

# Principal Leadership and Student Achievement

Lili Abdullah Rozak\*, Sumarto, Aan Komariah, Evy Segarawati Ampry

School of Postgraduate  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
Bandung, Indonesia  
\*liliabdullah1976@gmail.com

**Abstract**—This research aims to understand the extent to which the principal's leadership affects student achievement in Ciamis Regency, West Java Province - Indonesia. This research was motivated by the acquisition of the 2019 National Exam scores in Ciamis. This type of research used in this study is qualitative with the phenomenology method. This research was conducted on 18 principal respondents as samples. To obtain data and information, researchers conducted a literature study. In addition, researchers conducted interviews with several school principals. The school sample is based on the number of students who are large, medium and small. In general, the results of the study state that the principal's leadership does not have a direct impact on student achievement. Because based on the observation that in schools with a large number of students, a large number of student achievements were found. In general, the principal stated that the principal's leadership competence had an effect on improving student achievement. Because there are not a few school principals who have the competence to influence the achievement of their students, both academic and non-academic achievements. The principal must have competence in managing the resources at his school in an effort to improve student achievement in the school he leads.

**Keywords**—leadership, school principal, students achievement

## I. INTRODUCTION

All human beings are obliged to get education. Education is a need that humans must have during their life. Humans are trying and learning since they were born on this earth. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System that education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, as well as skills needed by him, society, nation and state. There is also a difference between the results of education that each congregation gets, depending on the efforts they do based on the source and the process they do.

Student academic achievement is not only an effective school but a sign of future youth generations in particular and the nation in general [1]. So with that, student achievement becomes a very phenomenon and becomes the center of attention in every educational institution anywhere, parents, government with policies and plans. The principal strives to

make the school the best for the quality of its graduates. One of the measures for the quality of graduates through academics is the implementation of the national exam.



Fig. 1. Score achievement of 2019 national exam Province of West Java-Indonesia [2].

The results of the 2019 national exam showed in figure 1 that the national level student achievement average was 52.82 and the provincial level was 53.57. Meanwhile, the 2019 National Exam Score Data for Ciamis Regency obtained an average value of 50.30. The average score of the exam gives an idea of the student's achievement in Ciamis Regency, which is less than the average for West Java Province and nationally. Based on data from the *Pusat Penilaian Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, Ciamis Regency is in the 14th position out of 27 Regency/Cities in West Java Province.

The strategic plan of the Ciamis Education Office is targeting the average national exam results in 2019 to be 57.50. This is motivated by the achievement of the average national exam score in 2016 which reached 68.60. The test scores exceed the average scores of the national and provincial examinations. It is feared that the decline in academic achievement is that the quality of junior high school graduates will not be able to compete at the provincial and even national

levels. The comparison of Mean per Academic Year show in figure 2.

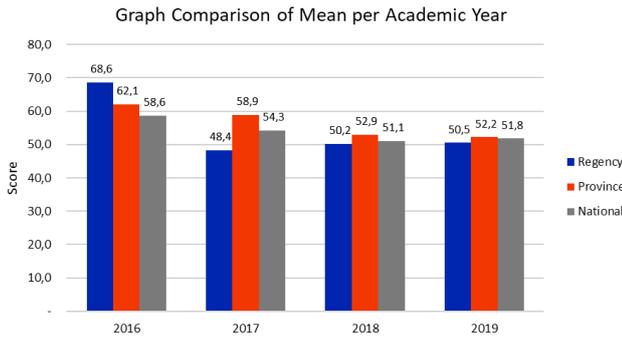


Fig. 2. Graph comparison of mean per academic year [2].

The results of the national exam cannot be separated from the responsibility for the performance of a leader. The leader in this case is the principal. Principal leadership is held accountable for student achievement even though some studies have found that it does not have a direct effect on student achievement [3]. From the results of research, it is known that it turns out that the principal's influence reaches 25% of all the influencing factors [4].

This research aims to know what competencies should the principal have and to understand the extent to which the principal's leadership on student achievement in Ciamis Regency, West Java Province - Indonesia.

