

# The role of principal leadership in developing levels of resilience: a private senior secondary school ethnographic study

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## ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the level of school resilience which is not yet good, so school principals must increase school resilience with their leadership. Therefore, this research aims to analyze and describe the leadership of school principals in setting direction, developing human resources, and redesigning organizations to increase school resilience. The method used in this research is qualitative research with an ethnographic approach, which helps provide an in-depth and detailed picture of the school's daily habits in implementing school resilience. This research uses data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews and documentation by carrying out data analysis techniques using description, analysis and interpretation. The results of this research explain that in carrying out the three leadership roles of the school principal, namely setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization, through school habits (culture), private schools will be able to create a level of resilience in the school environment. Even in unfavorable conditions, school principals can survive by carrying out leadership roles using existing school habits.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is essentially one of the primary human needs to improve the quality of human resources in order to achieve an increasingly advanced and prosperous standard of living. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system [1] mandates that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious, spiritual and personal strength. Mastery, personality, intelligence, morals are noble qualities and skills possessed by oneself, society, nation and state. A leader or principal who can manage a school well has high work motivation and can create a conducive school environment which is very necessary to realize educational goals. A good leader leads the team smoothly. As the highest leader, the school principal is very influential, has high commitment, and is flexible in carrying out his duties for the sustainability of the school [2]. Therefore, school principals must have good personality, traits, abilities and leadership abilities to lead and manage an educational institution. Leadership always refers to the art of influencing someone to achieve a common goal, and superior organizations are generally led by effective leadership. In the school sustainability cycle, a school principal must have good leadership skills [3]. These skills will be visible because effective schools show the principal as a key figure in success or failure.

School resilience needs to be carried out to maintain the continuity of the school and is carried out by a leader, namely the school principal. School resilience needs to be done to maintain school continuity. A school principal must implement core leadership practices to foster school resilience [4]. Based on this, principals have three core leadership practices. The first is setting direction [5], which is done to help develop a shared set of goals that encourage a sense of shared purpose. To choose a clear path, a leader must articulate a shared vision, create high performance expectations, and then communicate that vision and expectations effectively. Second, human development is carried out to influence behavior towards achieving common goals through providing intellectual stimulation and individual and collective support. Here, leaders must use their practices to model desired behavior and redesign the organization to determine whether leaders are demonstrating the procedures necessary to achieve success. Third is redesigning the organization; it is intended to facilitate the work of the school community in achieving shared goals, which may require a leader to reshape the school culture and structure to suit its goals. In particular, high school (SMA) principals must be able to implement these three things to defend their schools from downturns that threaten the cyclization of schools, especially private schools, so they need to have resilience to create school sustainability.

A person can rise to face and overcome risky and stressful situations through competent defense and positive and flexible adaptation to changes in stressful experiences. Rojas [6] states that resilience is the ability to overcome challenges. Resilience is seen when someone faces difficult experiences and knows how to deal with or adapt. Resilience is also a dynamic process in which individuals demonstrate adaptive actions when they experience adversity. Thus, this fundamental conclusion refers to the abilities that enable a person to overcome adverse events in life and acquire competence or skills in overcoming challenges and difficulties [7]. In this case, resilience is the ability of every school principal which is one of the leadership skills that must be mastered in facing existing challenges. With his strong ability to deal with things that pose risks and threats to the school, the school principal must be ready to meet all the opportunities he faces [8]. This is a unique thing to research because it examines the school's experience in developing school resilience.

However, many things are currently affecting the entire education cycle, private secondary schools (SMA *swasta*). Many problems often arise and pose serious threats, including the lack of the principal's ability to articulate a shared vision, create high performance expectations, and then communicate these visions and expectations effectively. Second, school principals are less competent in influencing the behavior of educators and teaching staff to achieve common goals and are less able to provide examples of the behavior expected of educators and teaching staff. Third, school principals do not understand how to redesign school culture and structure to suit the desired goals. This has an impact on the weak level of school resilience, thereby threatening the sustainability of the school in the future.

