



School Well-Being from Primary School Principal Perspectives

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Abstract. The school principal, as a leader in the organizational structure of the school, has an essential role in the creation of a supportive school climate well-being of students. This research explores the principal's perspectives about the concept and determinants of school well-being. Participants in this study were 79 elementary school principals from 4 districts in the province of Yogyakarta. Data was collected using an open-ended questionnaire and Scale about Mental Health in Schools. The thematic analysis of the open-ended questionnaire showed that there were four main themes in the definition of school well-being according to the school principal, namely a) psychological atmosphere in the school, b) school facilities, c) optimal services for student needs, d) involvement of stakeholder in education. These findings have implications for efforts to create schools that support student well-being.

Keywords: Principal · School · Well-Being · Students

1 Introduction

The well-being of students in Indonesia still needs more attention. Research conducted by Lau and Bradshaw (2018) explains that compared to some countries in Asia such as Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan, which have high levels of child well-being, Indonesia including in countries with the well-being of children is lowest. Cho (2015) found that related to indicators of material well-being, health, education well-being, behavior, and social well-being, Indonesia was still lagging behind other East Asian and Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore.

In the school context, research conducted by Plan International and the International Center for Research on Women in 2015 found that 7 out of 10 boys and girls in primary schools in Asia, experienced gender-based violence, including bullying and verbal abuse. For Indonesia itself, it found that 84% of children experienced violence in schools. Sadly, this figure is higher than the trend in Asia, which is 70% (Walia, 2015).

The next question that arises is, how is the role of schools in interventions and the prevention of problems related to mental health and student well-being? In a study conducted by Engels, Aelterman, Van Petegem, & Schepens, (2004) found that predictors

of the most well against the well-being of the students in the school is the atmosphere of the school, the relationship of students and teachers, the involvement of students in the classroom and the school, school regulations, and school infrastructure.

Schools as organizations have two systems, formal and informal systems. The formal system involves the rules that exist in the school, the classroom, and the structure that is in the school, the vision of the school, while the informal system involves what happens in the school, the processes experienced by students, student interactions with teachers, student interactions with students. As part of a school organization, the principal as a leader may not directly affect the mental health and well-being of students, but rather play a role in creating a positive school climate. Research from Hellinger, Bickman, & Davis (1996) found that principals give contributions to achievement in reading through the creation of a learning environment that teachers' expectations are high, students the opportunity to learn, a clear mission, and a grouping for learning.

In particular, the direct relationship of leadership with student well-being has not found, but the existing literature emphasizes that leadership in schools has a vital part in school effectiveness. The role is to create a learning environment for teachers and students, improve student learning processes through the influence exerted on the teacher and in creating organizational policies and procedures (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

1.1 Understanding School Well-Being

Many definitions used to describe school well-being. Long, Huebner, Wedell, & Hills, (2012) explain about school well-being which consists of (a) positive affect on positive emotions which often appears like pleasure and interest; b) negative affect that is the emotion of anger and anxiety is rarely present and c) cognitive assessment of quality of life in general (experience at school). In this definition according to Long et al. (2012), there are four model factors of the school structure related subjective well-being, namely: a) positive emotions, b) negative emotions, c) fear related to negative emotions, d) school satisfaction.

Liu, Mei, Tian, & Huebner (2016) define school well-being as a subjective evaluation of students about how they experience their lives emotionally, especially in the school context. Long et al., (2012), suggested there are three main aspects of the school well-being, namely: a) satisfaction school, the evaluation of subjective cognitive from students about their lives in school using their standards related to specific domains such as the atmosphere of learning, student relations with teachers; b) positive affect in school describe as the frequency of positive emotions experienced while in school (for example: happy); c) negative effect is the frequency of negative emotions experienced while at school (for instance moody, anger).

Vyverman & Vettenburg (2009) define that school well-being is an assessment related to whether children like to come to school. Some of the definitions put forward by other studies underline the meaning of school well-being related to the appreciation and satisfaction of children daily life in school (Merten & Van Damme & Decaluwe 2000; Schuurman, 1984; Brutsaert, 1993).

