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Adaptive Leadership in Educational Practice in the Era of Society 5.0

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Abstract

Today's school principal lead increasingly complex organizations and work in demanding environments. An essential skill for successful school principal is adaptive leadership. There is still another aspect that is vital to promoting change: the role of the principal and other school leaders. This study aims to determine the extent to which leaders in formal educational institutions are able to implement adaptive leadership in the midst of advances in digital systems in education governance as a feature of society 5.0. In addition, it also examines the extent to which educational institution leaders are able to help stakeholders adapt to an increasingly complex and challenging educational environment to bring about effective change. This type of research uses a qualitative design with an open-ended question and closed-ended question approach. Based

on the results of the study it can be concluded that the leaders of educational institutions have shown an adaptive leadership style seen from several indicators, as follows: First, identifying problems in schools involving stakeholders (teachers and school committees) to find the best solutions together; Second, showing empathy and appreciating the performance of all employees and teaching staff; Third, making current breakthroughs according to the learning needs of students; Fourth, transparent and creative governance; and Fifth, the transformation of digital-based learning process services. Thus, to present effective adaptive leadership, communication and collaboration are needed in the midst of an uncertain situation to provide the best educational services for the community.

Keywords: Adaptive Leadership, Society 5.0, Educational Administration

1. Introduction

Educational institutions are currently experiencing a rapid and massive transformation process that requires school principals as educational leaders to have the ability to adapt. These characteristics are known as adaptive leadership. Heifetz *et al.* (2009) [8] define adaptive leadership as the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. Meanwhile, Reeves *et al.* (2011) [18] identified four dimensions of adaptive leadership, namely navigating a new environment, leading with empathy, learning through self-correction, and creating win-win solutions. After knowing the concept of adaptive leadership, it is necessary to understand the essence of the characteristics of adaptive leader. Bennis & Thomas (2002) [4] identified four elements of adaptive leader, namely; a) involve other people on the same frequency, b) have a distinctive and interesting personality, c) have integrity, and d) have the ability to adapt. This fourth characteristic is an interesting part to study and is also the main point in this study on how a leader can adapt to changes that occur in their organizational environment. A person's ability to adapt is not only a special characteristic in adaptive leadership studies, but is a general issue in leadership term.

Responding to post-pandemic changes which also have an impact on the governance of educational institutions, there are many things that school principals must prepare to create an effective school climate. In Leadership practice, characterized by adaptation and knowledge building, has led institutions to be effective organizations. The findings also indicate that the constructs have a positive and substantial association. This suggests that the more adaptive leadership is practiced in the institutions under investigation, the higher the goal attainment and organizational effectiveness will be (Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021) [15]. Cruz in Santiago (2021) [19] defines a successful organization as building effective communication, having a real contribution, and being able to create a common vision to achieve common goals. Meanwhile, Pfeffer (2016) with a different view stated that successful leadership is able to eliminate hierarchy and encourage work teams to take the initiative. This

means that work decisions rest with each individual in accordance with the work mechanisms that have been regulated and are relevant to their duties. This competency requires the ability of every individual, not just leaders, to be able to adapt to the internal and external environment of the organization. Likewise, educational institutions require the ability to adapt to change. Therefore, adaptive leadership is a leadership style that is urgently applied in educational institutions where situations and conditions are always experiencing uncertain changes, both due to government policies and societal demands and increasingly competitive learning competition (Azmi, *et al.*, 2022)^[3].

One of the adaptation forms needed to respond towards the developments in modern education in technical capability is digital-based technology applications. The contrary of that, McManus (2021)^[14] is of the view that the success of an organization is determined by the capacity of its leaders, not technological infrastructure. However, McLeod (2015)^[13] stated that educational institutions need to integrate technology in their activities, even though their leaders do not have a collective vision of the importance of using technology to create an effective school climate. Therefore,

as an effort to respond towards the changes and progress in the digitalization of education, one of the skills that a school principal must have is the ability to operate digital platforms to provide effective performance as a manifestation of the adaptation process.