Therefore, this research was carried out uniquely at SMA Muhammadiyah Toboali and SMA YPK Toboali. Researchers consider these two schools to be appropriate locations to be used as research locations. The reason is, currently there is no research that analyzes more in-depth information regarding the role of school principals in developing levels of resilience in schools using an ethnographic approach, which has never been carried out by other researchers by observing school leadership experiences. school principal, especially the principal of one of the private high schools in Toboali Regency. This is urgent because the principal is the leader who has the most influence and determines the progress of the school. In other words, if a principal fails to develop a level of resilience in his or her school, the private school may experience decline or even closure. From the description above, the researcher wants to know more about the leadership experiences of school principals, especially private high school principals in Toboali District, regarding the resilience of their schools, thus making this ethnographic research interesting to research.

## 2. METHOD

The method used in this research is a type of qualitative research [9] with an ethnographic approach [10], [11] which helps provide an in-depth and detailed picture of the participants' daily lives. Ethnographic studies aim to provide an in-depth and detailed picture of the participants' daily lives. Ethnography is an approach to understanding the everyday life of "a particular social world through sustained engagement. The location of this research consists of 2 private schools in Toboali, namely SMA Muhammadiyah Toboali and SMA YPK Toboali. The data sources consist of 2, namely primary data sources [12] which include the principal, deputy principal for student affairs, deputy principal for curriculum and teaching, and secondary data sources in the form of documentation[13]. The research flow can be seen in Figure 1.

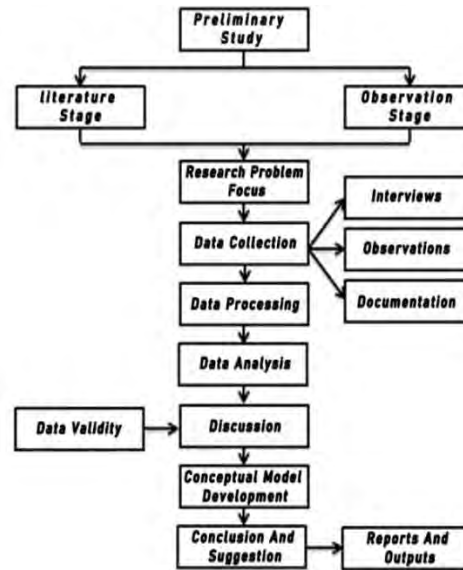


Figure 1. Research flow

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal has implemented three core leadership practices based on what was proposed by Sun and Leithwood [5] namely setting direction, developing human resources, and redesigning the organization, by doing several things, which can be seen in Figure 2.