II. METHODS

This type of research used in this study is qualitative with the phenomenology method. This research was conducted on 18 principal respondents as samples from 127 public and private schools. These schools are the public junior high school level which is divided into three categories based on the number of students. The school is a large number, medium and small number of students. Data were collected by means of in-depth interviews with the principal. Interviews were conducted via video calls, telephone and direct interviews. In addition, we also interviewed the *Dinas Pendidikan* (Education Office) who handled the field of teachers and education personnel, facilities and infrastructure and curriculum as a comparison of information obtained from school principals.

TABLE I. SCHOOL GROUPS BASED ON NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Group-1	Group-2	Group-3
Sch-01	Sch-07	Sch-13
Sch-02	Sch-08	Sch-14
Sch-03	Sch-09	Sch-15
Sch-04	Sch-10	Sch-16
Sch-05	Sch-11	Sch-17
Sch-06	Sch-12	Sch-18

The schools sampled were based on the number of students, namely Group-1, namely the school group with the most

number of students, Group-2, namely schools with moderate numbers of students, and Group-3, namely the school group with the least number of students. Some of these schools can be seen in the table 1 below.

After the data on the principles were collected, the data were grouped according to school groups, namely the number of students. The data grouping will describe the competencies that school principals have and need and the achievements of students at the school.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Based on the results of tracing information through the *Dinas Parawisata* (Tourism Office), Ciamis is an area located in a flat, wavy morphology to the mountains. The structure of the area consists of highlands and lowlands. Schools are scattered in the area, especially in the highlands, based on the results of researchers' observations. In general, principals in suburban or border areas gave the same and different answers to schools in urban areas. Schools in Group-1 and Group-2 are generally scattered both in the city center and in the suburbs. While Group-3 is generally schools in rural areas, not the least for Group-2 is in rural areas.

Interviews were conducted with a number of school principals. Questions through interviews that have been conducted to the principal. In general, the principal said that student achievement was largely determined by the leadership of the school principal and could not be separated from the principal's ability in good school management. One of the statements was made by the principal in Group-1. On the other hand, the principal's business is where the alumni can be accepted into public secondary schools in downtown Ciamis. This provides an indication of achievement for the quality of student alumni. So in this case the principal has a direct influence on the other side such as motivation for students. This can be an attraction for the community to send their children to these schools.

In general, according to the principal in Group-3, academic achievement cannot be excelled but non-academic achievement. Most of the students' non-academic achievements are in the arts and sports, which are their advantages as well as their attractiveness for prospective students. However, many schools in Group-1 and Group-2 stated that non-academic achievement was the prima donna for their schools as well as an attraction for elementary school graduates. In addition, another advantage is that student achievement in the field of religion is also a special attraction. So that students who have achievements in non-academic fields are more easily accepted in secondary schools in superior schools in urban areas.

Another strategy undertaken by the principal is by strengthening or enriching teaching materials for students to improve student achievement, especially students at the final level. Reinforcement of the material is carried out outside of class hours, namely after the learning process is completed.

Several school principals stated that student achievement was predominantly influenced by heredity. This descendant who gives them success in learning is not influenced by the principal. In addition, the environment also helps shape student achievement. Students generally associate with an environment that has close emotional relationships with their surrounding friends, so it depends on students when and with whom they hang out so that it will have an influence on their achievement in learning. But on the other hand, the principal gives a role to his school and becomes a priority in shaping the school.

The results of interviews with school principals in improving their competence, namely through the head strengthening program implemented by the government, namely the *Lembaga Pengembangan dan Pemberdayaan Kepala Sekolah* or LP2KS (Institute for Development and Empowerment of School Principals). In addition, school principals improve competence through seminars and other training programs. But from interviews with school principals in increasing their capacity by writing in the mass media, carrying out school action research, and being active in professional organizations, only a few. It all depends on their ability in their ability to write research results.