2. Materials and Methods

This research uses a qualitative design with an open-ended and closed-ended questions approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Farrell, 2016^[7]). Open-Ended Question is a form of question that is answered openly where participants can respond to questions based on experience, level of understanding, and their own opinions or ideas. The format of the questions asked uses three patterns, namely 'How', 'Why', and 'What'. Meanwhile, Closed-Ended Question is a form of question that can be answered in a limited way based on the answer choices 'Yes' or 'No'. This pattern is used to make it easier for participants to provide correct answers, can be clearly identified, and easily classified. The forms of open-ended and closed-ended questions instruments used in collecting research data are as follows:

Table 1: Research Data Collection Instruments

Closed Questions	Open Questions
Are you used to using IT-based media in management activities at school? (Yes/No)	Why should a school principal get used to using IT-based media in management activities at school?
Do learning activities at this school accommodate the learning needs of students? (Yes/No)	What policies do you implement at this school to accommodate students' learning needs?
Do school principals need to adapt to developments towards information and technology in managing educational institutions? (Yes/No)	Why do you need to respond towards the developments of technology and information that can support your duties as a leader?
Do you agree that school principals need to identify the problems experienced by their institutions? (Yes/No)	How do you identify the problems at this school?
Is it true that empathy is an important value that a leader must have? (Yes/No)	What kind of concern do you show as a leader towards the school community?
Do you agree that the use of ICT media is a solution in creating transparency and good institutional governance? (Yes/No)	What are you doing in implementing ICT media to ensure that the transparency and governance of this institution meets the needs of school stakeholders and the community?

The subjects of this research were school principals at the Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA) and equivalent levels at state and private educational institutions in Indonesia. The number of participants was 283 people consisting of junior high school principals and 193 from senior high school principals. Information obtained through instruments given to participants was analyzed using 2 approaches. Data obtained through open-ended questions were analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods in the form of percentages, while data from closed-ended questions were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman model qualitative method, which includes Data Collection, Data Reduction, Data Display, and Verification/Conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of data analysis in the closed-ended question section based on the instrument show that the principal is accustomed to using ICT systems in management activities at school (88%), learning activities at school accommodate the learning needs of students (94%), the Principals is able to adapt to developments technology and information in managing educational institutions (93%), school principals need to identify institutional problems (98%), a leader needs to have concern (96%), and ICT media is a solution in

creating transparency and good institutional governance (83%). Meanwhile, the results of data analysis in the closed-ended question section show that the characteristics of adaptive leadership demonstrated by school principals as educational leaders include the ability to identify problems, an attitude of empathy and respect, meeting students' learning needs, transparent institutional governance and professionals, as well as the transformation of management services and digital-based learning activities.

Identifying problems

The form of adaptation shown by the school principal as an educational leader is the ability to identify problems that occur in the school, both in relation to internal and external parties. Based on the information presented by participants through an open-ended question approach, it was stated that mapping problems that were seen directly or based on reports from teachers, staff, students and parents was a routine that was experienced almost every day. The results of the report are then administered and discussed through a meeting forum to find the best solution to the problem. Most of the problems faced by school principals as educational leaders are related to disciplinary behavior, lack of parent participation, quality of teaching, and communication. Kerns (2016)^[11] states that an important competency that a leader must have so that he can be called an effective leader is the

ability to identify and solve problems. These efforts can be made by quickly converting information into knowledge-based action plans and carrying out evaluations by recognizing successes and failures and the ability to adapt to change (Kownatzki *et al.*, 2013; Worley *et al.*, 2014)^[12, 21].

Empathy and appreciation

Information obtained based on the open-ended question approach shows that the majority of school principals stated that empathy and the ability to give appreciation are important values that must exist in a leader. The forms of empathy shown by the school principal include providing assistance to school residents who experience disasters, providing reduced school fees through scholarships for students from poor families, and treating all school residents like their own family. Meanwhile, the form of appreciation shown as an educational leader is giving awards to outstanding students and teachers, giving each teacher the opportunity to take part in self-development activities, and providing additional salary as a bonus for dedicated teachers based on performance assessments. Empathy can increase leadership effectiveness with a huge impact both individually, with followers and the organization (Zivcopic, 2022)^[22]. Kamran (2017) stated that a leader's empathy for his members greatly influences their work motivation compared to giving awards or appreciation in the form of money.

