The Use of Conventional Communication Technology as Effective Principal Leadership Strategy in Strengthening the Role of Multi-Stakeholders Forum for School Quality Improvement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the use of conventional communication technology as a leadership strategy for the principal of the One Roof School, in accordance with the problems faced and local wisdom developing in these remote areas. The research was conducted with a multisite qualitative approach. The informants of this study were school principals, teachers, supervisors, community leaders, and education office employees. The results of the study concluded: (1) there are three main problems in schools, namely from the historical, cultural, and demographic aspects; (2) the success of the principal is influenced by his expertise in utilizing face-to-face communication techniques; and (3) the use of face-to-face conventional communication technology can enhance the multi-stakeholder role in achieving school quality.

Keywords: conventional communication technology, leadership strategy, remote area

1. INTRODUCTION

Principal is a major factor for the education quality process in schools [1]-[3]. Quality education is able to present high-quality learning services [4], [5]. The result will certainly produce quality graduates. The output of quality education is characterized by the ability of human resources to optimize their overall domain in real life [6]-[8]. The success of the principal is determined by a high leadership spirit [9], [10]. They believe that the role of the principal is very important for improving school quality.

The principal can act as a school quality developer. But the principal can also be a destroyer of the existence of the school itself [11], [12]. The awareness of humanistic principles about the role and function of the school were able to formulate themselves as principals to continue to strive to actively make various breakthroughs to think and act in advancing remote schools, including one roof junior secondary schools.

One Roof Junior Secondary School is a junior high school that is held in an integrated manner in the elementary school building [13], [14]. Until now, the number of One Roof Schools in Indonesia is around 5,000 units [15]. The establishment of One Roof Schools, besides being based on efficient education funding policies, is also mobilized by the inaccessibility of secondary schools by elementary school graduates, both for geographical, economic, and even cultural reasons [16]. In Indonesia, the existence of a One-Roof School has a very strategic role in the implementation of policies on nine-year basic education (access) as well as improving the quality of human resources.

One Roof School is the government’s strategic answer in catching up in the field of human resource development towards increasing the overall resource quality index (HDI), which until now is still ranked 116 out of 189 countries in the world [17]. The Continuity of One Roof Schools is faced with many problems. Common problems faced by schools include: (1) the absence of special teachers by most One Roof Schools; (2) Most of the One Roof School teachers are teachers in the Primary School where the One Roof School was established, which does not yet have the equivalent performance worth of the SMP; (3) Difficulty The headmaster positions and applies two different management and leadership characteristics; (4) the low morale and financial support of parents; and (5) low learning awareness; and others [8], [14], [18].

Being a headmaster in a remote area is not easy. Remote areas are an isolated community of almost all changes towards progress [19]. Even though technological devices have begun to reach the younger generation in the area, their utilization is still more in entertainment, games, and short messages, not in the aspect of future technology-based self-development needs [20]. The existence of these
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Technologies even lead them into partial thinking about the meaning of life that forms their mindset about right-wrong, positive-negative, progress-deterioration, lifestyle needs, and others.

The background of education that is still low in majority turns out to greatly determine the low maturity of positive thinking, especially on the impact of technological tools that seem to be the basic needs of rural youth today [19], [21], [22]. They are middle age teenagers, with a low understanding, but have the potential to determine the future of their own society. In such conditions, the role of the school becomes complicated, and for whatever complexity it is, the principal still has to act as a change agent for the lives of the wider community through school institutions [23]-[26].

The principal opportunity to get community support for advancing One Roof Schools is to raise public awareness that schools are very important for a community [27], [28]. The principal has a great opportunity in the form of respected community leaders, who by using certain approaches will actually strengthen the existence of the principal and the school itself [29]-[31]. The principal should act in accordance with the demands of local characteristics so that his presence is acceptable, his attendance is expected, all his ideas are facilitated, and finally school programs can be supported and implemented.

Thus, the existence of multi-stakeholders needs to be the major concern of the school principal. The principal must realize that all members of the community must have the best aspirations for their children as potential citizens of the future of the community itself [32]. Approaching the community with the best variety of strategies, becoming a powerful force in supporting the realization of the quality of education and teaching services in schools to the maximum is the principal task of the principal. The best strategy will be well received especially if it comes into contact with local wisdom so that the community is highly committed to playing its roles as well as possible.