The Teacher and Education Personnel Sector argues that the competence of school principals in Ciamis Regency needs to be improved. There needs to be a planned, continuous and applicable training for the organization so that their competence is maintained and can be improved. This can trigger an increase in student achievement in Ciamis Regency. Meanwhile, according to the school facilities and infrastructure section of the local education office, the facilities and infrastructure in public schools are always fulfilled and equipped for all deficiencies based on the request of the school principal. It is different from private schools because the school is managed by foundations. So that according to the manager of the facilities and infrastructure of the Education Office, it is sufficient for the process of implementing learning in public schools. So to improve student achievement, only the principal's competence in managing the school remains. Meanwhile, according to the field of curriculum, student achievement is influenced by the ability of the principal in school management, not from the curriculum. Because the curriculum is the same nationally using the same curriculum. In addition, teacher competence also needs to be improved. The principal must give permission to teachers that will improve their competence through their discussions at teacher professional organizations, continuing school, education and training and so on. Meanwhile, the principal must be able to accept and adapt to any changes in the environment due to the influence of globalization.

## *B. Discussion*

The research results have been presented in the description above. From the results of interviews conducted by researchers, various information can be generated from the principal, the school facilities and infrastructure department as well as from the school supervisor. Based on the results of the interview, it

turned out that there were very few school principals who stated that they had a direct effect on student academic achievement. In general, the principal expressed his opinion that the principal's influence on improving student achievement was not directly attributable to the principal. The principal's efforts to improve student achievement usually create a conducive environment. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by Eissa Al-Safran that the results of her research state that the hypothetical analysis data of the principal's leadership style is indeed related to school achievement [5]. This relationship can be direct or indirect through the school work environment. And this has become the research material, it turns out that the school ecosystem is one of the main factors in determining student academic achievement.

The results of other studies have shown that the principal has no direct effect on improving student achievement. According to Yvonne L. Goddard, this conformity states that student achievement is determined by the extent to which teachers collaborate in their schools [6]. So according to him, the principal should be able to improve teacher collaborative work in schools. The greater the collaboration between teachers, the greater the opportunity for increased student achievement. Meanwhile, according to Hallinger, the principal does not directly affect student achievement, but it directly affects the school climate [7]. In fact, according to him, the effect of the principal on student achievement is close to zero. Also according to Janice E. Gerland, from the results of her research, there is no correlation between leadership behavior and the principal and student achievement [8]. A strong relationship in student achievement is between teachers and students.

The principal must also be able to improve his competence. Moreover, the demands on the competence of the 21st century today [9]. One of the abilities that need to be possessed is the digital ability of the principal. Various benefits that will be obtained by principals with digital abilities can communicate remotely, collaborate with fellow professions, exchange opinions, information, innovate through internet media and others so that they are able to change themselves from their previous abilities so that they can become examples for teachers- the teacher is also the student. This competency is being enforced in the presence of the current coronavirus 19 pandemic. So that the ability of the principal is in accordance with the demands of 21st Century competence. The 21st century competence is like what is conveyed by the facilities and infrastructure division that schools are always filled with lack of infrastructure in their schools so that increasing student learning achievement can be achieved [9].

The competence of the principal described above leads to the resulting student achievement. This student achievement is a part that the community can see and feel the benefits of as the beneficiary of school services. The community will benefit from sending their children to school so that they have good learning achievements, of course, have the competencies expected in the 21st century. Student achievement is an asset

that students have for their future. They will really hope with his achievements. In the future, they hope that they will get success from the knowledge they develop.

Other student achievement factors according to some school principals apart from leadership are heredity or family factors. This suitability is the same as stated by Cristenson et al. and Széll that heredity is one of the factors of student learning success [10,11]. The entry and exit of the principal also provides its own causes. Schools that experience high turnover of school principals tend not to experience an increase in student achievement, this is in line with what Ashley Miller stated that student achievement in two years has decreased and will then increase in the next three years. Meanwhile, Ciamis Regency tends to have a high turnover of school principals [12]. This is thought to have an impact on student achievement.

Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 13 of 2007 states that school principals who receive assignments from authorized supervisors must have competency standards. Based on these regulations, there are 5 competencies that must be possessed by school principals, namely personality competence, managerial competence, supervisory competence, social competence and entrepreneurial competence. In addition to the competencies that have been mentioned above, for now the principal must also have 21st century competence. This competency is a competency that is more focused on the demands of today's times. Along with this, the 21st century competence of the principal is needed in increasing the competency abilities of students. 21st Century Skills identifies the competencies needed in the 21st century, namely "The 4Cs" - communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity [9].