In research conducted by Engels et al., (2004), school well-being is defined as an expression of positive emotional life that results from the harmony of many specific

environmental factors on one side and the expectations of each student on the other. Eder (1995) to distinguish well-being in school into two: the current well-being and habitual well-being. Indicators of current well-being, situationally oriented state well-being, with current feelings associated with feelings of pleasure in school, satisfaction with aspects of situational fear with school, and many psychological factors and psychosomatic caused by the school situation. Current well-being is the result of effects on students from the influence of several things, family, school, media, all of which influence the assessment (satisfaction) and perceptions (feelings) of students in certain situations so that personal needs and expectations related to school will be formed.

Konu, Lintonen, & Rimpelä (2002) describe school well-being in a complete model based on the sociological concept of well-being. There are four dimensions of the phenomenon that used as the concept of well-being. Well-being is associated with teaching and education, on the one hand, and learning and achievement on the other. Well-being divided into four components, namely: a) having, for example, school conditions such as school environment, organization of the school, the size of the group, punished, eating late school and others, b) loving, associated with the social relationship, or named by school climate, group dynamics, the relationship between teachers and students, bullying, cooperation with parents, c) being, the potential of self-realization, through participation in school, increase self-esteem, the use of creativity and, e) health, for example, health status, including somatic disorders, chronic diseases, and others.

Another notion of school well-being is explained by Hofman, Hofman & Guldmond (1999) as students' attitudes toward school. This attitude can be classified into four dimensions, namely: a) attitudes generally related to school life, b) attitudes related to teachers, c) attitudes related to peers, and d) attitudes related to school organizations and buildings. Samdal, Wold, and Bronis (1999) then added this dimension of student attitudes to the level where students felt safe and comfortable at school (meaning not feeling lonely and bullied) and the level at which students felt safe at school as an indicator of school well-being. Samdal et al. (1999) describe school well-being as the degree to which students feel good at school, are satisfied with aspects of the situation they encounter at school and are free from feelings of fear associated with school and psychological or psychosomatic problems caused by the condition at school. It can be concluded that school well-being includes not only positive emotions felt by students in the school but also how the school as a system can encourage the actualization of the potential that exists in the school.

1.2 Determinants of School Well-Being

Liu and Zhang (2006) explained the factors that influence school well-being in two parts, namely the factors that directly and indirectly affect the school's well-being. Factors that directly affect the well-being there was the experience of a student's academic and academic achievement of students at this time, while the indirect factor is the social pressure that is felt by students and academic success.

Simmons, Graham, & Thomas, (2015) found four themes that the students feel are ideal conditions for well-being in school, which are pedagogy, school environment (social, emotional, and physical), relationships (with teachers, principals and friends) and opportunity to share opinions at school. These four things that reflected school structure

that helps facilitate relationships, the importance of feeling safe and comfortable, the capacity to get pleasure, the desire to be understood, better communication, equality and appreciation, and more opportunities for students to hear their opinions. Murray-harvey (2010) explains that there is a strong relationship between social-emotional of the students and academic experience in school. Besides, the quality of the relationship between the teacher and students has the most powerful influence on students' well-being and academic achievement after relationships with parents and peers.

Furthermore, Engels et al. (2004) found the best predictors of student well-being in schools were the school atmosphere, student-teacher relationships, student involvement in the classroom and school, school regulations, and school infrastructures. Regarding the school as an organization, the leadership of the school principal is a determinant of the creation of a positive school atmosphere, including the school rules, the relationship between people in the school such as teachers, students, staff, and school infrastructure.

School context factors can be divided into two forms, namely the school context as a risk factor and the school factor as a protective factor. The school context that is a risk factor is academic problems, bullying, peer rejection, aggressiveness, poor connections with schools, and inadequate management of behavior. Instead, protective factors from the school context are positive school climates, a sense of responsibility and assistance available to everyone, a sense of belonging and attachment, opportunities to get adequate access at school, and recognition of school achievements and norms that do not allow violence.

