Dominant Leadership of School Principals in the Implementation of Curriculum 2013 in Religious Based School Indonesia

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Research Highlights

The school effectiveness in achieving vision, carrying out mission, getting goals and targets, and in carrying out learning activities requires a school principal who displays effective leadership (Arifin et al., 2018; Janson, 2008; J. Juharyanto, 2017; Leithwood and Azah, 2016). The effectiveness of leadership certainly contributes to school performance quality. Effective school leadership has strong influence on student attendance, student engagement to school, student academic self-efficacy, staff satisfaction, and collective teacher efficacy (Leithwood and Azah, 2016; Lunenburg, 2011). In educational autonomy context in Indonesia, principals are the most decisive factor that guarantees the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum 2013 (Kemendikbud, 2013). In religious-based schools, principals are required to have good skill in integrating religious values into all school contexts, especially learning (Fry, 2003; Kriger and Seng, 2005). Not all principals have succeeded in doing well, except those who have effective leadership behavior (Bafadal, 2016; Juharyanto, 2017).

Research Objectives

This study want to describe: 1) the problems faced by principals in implementing the curriculum 2013; 2) the leadership roles of principals in implementing the curriculum 2013; 3) the principal’s strategy in implementing the curriculum 2013 in religious based school.

Methodology

This research was conducted at three religious based schools in Indonesia. These schools relatively have the same characteristics, they are private religious-based education and managed by the Islamic Foundation with different religious affiliations. In addition, there are certain considerations in the schools involvement in this study, including: First, the three schools are good schools and are favored by the community. Second, the school is chosen as the target of a comparative study or benchmarking activities for other schools in Indonesia.
Third, the school has academic and non-academic high achievements. This study was designed using a multisite study design, because the researchers intended to know and describe in detail about effective leadership in a sustainable, independent, and contextual manner in the implementation of the curriculum 2013. The key informants in this study were the Principal and the teachers. Data collection in this study uses participatory observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This study used a research design with a constant comparative analysis method.

Results

1. Leadership problems for religious based schools: non-government teachers, teacher qualification mismatches, low teacher competency, low community support, inadequate infrastructure, parents’ low education level, low economic levels of the community and parents, low awareness on education, necessity to implement inclusive school programs, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, limited funding sources.

2. Potential leadership support: high morale, teaching for dedication, teachers’ harmonious interaction, teachers’ and community’s pleasant interaction, community leaders’ strong support, high student learning passion, strong religious fanaticism, government policy support.

3. The dominance of effective leadership behaviors of religious based schools principals in implementing curriculum 2013, includes: 1) spiritual leadership, with characteristics: hard work, discipline, honesty, modelling, and grateful. 2) change leadership, with characteristics: change future awareness, inspire teachers to change, establishing strategic, plan for following-up. 3) instructional leadership, with the following characteristics: understanding and explaining vision (goals, expectations), understanding, and explaining essence of learning, developing a new learning culture, developing an effective learning environment, seeking school committee support, and striving for guarantee process for learning success. 4) entrepreneurial leadership, with characteristics: strong culture of independence, clear understanding of vision, believe in success, lifelong learning culture, the power of imagination, multidimensional values, empowerment, collegiality, and fighting value.
Findings

1. The problems faced by private religious-based principals are relatively similar, among others: non-government teachers with low salaries, low competency teachers on curriculum and learning, and lack of understanding of substantive religious values and strategies for integration into the curriculum and learning.

2. The effective leadership capacity includes: high morale, teaching motives as high dedication, harmonious teacher interaction, pleasant teacher interaction with the community, strong support from community leaders, high student learning motivation, high public religious fanaticism, government policy support.

3. Four dominant leadership behaviours for effective principals: spiritual leadership, change leadership and instructional leadership and entrepreneur leadership.

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