2. METHOD

This study aims to describe the use of conventional face-to-face communication technology as a strategy for leadership of principals in strengthening the role of multi-stakeholder forums to improve school quality in remote One Roof Schools.

The initial idea of this research came from a variety of information about the management of one-roof schools in remote areas developed by school principals through various strategies, both from education service officials, supervisors, teachers, principals, and the community. Management of One Roof Schools, divided into three categories, among others: (1) management of failed One-Roof Schools; (2) management of One-Roof Schools that are successful through pure management by one school principal and school internal team; (3) management of One-Roof Schools that have been successfully carried out by two principals (Elementary and Junior High Schools); and (4) the management of One Roof Schools that have succeeded very well and have the potential for sustainability because they are supported by the roles and functions of stakeholders. The four categories have taken the same approach from the start, which involved the roles and functions of stakeholders as a form of mediation in the development of school quality in One Roof Schools carried out by almost all One Roof Schools.

The fourth category is very interesting to be explored naturally and academically. P considerations, including: (1) government intervention does not have the same effect on success. Such conditions are very dependent on the strength and seriousness of the principal in applying his innovative leadership strategy as a school leader; (2) the involvement of the roles and functions of stakeholders cannot be easily obtained, but must be done with a variety of strategies, especially the strategy of communicating with the local community through certain approaches that can be accepted by the local community; and (3) the acceptance of the principal of a One Roof School requires certain characteristics that must be accepted and carried out by the principal, and these requirements can only be fulfilled and carried out by certain principals.

This research is based on real phenomena through a variety of problems and these considerations are traced naturalistically, through in-structured in-depth interviews, role observation, and document review, including minutes of the results of community forum meetings (MSF). The findings were then verified through Forum Group Discussion (FGD) in the MSF One Roof School activity. Further analysis of the findings was also conducted through various discussions with lecturer colleagues at the State University of Malang, who did have expertise in the field of schooling.

The results of the verification of these findings are then explored academically and review the previous research with the themes. Overall, the number of respondents was 4 One Roof Schools principals, 53 teachers, 3 school supervisors, school committees, community forum teams from 4 different schools.

For the purposes of data validity, analysis of reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion is used. In addition, the validity of the data is also proven by credibility through continuous involvement of various activities carried out by the principal in MSF activities, observations of various performances in the activity, member checks, and testing between colleagues. Furthermore, the dependability test is carried out through a data audit process in the field, and confirmability is done by looking at the relationship between the data obtained, information received, and interpretations found.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. School Dominant Problems in Remote Areas

One-roof schools were established as a solution to the low access to compulsory 9-year basic education, especially in remote areas. There are several dominant problems faced by One Roof Schools. The dominant problem relates to the historical, cultural, and demographic aspects.
3.1.1 Historical Aspects of Previous Leadership

In certain remote areas, leadership test cases often occur, in which the community does not directly believe in the presence of a new headmaster. The roles carried out by the previous principal, behavior and proximity to the community and their persistence and success in guiding education and society as a whole contribute to the level of acceptance of the new principal as the next leader. In fact, certain communities have had performance standards as a prerequisite that must be attached, owned, and carried out by school principals to be accepted and supported by the local community.

From these various descriptions, it can be explained that basically managing and developing a One Roof School in a remote area is indeed very difficult. Not all principals are able to manage and develop such schools [33]. In several countries such as Australia, Japan, India, Africa, and other countries of the world have relatively similar problems and challenges in developing schools in remote areas, including cultural, social, economic, geographical and demographic issues, which as a whole it has an impact on the very slow achievement of school quality [34]-[37].

These problems certainly have been approached with various strategic steps to be overcome from time to time. Particularly in the case of Indonesia, these problems are also supported by the attitude of looking down on new school principals due to the failure of the previous principal’s leadership. There are still many people in remote areas who generalize a failure to the possibility of subsequent failures. This problem actually contributed to the failure of the next principal.