In efforts to promote mental health in schools, principals have an essential role as policymakers. Since 2015, UNESCO has made efforts to build a more effective system of education through policy changes (Setiyawati & Hamsah, 2015). The efforts made are not only for policymakers nationally but also up to the level of existing school-schools. In this case, the role of the principal as a policymaker at the school level is crucial in achieving the primary educational goals. The importance of the principal's role in creating school well-being, so this study aims to explore the principal's perspective on the well-being school. In this study, data mining was carried out at the primary school principal. We suggest that primary school is the necessary beginning of formal education pursued by children. Therefore, the educational process that occurs while in primary school will significantly affect children's development at later educational stages. If at the elementary school age, the child feels happy and well-being in school, then in subsequent developments he can grow optimally.

2 Method

Participant

Participants in this study were 79 Elementary School Principals from several districts in the province of Jogjakarta (DIY), Indonesia, namely the District of Bantul, Gunung Kidul, Kulon Progo, and Yogyakarta (Table 1).

Data is collected using an open-ended questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire asked about the definition of school wellbeing and parties involved in creating school well-being as perceived by the participants. Analysis of the answers of participants performed the thematic analysis to find themes that emerge in open-ended questionnaire

Table 1. Description of Research Participant

Descriptions	N	Percentage
Gender	48	60.7%
Man	31	39.3%
Woman		
Education	57	72, 1%
Bachelor Degree	22	27.9%
Master Degree		
Age (years)	1	1.2%
25–35	31	39.2%
36–45	44	55.7%
46–55	2	2.5%
56–65		
Term of service (year)	70	88.6%
1–10	4	5.1%
11–20	3	3.8%
21–30	2	2.5%
31–40		

answers given to the participants. According to Braun & Clarke (2012) thematic analysis is a method for identifying, organizing, and offering insights about meaning patterns (themes) throughout a data set. The focus of thematic analysis is on meaning, thus enabling researchers to understand it collectively or separately. This method identifies what generally happens on a topic and understands the notion of similarity.

Thematic analysis is done by coding the answers given from the subject's answers, then categorizing them in themes. The data analyzed in this case are the responses given by participants to the open questions given in the questionnaire because participants can answer more than one response. The thematic analysis involves two raters for data analysis. To help the data analysis process using the Nvivo 12 Plus program.

3 Results and Discussions

Results

Based on the thematic analysis of open-ended questions given by participants about perceptions about a school well-being several main themes emerge, namely a) positive school climate, b) support of resources available at school, c) optimal services for student needs, d) school leadership, e) school as a community involves stakeholders in education.

Table 2. Explains the findings from the thematic analysis conducted. There are five main themes obtained from the open-ended questionnaire that contains questions about the definition of school well-being according to the perception of the principal. The themes were: 1) positive school climate, 2) resources at school, 3) school leadership, 4) services, and 5) school as a community that involves many parties.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis Principal Perspective about School Well-being

Main Themes	Categories	Indicators	Number of Responses	%
Positive school climate	Positive emotions	Students and teachers feel happy at school Fun learning situation Students study with enthusiasm	17	13.93%
	Appreciation	Relationships between school members (teachers, students, staff) who respect and respect each other There is no violence and discrimination against students, teachers or other school components	9	7,37%
	Feeling comfortable	Students, teachers, and staff feel comfortable and safe while at school A conducive learning atmosphere	32	26.22%
	Developing potential	Able to make students, teachers, and staff develop their potential	7	5.7%
	Rights and obligations	Everyone in the school gets the rights and fulfills their obligations	3	2.4%
School Resources	Physical facilities	Have complete facilities and infrastructure and support the learning process	12	9.8%
	Teacher competence	Teachers who have adequate pedagogical competence	2	1.6%
School Leadership	Inspire	Inspiring leadership for school residents	1	0.8%
	Planning and evaluation	The school has planning and evaluation	1	0.8%
Service for the student's needs	Optimal service	Able to provide optimal service to all students according to their needs	21	17.2%