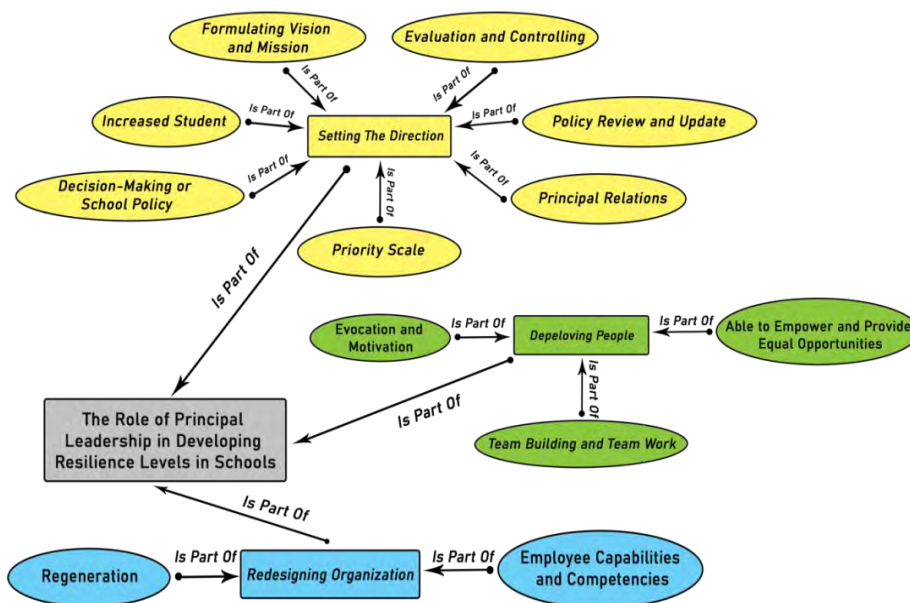


Figure 2. Steps taken

#### 3.1. Direction setting

For the role of leadership as a determinant of the direction of developing levels of resilience in schools, school principals use several methods in their schools, including:

##### 3.1.1. Formulate the vision and mission

In formulating the vision [14] and mission [15], private schools in Toboali have the same habit, namely using a deliberation system. The culture of deliberation that the Toboali community has is a good

habit and can help formulate the school's vision and mission so that all future school plans can be reviewed and agreed upon together, thus making the vision and mission progressive and sustainable. The vision and mission are of course the main benchmarks in running and maintaining the continuity and continuity of the school so that the formulation of the vision and mission is very important to be implemented and formulated by the school principal.

### **3.1.2. Decision making or school policy**

Basically, with the school culture in Toboali which prioritizes discussion and deliberation, policy making [16], [17] is always done through reflection. Even though policy-making is sometimes carried out using a discretionary system, the culture of consideration is still highly upheld by schools in Toboali. This is a good thing because holding deliberations in every decision or policy making will minimize errors in school policy-making and will have an impact on increasing the school's resilience capacity.

### **3.1.3. Policy review and updates**

Usually reviewing and updating policies often occurs when decisions are taken discretionarily (unilaterally), thus requiring a joint review of policies that are considered wrong and detrimental to the school [18]. The wrong policy will harm the school. Of course, a review is an effective solution in school resilience efforts. Reviews are also useful for updating policies if they can threaten the continuity of the school [19].

### **3.1.4. Primary relationship**

One of the results of a culture of discussion and deliberation is the many relationships between school principals [20], [21]. Many relationships help the principal develop the school and community regarding facilities, infrastructure, and student needs. Quality communication ethics is also a habit of principals at both schools to easily make friends with many parties so that it has the potential to provide benefits for school resilience.

### **3.1.5. Priority scale**

Continuing the school's vision and mission which are formulated based on school cultural deliberations, determining the school's priority scale will of course be more precise and easier [22]. After the vision and mission are formulated and determined, determining the priority scale becomes important so that the school principal knows which policies and rules must be implemented first [23], [24]. Of course, this is important to do, the school principals can work systematically and know the priority of the plan [25].

### **3.1.6. Evaluation and control**

The school principal evaluates and controls to assist teachers and school employees in carrying out school development activities [26], [27]. Considering that evaluation and control require analysis of all aspects of the school environment, school principals must continue to be proactive in establishing communication and discussions with school employees regarding developments that occur at the school [28]–[30]. Evaluation is also useful for looking at developments in the performance of teachers and school employees, which is important for school principals to know to be able to develop something less efficient in school resilience [31].

### **3.1.7. Student improvement**

The increase in students [32], [33] is a bonus from the principal's ability to carry out his role. This of course cannot be separated from how the school principal carries out his role as a giver of direction by actively communicating with various parties, namely school employees, parents, and other parties using various promotional media. With an increase in the number of students, the principal can measure developments in his school and become a success in school management.