These problems often take up the time, mind, and energy of the principal and teachers and staff more than they are concerned with improving and developing school quality. In such circumstances, leadership failures experienced by principals often obtain understanding from various parties, although there are some principals who have managed to get out of the problem quickly, and turning it into a challenge and opportunity for success in improving and developing school quality and even the school community as a whole [26],[38]. The failure of the principal’s leadership is sometimes not caused by the many problems faced, but their inability to deal with these problems as a fact, which can actually be a good opportunity to manage the problem appropriately, especially for the improvement and development of school quality.

3.1.2 Cultural Aspect

The One Roof School is faced with the following problems, including: (1) the stigma about public schools is no more important than religious-based schools, such as madrasa educational institutions, surau, Islamic boarding schools, or other religious education providers; (2) There is still a marriage at the age of children, especially for girls. The parents were confused, even as if they were embarrassed when none of their daughters asked for their hand at the age of 12-15 years. They assume that their child is not selling well and tends to expire. In such circumstances, parents will transfer their children to boarding schools, precisely when they are still in high school, or even when they are in the lower classes. These efforts are considered as an effective way to increase their social status and are believed to have an impact on the increase in bargaining value of their daughters in the eyes of the public; (3) public schools are still considered as institutions that hinder the transformation of the values and norms that apply in the place. Public education is stigmatized as a particular educational institution that tends to equip children with the values of freedom of expression, freedom of expression, and critical ability towards an order that is considered established; (4) remote communities have a high culture of shock. Technology that is already in the grip is not commensurate with the quality of education of rural children. The variety of information and external cultural values can freely and massively influence the children’s thinking and behavior. This situation is considered very dangerous for the continuity of local culture. Therefore, religious education is the first and first choice that is considered the most effective.

3.1.2 Geographically Aspect

The location with the background of mountainous and hilly areas accompanied by inadequate infrastructure and the distance of access between remote communities is a barrier to obtaining education. The situation is also based on the location of residential areas that are far from the location of the education. This will become more difficult in the rainy seasons, where school activities are very dependent on weather conditions and rain activities that affect geographical conditions making it increasingly impossible to travel to school safely and comfortably.

3.2 Utilizing Conventional Communication Technology in Strengthening the Role of MSF

Technology is a simple and applicable tool that can be used to facilitate and facilitate the achievement of a program. The use of conventional communication technology by school principals is done through direct face-to-face meetings with community leaders in stages. These community leaders are grouped into two categories, namely the main character and supporting figures. The main figures are village government figures, religious leaders, and traditional leaders. Supporting figures include entrepreneurs, sub-district government heads, and youth forum leaders. On the basis of these classifications, the principal conducts face-to-face communication in stages as well, from the main character to the supporting figures.

Direct face-to-face communication played by the principal, was mainly carried out at the beginning of their appointment as principals in the local community. Communication with direct face-to-face is carried out not only to establish and capture information and convey messages of ordinary change, but at the same time to make personal closeness and achieve personal support. Personal
support, especially from the main figures, is a strategic starting point in gaining further community support.

Face-to-face communication directly becomes an effective medium in carrying out leadership roles by the principal, for several reasons, including: (1) as an information medium that is inherent in traditional values that are still recognized and carried out; (2) have a high message effectiveness, especially if delivered by certain credible figures; (3) the strategy does not only contain the message “convey the message”, but at the same time verification and message validation, so that it has a high level of trust; and (4) this strategy is to lead others to understand, invite, strengthen and be involved to carry out and forward information to other parties.

The Principal of the One Roof School who realizes himself as a person with low leadership capabilities but has a high awareness of the strength of local traditions, can achieve high success in finding and obtaining community support to realize the ideals and achievements of the school program. The principal is aware that the community has a high role in achieving school goals. The face-to-face communication strategy is immediately proven to be a way out that must be done to obtain community support as much as possible before the strengthening of their roles is truly strengthened for the benefit of the school.

The effectiveness of the principal’s leadership can be seen from how high the quality of involvement of each individual is in supporting the success of the school program [22]. Leadership effectiveness is also strongly supported by personal performance in stimulating the emergence of individual trusts involved in school organizations [39], [40]. These personal aspects do not stand alone, but are integrated with the values that develop in the local community, where the principal is in charge. The leadership role of the principal will be effective if they appear as individuals who represent the interests of the community as a whole. From here then community support grows and can be strengthened through strategic interactions with strategic figures by utilizing superior strategies, namely the use of face-to-face communication technology.