Fulfilling students' learning needs

The characteristic of an adaptive leader is the ability to provide learning services that suit the needs of students. Information put forward by participants was that efforts to respond to developments in modern learning and in accordance with contemporary learning demands were digitalization of learning. In addition, the school environment is designed in an inclusive, child-friendly model, and ensures that students' learning needs can be maximized according to school resources. Starratt (2004)^[20] states that as educational leaders, school principals need to support conditions that can encourage the learning transformation needed by the school community. Therefore, school principals as leaders need time, capacity and support to be able to focus more on improving student learning services in schools (Pont *et al.*, 2008).

Transparent and professional institutional management

Transparency and professional behavior are important indicators in the management practices of educational institutions. School principals as educational leaders are required to demonstrate professional attitudes and transparency as characteristics of adaptive leadership. The results of data analysis through open-ended questions show that efforts to create transparent institutional governance are carried out through the application of digital media where all stakeholders can access information on learning activities and various results of decisions implemented in schools. Apart from that, one of the professional attitudes shown by school principals is the distribution of work based on competency and school governance which prioritizes professional and proportional principles. The important thing for a leader to gain trust from subordinates and other stakeholders is to create transparency, self-confidence, and have optimism for a better future for the organization (Norman *et al.*, 2010)^[16]. A leader's ability to be transparent and professional in carrying out their duties will create trust from their subordinates, be able to resolve problems more quickly before they occur, be easier to motivate, and

increase efficiency as a system (El-Nafaty, 2019)^[6].

Digital-based transformation of management services

Digital-based education services have been provided by all schools that are the subject of this research. Information about activities taking place at school can be accessed via the school website. Apart from that, the school has also prepared a digital platform as a forum for communication between teachers, students and parents. Digital transformation in education management services is currently a demand and necessity through e-learning programs. Although some school principals stated that management services in schools cannot be fully carried out through digital platforms. According to him, there are certain activities that need to be carried out through conventional approaches, such as guidance and counseling services, meetings with all student guardians and school committees, and many other services. In order for digital-based management services to run effectively there needs to be support from three things, namely culture and mindset, human resource competency, and infrastructure (Akbari & Pratomo, 2022)^[1]. Ifenthaler and Egloffstein (2020)^[9] remind that digital technology integration is an important mission for every business, organization, or institution not only for communication, administration, and management but also for learning and instruction/teaching.

Adaptive leadership is a leadership style that needs to be applied in educational institutions which are currently experiencing a transformation phase in post-pandemic learning activities which is being felt by almost all educational institutions in the world. In the era of society 5.0, a leader must be able to adapt to massive changes where technology and individual skills are prioritized. The principal as a leader in an educational institution is not enough just to have the authority to regulate the course of the learning process, but must also have adequate skills in mastering information and technology as tools that can support his duties and role as a leader. Therefore, the digital transformation process in the era of society 5.0, especially in Indonesia, in increasing leadership capacity should be supported by government policies that practically provide knowledge and skills in applying digital technology and communication (Aliardo, 2022)^[2].

4. Conclusions

The ability of school principals as educational leaders to respond to developments in digital technology-based educational governance is very necessary. This adaptation is not only the ability to apply digital media, but also skills in carrying out digital transformation in all educational services. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the leaders of educational institutions have shown an adaptive leadership style seen from several indicators, as follows: *First*, identifying problems in schools involving stakeholders (teachers and school committees) to find the best solutions together; *Second*, showing empathy and appreciating the performance of all employees and teaching staff; *Third*, making current breakthroughs according to the learning needs of students; *Fourth*, transparent and creative governance; and *Fifth*, the transformation of digital-based learning process services. Thus, to present effective adaptive leadership, communication and collaboration are needed in the midst of an uncertain situation to provide the best educational services for the community.

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