## **3.2. Developing humans**

The leadership role of the school principal as a community builder and encouraging levels of resilience in schools is carried out in several ways, including:

### **3.2.1. Awakening and motivation**

For school employees, the principal has the habit of providing motivation and raising enthusiasm during meetings or face-to-face meetings with each employee. This greatly influences employee performance and can increase the level of resilience in schools because good teacher performance cannot be separated from the moral support provided by the leader, namely the school principal himself. With motivation and inspiration, the school principal can indirectly become a locomotive that will create a sense of ownership and

responsibility to advance the good name of the school and be able to work together to carry out existing tasks voluntarily and with maximum ability.

### **3.2.2. Able to empower and provide equal opportunities**

In empowering and providing opportunities to his employees, the principal routinely does this randomly and alternately by giving full confidence that each employee can carry out the tasks assigned. This attitude will certainly increase the ability of school employees to feel like they are doing something assigned to them. This increase in capacity is achieved naturally without special training. However, this is done by guiding employees in carrying out the tasks given to them, so that later employees can manage everything well based on their experience. This empowering ability can increase school resilience because by expanding the capacity of school employees to carry out a task, school principals can develop the potential of their employees thereby increasing school resilience.

### **3.2.3. Team building and teamwork**

Team building [34] and teamwork [35] are habits carried out by school principals to help themselves and their employees in carrying out their duties at school. Team formation is routinely carried out at every school activity so that the activities and tasks carried out can feel light when done together. This habit will certainly increase school resilience because school principals can continue to develop and educate their employees to work together. This is by South Bangka's slogan, namely "*Junjung Besaoh*", which reflects the strong ties of family and brotherhood in South Bangka and upholds the spirit of cooperation. Collaboration in implementing teamwork is very important so that cohesiveness is always maintained and makes it easier for teachers and teaching staff to carry it out completing assignments at school.

## **3.3. Redesigning the organization**

Regarding the leadership role of school principals in redesigning organizations and developing levels of resilience in schools, several methods used are:

### **3.3.1. Regeneration**

Regeneration is a necessity and is a foundation that must be prepared and must be carried out and carried out by school principals. In carrying out the regeneration of his school, the principal continues to monitor the development of his employees so that in the end the principal can train his employees to restore human resources in his school [36]. The school principal's habit of carrying out regeneration is to develop employee abilities through experience and training carried out by schools and other agencies that can support the abilities of school employees. So that the abilities of school employees become qualified and in the end, they can replace strategic positions in the school if necessary. This regeneration capability can increase school resilience so that human resources in schools remain able to survive and be sustainable. Regeneration is very important as the lifeblood of school sustainability. The regeneration crisis will result in schools experiencing shortages.

### **3.3.2. Employee abilities and competencies**

Looking at employee abilities and competencies [37] is also a habit of school principals in Toboali. School principals often monitor their employees directly through human interaction or indirectly through CCTV and other tools. Knowing the abilities and competencies of the school principal should be done as well as possible so that the school organization can run according to the corridors and abilities of school employees [38]. This can certainly increase school resilience because placing employees according to their abilities and competencies will influence employee performance and increase school resilience.

## **3.4. Result**

This research has results obtained based on processed findings, where the principal has carried out three core leadership practices according to Leithwood [39], namely setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization through school habits using several methods, including:

### **3.4.1. Set direction**

Based on the research results described, in setting direction, school principals must develop resilience in their schools through existing habits of holding deliberations, discussions, and strong communication. Thus, the results of this research explain that a school principal must be able to formulate the school's vision and mission in determining its direction. Preparing a vision is very important as inspiration and motivation for the school in providing services, the values to be developed, and the school's aspirations for the future. Meanwhile, the mission has an urgency which is also important to achieve the vision set as a

reference for preparing short, medium, and long-term programs.

Then, a school principal must be able to make school decisions/policies. This is in line with what was stated by Bernstein *et al.* [40] states that the principal must take policy steps to continue school activities. Namely carrying out reviews, updating decisions or policies taken, and establishing relationships with various parties. In building relationships, a school principal must be able to build partnerships with anyone. Schools must maintain communication with partners, frequently renew cooperation, have a large amount of trust capital, and carry out evaluations when activities have been completed. The form of partnership in question is a mutualistic partnership. Furthermore, the increase in the number of students was caused by the success of the school principal in determining the direction of the school so that it was able to create a good image in society [41]. The increasing number of prospective students who enter can increase the positive image of an institution in society.

