves, others, nature, objects and ideas; therefore, they create and foster a healthy relationship atmosphere in which all in the school community achieve a high level of learning (Eipstein, 2018; Domitrovich, Durlak, Staley & Weissberg, 2017). If the leader wants the teacher to respectfully relate to children as people rather than the brain, then he must walk in conversation and respectfully relate to his staff as people "rather than as pawns to be manipulated" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 24).

The principal's professional demands are an age-old demand where leaders are expected to evolve dramatically to facilitate the development of teacher professionalism in addition to their managerial roles.

Creating a professional learning community is a respected, relational practice carried out by a leader in respect of the teacher's professional brilliance which in turn empowers them to improve student achievement because they increase their own sense of achievement and personal responsibility for student achievement (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghre & Montie, 2006). To create a community or professional learning team, the principle of effective relationships "shows task-oriented behavior, relationship-oriented behavior and participatory leadership" (Chance, 2013).

Task-oriented behavior includes connecting colleagues by mentoring, training and entering dialogues and asking questions providing interrelated work, space, time, schedules and systems for communication, reflective practice and informal meetings. (Donaldson, 2001; York-Barr, Sommers, Ghre & Montie, 2006).

Relational behavior involves asserting, supporting and challenging individuals; relating to authenticity, honesty and integrity; respect emotional intelligence in others; use empathy and emotional intelligence to read needs (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996); keeping secrecy; speak patiently and kindly; managing impulsivity; and think flexibly.

The principal shows participatory leadership with respect for time; attend their own workshop; provide meaningful workshops; share positive, constructive and supportive feedback; building trust through an unformalized and hierarchical culture and egalitarian structure; distribute leadership with staff; pay attention to the feelings and behavior of people towards each other; and talk about roles and responsibilities while seeking as much agreement as possible (Donaldson, 2001). This behavior fosters trust, identity and group effectiveness, which in turn encourages vibrant involvement and teamwork.

The theoretical framework of relational leadership seems to be most applicable to the context of the relationship between principals as leaders in schools, because it illustrates how leadership arises in relational dynamics throughout the organization (Fletcher, 2004; Gittel & Douglass, 2012) rather than only in certain hierarchical positions (Uhl - Bien, 2006).

In a relational view, leadership can be socially built between individuals in the hierarchy when they refer to leaders or followers' identities and positions are validated or not (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Relational leadership is understood as an effort to encourage relational health throughout the organization (Fletcher, 2007), facilitating results that require creativity, such as learning (Carmeli, Tishler, & Edmondson, 2012), innovation, and adaptability (Fletcher, 2007).

Research on the interactions between principals and teachers who measure the effectiveness of relational leadership has been carried out by Heather E. Price (2012). In his research, he found that the relationship between principals and their teachers affected the satisfaction of principals and teachers and built positive working relationships.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Reflective action research with qualitative methods was used by conducting semi-structured informal interviews, questionnaires and observations in two national plus schools in Bandung over a three-month period. The study involved two principals, two vice principals, staff and teachers as practitioners. This is parallel to the work of Koshy et al. (2011), who proposed that action research should involve practitioners in systematic questions to improve practice. Such research is carried out 'at work' and gives practitioners the opportunity to explore systematic problems that are important to them in the context of their specific work. Meyer (2000) states that the power of action research lies in its ability to help create solutions to practical problems in certain work-based situations.

## 4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this study it was found that the principal's relational leadership in Bandung City was in a very high category. From the 4 dimensions of the Relational Leadership of Kindergarten School Principals all are in a very high category. The dimensions include service quality, behavioral balance, building good relationships and showing self discipline.

First, the quality of the Principal's service in the city of Bandung can be seen from the principal having a vision as a leader, orientation to service, the ability to build followership, providing opportunities for teachers and staff to come up with ideas, challenges and opinions, able to

create school vision and mission realize goals, and be able to empower teachers and staff. The principal in the city of Bandung, has a vision as a leader to develop his school. They know that their job as leaders is to develop the organization for the better. His vision as a leader is supported by an excellent service orientation for everyone, both teachers, students, parents, and the community. The quality of service of a good headmaster is not only able to move him to provide services to others, but they are able to mobilize subordinates and be able to empower existing resources.

The second dimension, the principal in Bandung City shows a balance of behavior. This balance of behavior is shown through trust and consistency in action, acting according to the rules, religious norms, and social prevailing, being able to make the hardest decisions according to ethics, having sympathy and empathy, having social sensitivity, being able to motivate others, able to resolve problems peacefully, polite words and harmony between words and deeds.

The third dimension, principals in Bandung City are able to build good relationships including being able to form and work in teams, maintain trust, and realize the importance of communication.

The fourth dimension, principals in Bandung City are able to demonstrate self-discipline which includes discipline in each action, able to provide appropriate feedback, able to increase interaction with others, set a good example, and be able to delegate appropriately. But if we make a comparison of the four dimensions, the dimension shows self discipline is at a smaller value. This is because the Kindergarten Principals, especially in the city of Bandung, have a considerable work load, especially school administration problems. This workload, of course, is not comparable to the time allocation given, especially the Principal does his own work, without obtaining assistance from administrative staff. Although indeed, a small number of schools have special administrative personnel who can assist the Principal, but even then it is the nature of honorary staff. Therefore, there is a need for Government efforts in facilitating special Administrative Staff in Kindergarten Schools, so that administrative activities run well and principals are able to complete their main tasks and functions smoothly. From these four dimensions it can be concluded that Principals in Bandung City have relational leadership. This is in line with the opinion of George (2003) who argues that a leader is said to be a relational leader, if he really can develop leadership qualities correctly, has a lot of experience and at least has 5 (five) traits called Dimensions of Relational Leadership. The dimensions of relational leadership are: (1) Understanding their purpose; (2) Practicing solid values; (3) Leading with heart; (4) Establishing connected relationships; and (5) Demonstrating self-discipline.

Evaluation and supervision activities to improve the School Relational Leadership Development Model are carried out internally and externally. Internally carried out by the Principal regarding teacher performance, Administration, achievement of work results, achievement of academic and non-academic achievements of students, achievement of programs or policies, achievement of rules or regulations,

and use of funds / program funding (efficiency and effectiveness). Monitoring and evaluation are conducted periodically or periodically. Whereas external Evaluation and Supervision is carried out by School Supervisors, also supervisors from the Office of Education regarding the implementation of 8 National Education Standards (SNP). Supervision and evaluation are conducted regularly and scheduled. The evaluation and supervision of the School improvement program in the city of Bandung is carried out through supervision, routine checks and regular reports. Evaluation and supervision refers to predetermined indicators. Reports were submitted to the Bandung City Education Service.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The development program of the School Relations Leadership Development Model is not without a number of problems and weaknesses later, but in general the managers of Kindergarten are now making efforts towards the School Relations Leadership Development Model. Regarding problems, weaknesses and supporting potential, there is a tendency for the program to develop the School Relationship Leadership Development Model going forward and the results will be better and optimal. Kindergarten managers will reflect on the lack of implementation of the previous program to improve it in the next program. Program evaluation activities, implementation of SWOT analysis, must be carried out so that the School Relations Leadership Development Model program from time to time gets better results.

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