

## **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: PROBLEM-SOLVING AS THE PRINCIPAL'S ABILITY IN CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the important role of principals as educational leaders in addressing various problems in the school environment, with a focus on their problem-solving abilities. Many problems faced by principals require resolution. This study aims to identify how principals' attitudes are reflected in their self-confidence, approach/avoidance style, and self-control when facing problems. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Participants were principals and teachers at SDN Pelita, Kecamatan Cicalengka, Kabupaten Bandung. A sample of five people was selected based on research needs through a purposive sampling method. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews. Interview data were analyzed using Atlas.ti version 25 to obtain word frequencies and concept maps. The results showed that principals have strong confidence in solving problems and actively collaborate with teachers to find appropriate solutions. They are able to distinguish between problems that need to be approached and avoided, and demonstrate good self-control when facing challenges. This problem-solving ability not only has a positive impact on the school internally (teachers and students), but also on the surrounding environment. The main supporting factors are the principals' self-confidence, approach to problems, self-control, and a spirit of collaboration through discussions with teachers. This study emphasizes that the principal's problem-solving abilities greatly influence the creation of a positive school climate.

**Key words:** Principal; Problem Solving; Collaboration; Self-Confidence; Self-Control

### **INTRODUCTION**

School is an institution in the field of education that has the task of carrying out educational tasks. Because it is an institution, there is leadership in it that is responsible for carrying out all educational functions. Educational leadership is a leader who carries out his duties in educational institutions, both state and private (Latief et al., 2021). With the presence of educational leadership, all educational tasks can be carried out properly. So there is an inherent responsibility that must be carried out by an educational leader.

Educational leadership in school institutions is carried out by a principal. The principal bears the overall responsibility of the organization so that the organization can run smoothly. The principal has a role as the person responsible for the running of the school organization (Ismail, 2022). Some leadership functions that must be carried out in schools are as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators and motivators (Ismail, 2022). Through these functions, the principal as an educational leader can carry out the functions of the school organization as an educational institution.

In addition, a leader is the face of an organization. If the principal is good, then the school will be good too. So it is very important for a leader to understand the concept, elements, characteristics and application of attitudes in leading a school (Langeningtias, Ulfa, et al., 2021). The attitude of the principal as an educational leader can be reflected in the resolution of problems that occur in the school. As conveyed, (Ariningsih, 2021) the principal must have good preparation and very good readiness because there are many responsibilities and challenges that must be faced.

The principal is also a human being who has feelings. Feelings of happiness, pain, discomfort and anger felt in everyday life and in duties (Dewanti et al., 2024). These feelings will color the principal in dealing with problems that occur in schools. Where problems in schools will always exist, whether coming from himself, teachers or students.

The principal as a leader who carries out leadership plays a dominant role in improving the quality of the school. This is not easy because a leader will be faced with problems that occur so that he must be able to find a way out or solution to the problems faced (Mahira et al., 2022). Problems that occur can disrupt the conduciveness of the school in learning. One of the problems that occurs in schools is one of those conveyed by Lukman A. (Asha, 2021) namely the principal in overcoming problems that occur in the implementation of online learning. With these problems, the principal provides solutions by involving teachers to improve skills in online learning.

Another problem that principals often face in schools is related to students. According to (Yayasan Al Ma'soem, 2023) problems in children that often occur in schools include bullying, student brawls, problems with enthusiasm and motivation to learn, violating school rules, mental and intelligence problems. In addition, problems

that often arise in schools are difficulties in adapting, social problems, teacher problems, school environment problems (Kahiroh, 2024). From these problems, the point is that the principal will face problems from student problems, teachers and the school environment.

In solving problems, the principal must have problem solving skills. Problem solving skills are a process of solving problems through cognitive activities that involve activities to obtain information and organize information in the form of knowledge structures to the solutions applied (Anggi Saputra Nasution et al., 2024). Heppner and Peterson (Anggi Saputra Nasution et al., 2024) convey three aspects in problem solving, namely self-confidence (Problem Solving Confidence), the distance that is owned (Approach Avoidance Style) and third self-control (Personal Control). These three aspects are aspects that need to be possessed by the principal in solving problems that occur in schools.