The competencies of school principals that have been described above in carrying out their duties are expected to be able to become effective school principals. The ability of an effective school principal that the principal as a leader is able to control his organization by using available organizational resources effectively. Several statements that can be cited according to Mukhtar et al. that in order to become an effective leader, several things are suggested, namely 1) the leadership must certainly carry out strategic things for the progress and development of the organization, 2) the leadership is advised to continue to make breakthroughs and changes in adjusting organizational goals with the needs of the community, 3) related to curriculum review and other regulations, it is hoped that the leadership will have the courage to allocate funds to improve service quality, 4) besides the commitment of the leadership organization, it is hoped that the leadership will always strive to carry out supervision, both directly and indirectly and 5) the leadership is also advised to get involved a lot in activities [13].

The various descriptions that have been described above are how a school principal leads the organization will be seen from the effectiveness of the organization's movement in achieving its goals. He cannot move alone, and must be assisted by his

followers, namely teachers and education personnel. In providing student learning motivation so that student achievement can be achieved. The principal can exert direct influence on students and teachers through conducive conditions in the school environment. Motivation that is directly felt by students in general comes from the teacher directly, but it does not cover the possibility that the principal can also directly affect student achievement. As a leader, the principal remains responsible for the success of students in learning. Every institution that asks about the success of students, of course, it is directly met by the principal. So in this case the principal plays an important role in student achievement.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results of the discussion above provide an overview of the competencies that must be possessed by school principals and efforts to improve student achievement. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 13 of 2007 the competencies that the principal must have are personality competence, managerial competence, supervisory competence, social competence and entrepreneurial competence. Meanwhile, the competencies of principals in the 21st century that must be possessed are communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity according to the US-based Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

The principal as a leader must be able to use and utilize all organizational resources at his disposal for his effectiveness as a school principal. The results that can be achieved on this effectiveness are a number of student achievements which ultimately have an impact on school performance.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First, I would like to say to the parents who always provide prayers and motivation in the process of completing this research. Furthermore, my wife and children were always there to accompany me every step of the way in my studies. Finally, the supervisors who always provide guidance and enthusiasm for the completion of their articles and do not forget their friends in arms in taking doctoral studies.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] MeenuDev, "Factors affecting the academic achievement: a study of elementary school students of ncr delhi, india," *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 7, No.4, 2016.
- [2] Education Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019.
- [3] J.A. Ross and P. Gray, "School leadership and student achievement: the mediating effects of teacher beliefs," *Canadian Journal Of Education*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 798 822, 2006.
- [4] R.J. Marzano, T. Waters and B.A. McNulty, *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.
- [5] E. Al-Safran, D. Brown and A. Wisman, "The effect of principal's leadership style on school environment and outcome," *Research in*

- Higher Education Journal, Academic and Business Research Institute. 147 Medjool Trail, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081, 2014.
- [6] Y.L. Goddard, "Connecting principal leadership, teacher collaboration, and student achievement," University of Michigan, 2010.
- [7] P. Hallinger, L. Bickman and K. Davis, "School context, principal leadership, and student reading achievement," *Elementary School Journal*, vol. 96, no. 5, pp. 527-549, 1996.
- [8] J.E. Gerland, "The relationship between principal leadership behavior and student achievement in low performing school," Seton Hall University Dissertation and Theses, Spring 5-21, 2018.
- [9] D.A. Kurniady, S. Nurlatifah, and A. Komariah "Analysis of 21st-century leadership in higher education management," 3rd International Conference on Research of Educational Administration and Management (ICREAM 2019), Atlantis Press, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 400, 2019.
- [10] S.L. Christenson, T. Rounds and D. Gorney, "Family factors and student achievement: An avenue to increase students' success," *School Psychology Quarterly*, Vol 7(3), Fal 1992, 178-206, 1992.
- [11] K. Széll, "Factors determining student achievement," *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 55, 2013.
- [12] A. Miller, "Principal turnover and student achievement," *Economics of Education Review*, vol. 36, pp. 60-72, 2013.
- [13] H.A. Mukhtar, Mardalena, *Efektifitas pimpinan kepemimpinan trasformatif dan komitmen organisasi*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Deepublish, 2016.