Effective leadership often occurs not because of academic factors, but rather someone’s personality factor. The success of the school is also often supported by political competence, because the existence of the principal really needs support from the community [41]. The combination of the personality and politics of the principal with the personality of the community leaders will produce very high strength in improving and developing the One Roof School. Remote villagers need more leaders who have high personality qualities than other aspects reflected in the principal’s communication both verbally, non-verbally, gestural, and textural. These two competencies are the main key drivers of the strategy for using face- to-face communication technology that strengthens the success of the principal’s communication in the midst of remote communities to jointly support their policies to improve school quality.

Communication with direct face to face communication media technology, not ordinary communication as done in the form of face to face talks every day. Direct face-to-face communication technology is “unusual” communication, which is only used for interests that are loaded with strategic values and meanings [42], [43]. The technology of direct face-to-face communication technology not only forwards information from one person to another, but contains verificative, validate, reconstructive, and propaganda traits. All information submitted is not taken for granted, but it is examined further and more in the level of its truth, discussed, believed to be true, and disseminated through additional certain values that can increase the strength of information to be accepted by others easily and evocatively. The effectiveness of the use of face-to-face communication technology becomes increasingly quality if it involves the main figures as media [19], [44]. Whatever program the principal wants, if supported by the main community leaders, will work well.

The topics discussed in each conventional communication face to face directly revolve around things: the character of the local community, community expectations of the school, and the reciprocal role that can be played by the school and the community. The communication is carried out to obtain more information about the characteristics, trends, and needs of the school’s role, as well as the role of the school and the community.

The understanding and commitment that has been formed, followed by conducting a wider and more comprehensive gathering through a strategy of using face-to-face communication technology carried out informally based on local culture together with the principal. After the understanding and commitment was established, it was continued to arrange a joint meeting schedule to share information, discuss the fulfillment of community expectations and One Roof Schools, and share the role in solving each One Roof School problem according to their respective fields or clusters in the MSF forum.

Through the use of conventional face-to-face communication technology which is supported by the fulfillment of community character standards by the principal, it has been able to successfully establish high commitment through sharing their respective roles in increasing community support for the school. The attendance of students is increasing, the school environment is clean and healthy, the availability of school food and drinks is also getting healthier, children’s learning activities are getting better controlled, additional school income is increasing as a result of community-managed school environments, and of course the quality of academic achievement and non-academic increases over time.

As explained earlier, the involvement of stakeholders in certain forums (MSF) organized by schools contributes greatly to the effectiveness and efficiency of school program achievements [45]. The multi-stakeholder discussion and negotiation activities are very effective in determining the direction of organizational policy in a systemic and complex manner,
as is the complexity of the resources incorporated in the group [8]. The important role of the involvement of MSF which is so high for the success of the school needs to be supported and strengthened in the form of further programmatically well-organized forums [45]. However, the principal is not the only person responsible for the future of the school. Need support from various parties so that the school’s ideals can be maximally achieved.

Thus, involving the role of MSF is not just the involvement of certain people without selection and recommendations. Selection and recommendations need to be done on the basis of input and suggestions from the main characters. Involving leaders means giving trust to certain people who are trusted to select and recommend other important figures who have a certain level of feasibility in accordance with the expectations of the principal as communicated beforehand. Involving stakeholders is also done to provide debriefing or information related to school development so that the participation provided remains relevant to the interests of the school and the community around the school. In short, the involvement of stakeholders also means efforts to strengthen stakeholders in order to strengthen school programs [41].

Therefore, important principles that need to be considered by principals in strengthening MSF include: legitimacy, dialogue participation, effectiveness and efficiency [8], and continuous strengthening of HR stakeholders [46], [47]. The goal is that the interaction of schools and communities takes place with quality in order to produce quality goals.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This research produced several important conclusions, especially in coloring the treasures of new knowledge relating to the selection of effective leadership strategies based on local wisdom. There are three dominant problems faced by the head of a One Roof School in remote areas, namely: historical, cultural, and geographical.

The success of the principal is influenced by the expertise of the principal in utilizing conventional communication technology in the form of direct face-to-face communication. The expertise of school principals in utilizing conventional face-to-face communication technology can increase community participation to jointly advance school quality.

REFERENCES