This study will examine educational leadership in this case the principal as an educational leader in solving problems through problem solving attitudes. Then the principal's attitude in dealing with problems at school will be known through three aspects of problem solving. Then it will be identified related to self-confidence, attitudes of approaching and distancing as well as the principal's self-control.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is the process of understanding human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in the words of informant sources (Warsono et al., 2022). The subjects of the study were the principal of SDN Pelita, Kabupaten Bandung and 4 teachers. The data collection procedure used in-depth interview techniques. Then the results of the interview will be analyzed using the atlas ti application version 25. The results of this data analysis are in the form of *word* frequencies and concept tree maps.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational leadership in terminology consists of two words, namely leader and education. Several experts describe the meaning of leader which is a translation of the word leadership which comes from the word leader. According to Ara Hidayat, (Langeningtias, Ulfah, et al., 2021) a leader is a person who leads and etymologically has a meaning that comes from the word *kaya pimpin* which means guiding and leading. So a leader is a person who guides and leads others. To lead oneself and others, a leader (Edhy Susatya, 2023) is a chosen human being who must have *self-understanding, self-awareness and self-control*.

Education can be interpreted as a process or method used so that someone can gain knowledge, understanding and how to behave according to needs (Langeningtias, Ulfa, et al., 2021). Then education in educational leadership contains the meaning as a vehicle for leadership, namely the field where leadership is carried out so as to be able to move the implementation of education towards the goals that have been set effectively and efficiently (Ariningsih, 2021).

So educational leadership can be interpreted as the ability to drive the implementation of education so that the predetermined educational goals are achieved (Ismail, 2022). In terms of education, one of the educational leaderships is the principal, because the principal as a leader in the school carries out the implementation of education to achieve educational goals.

The characteristics of educational leadership compared to the principal as an educational leader in a school can be described as follows:

1. Waruwu (Duhita Permata & Nurhayati, 2024) explains that the characteristics of a leader are being able to analyze problems, listen to the views, suggestions and opinions of others in making decisions, have good communication skills, high intellectual ability, show empathy to others, be adaptable, flexible, have broad insight, be visionary, act quickly and appropriately for the benefit of the organization.
2. According to Tead, (Abdullah, 2023) the characteristics that are required to be an educational leader are having good physical and mental health, adhering to the goals to be achieved, being enthusiastic, honest, capable of providing guidance, being quick and wise in making decisions, being intelligent and capable in teaching and having faith in what is good and trying to achieve it.

The role of the principal as an educational leader according to Stoop and Johnson, (Edhy Susatya, 2023) the role of the principal includes:

1. Administrator

The principal's duties in the managerial field are related to school management. This educational management includes the process of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling as a process to make the vision into action. (Mulyati, 2022)

2. Leader

As the educational leader in the school, the Principal has the legal responsibility to develop the staff, curriculum, and implementation of education in his/her school. Here, the effectiveness of the Principal's leadership depends on their ability to work with teachers and staff, as well as their ability to control budget management, staff development, scheduling, curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment. (Mulyati, 2022)



leader who is able to act as a direction setter, leaders must be able to make selections and set targets by considering the future external environment which is the goal of mobilizing all organizational resources (Sinaga et al., 2022).

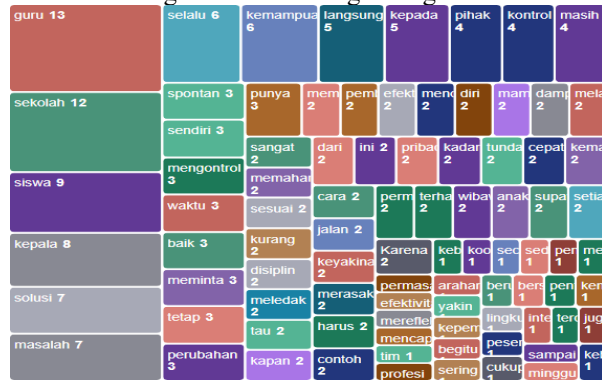


Figure 2 Concept Treemap

Based on the concept treemap above, the word teacher appears 13 times. The word teacher appears more than any other word. However, the words school, student, head, solution and problem are in the next order.

Looking at the results of the treemap, the principal who carries out educational leadership in schools will always interact with teachers, students, problems and solutions. This means that the emergence of the word indicates that problems that occur in schools will arise more from the school environment. The principal's duties in the managerial field are related to school management. This educational management includes the process of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling as a process to turn vision into action (Mulyati, 2022).

The principal of SDN Pelita has carried out his role as an educational leader who is able to manage problems in the school. With the ability to control himself in solving problems, the principal of SDN Pelita is able to face problems in a good way. Personal control is an aspect that assesses an individual's belief in deciding whether or not to use a design that has been systematically prepared well when facing problems (Talitha Elvina Desiana & Sri Ernawati, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Principals who successfully resolve school problems are supported by internal factors, namely self-confidence to find solutions, a tendency to approach and face problems directly to prevent them from protracting, and calm self-control that creates a sense of comfort for stakeholders. These factors are complemented by external factors such as collaboration with teachers as working partners in finding the right solution, and overall, the principal's problem-solving abilities have a very positive impact, encouraging teachers to support and follow directions, and ensuring students achieve learning goals at school.

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