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Main Themes	Categories	Indicators	Number of Responses	%
	Student services for special needs	Has services for students who have special needs	4	3, 2%
School as a Community	Supported by stakeholders	Get support from the school committee and the community	2	1.6
	Family atmosphere	Kinship and harmony among the school community	7	5.7
	Achieving goals	Achieve the common goals of the school community, both teachers, parents and the community	2	1.6
	Integration	There is a combination of physical and psychological health in the learning process	2	1.6
Total Response			122	100%

The first theme is a positive school climate which includes five components. First, positive emotions felt by all parties in the school, both students and teachers. These positive emotions related to the pleasant learning process, students who have a passion for learning and teachers who feel like teaching. Second, the appreciation is the relationship between individuals (students, teachers, school staff) in the school that respects each other. Respect defined as the absence of violence and acts of discrimination experienced by students, teachers or school staff. Third, there is a sense of security and comfort felt by everyone in the school and a conducive learning situation. Fourth, development potential. A positive school climate is also characterized by a school atmosphere that can support the development of the potential of students and teachers. Fifth, a positive school climate is marked by the fulfillment of the rights and obligations of everyone in the school.

The second theme is school resources which include two components: physical facilities and teacher competency. School well-being described by having complete facilities and infrastructure that support the learning process and teacher with pedagogical skill. The third theme is about school leadership, which inspires all the school members and has proper planning and evaluation about school. The fourth theme is about optimal services that could fulfill the entire student needs included students with special needs. Finally, the fifth theme is the school as a community that needs the support of stakeholders such as parents, school committees and the community, the existence of common

goals to be achieved, have a family atmosphere and integrate physical and psychological health in the educational process.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the definition of a school well-being according to the principal of a primary school is a school that has a positive climate that is full of appreciation for each school member, has adequate support facilities and infrastructure to support learning, teachers who have excellent pedagogical competence, has leadership schools that inspire, provide optimal services for the needs of students and become a community that involves relevant parties such as parents and the community in achieving common goals in education.

Discussion

Some experts define school well-being with different emphases, but there are many similarities from the definition that school well-being is related to the positive attitudes and emotions felt by students in their lives in school. The factors that play a role in schools are the teacher, peers in the school, the physical environment, and the structure of the school itself specifically, the principal. There is not much literature describing the direct influence of the principal on mental health and student welfare, but it plays a role in creating a positive school climate including the creation of a learning environment such as high teacher expectations, opportunities for students to learn, clear missions and groupings for learning (Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, in Ross & Gray, 2006).

The findings of this study explain that the principal perceived school well-being as a pleasant school, provides comfort, a respectful relationship, provides excellent service to students according to needs, and has complete facilities to support the learning process and involve all stakeholders such as teachers, principal, parents, and community. This definition is following the findings of Engels et al. (2004) who explain that the school atmosphere, student-teacher relationships, student involvement in class and school, school regulations and school infrastructure are the best predictors of student welfare in school.

Related to the climate of appreciation, it appears that the principals who participated in this study mostly understood that the culture of mutual respect and involvement of students in making regulations in schools was necessary for school well-being to be perceived by participants in this study as schools that able to provide optimal services related to the needs of students including special needs or those experiencing emotional problems and aggression. The climate of appreciation is one of the crucial components of a prosperous school, as explained by Konu and Rimpela (2002) as loving in the model of school well-being that he composed. Loving define as interactions in a school atmosphere that is full of appreciation, group dynamics, positive teacher and student relationships and dynamic collaboration with parents.

There are several implications related to the results of this study. First, education in primary schools becomes an essential basis for children's development at the next stage of education, so that the well-being of the students in primary schools needs to be the focus of attention. Both principals still need to be given an understanding that other important aspects of education that must be a concern that is related to mental health and student wellbeing. Third, to create school well-being that pays attention to the mental health and well-being of students, the principal needs the support of some parties such as parents, the community and other professionals, namely psychologists

and psychiatrists and stakeholders in additional education. The school-based mental health system is needed by involving many related parties to support the creation of school well-being.

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