Being able to sort out the priority scale because in this way the school principal will be able to measure the extent of the strengths of the school he leads and know all the urgent needs that must be addressed in the short term. Determining the priority scale and alternative performance values for all school needs must be known to make it easier to determine school priorities. This research explains that by understanding the existing priority scale, schools can determine school needs appropriately.

Apart from that, the school principal must carry out control and evaluation as a form of leadership in determining the direction of the school. Control and assessment are very important so that the school's approach runs along the corridor of co-determination. The implementation of control and evaluation is expected to increase transparency and accountability, avoid gaps, and result in undesirable things. By setting direction, the principal's leadership will be able to increase the resilience of the school together with teachers and staff through the principal's habits with the characteristics of principals in Toboali, namely proactive deliberation, discussion, and communication. Then, with direction from the school principal, the principal's leadership will be able to direct and train teachers and staff to increase school resilience.

### 3.4.2. Developing people

Regarding the development of the community/school staff, school principals in Toboali uphold the values that exist in Toboali, especially South Bangka Regency, by echoing the slogan "*Junjung Besaoh*" [42]. This means and reflects a society that likes to work together. For this reason, school principals must be able to develop their employees to implement and provide inspiration and motivation.

Providing a stimulating and motivating attitude is carried out so that school employees can improve their inner qualities. In research conducted by Tian *et al.* [43] it was explained that the principal's leadership and teacher work motivation did not have a real influence on teacher performance and improving the quality of Islamic religious education, one of the factors being the less-than-optimal leadership of the principal. School principals are not yet equipped with adequate competence in their main duties and functions. This is of course a serious concern because carrying out the role of the school principal, especially in providing inspiration and motivation, will improve the performance of school employees.

Then, in developing the school community/staff, a school principal must be able to empower and provide equal opportunities to all teachers and staff. This is useful so that all teachers have the same experience so that in the future there will be an equal distribution of skills among all employees in managing and carrying out their duties. Empowering school employees can be done by developing employee competency and providing enormous benefits for a school because employees with good competency according to needs will create work effectiveness and efficiency; In this way, the school's goals will be achieved as fully as possible.

Moreover, in developing people/school employees, a leader must be able to form a team and collaborate with the group being formed. This team was formed so that the school principal could easily implement the entire program. With a team, there will be good cooperation. Collaboration between employees and school principals is the maximum ability to carry out duties and responsibilities in managing school activities, such as planning, implementing, and evaluating the results of school activities so that they can be realized. In this way, a team can carry out its duties and responsibilities optimally by working together well.

Furthermore, to develop school resilience, a school principal must be able to regenerate employees. Regeneration is a process of forming cadres who will at any time experience renewal in the school's organizational structure. Conditions that often occur in organizations that do not experience growth are caused by the reluctance of humans as members of the organization to follow change, where change is considered to cause *moral disequilibrium* (loss of moral balance). This results in the emergence of disease in humans as members of society or actions that are not by the provisions that apply to the organization, so that organizations need to be developed for evaluation, adaptation, regeneration, and innovation. To avoid this moral balance, school principals must also carry out cadre formation and cadre development for their school

organization. School principals must develop human resources or training and provide moral support to teachers and staff. By creating human resources for teachers and employees through the school's habit of developing its employees, the school's resilience will undoubtedly develop and improve well, in line with the school principal's treatment of his employees.

### 3.4.3. Redesigning the organization

In the organizational redesign process, school principals establish the habit of supervising and controlling school employees so that they can quickly regenerate human resources in the school and know the abilities and competencies of their school employees. A school principal must also be able to place his employees according to their abilities and competencies so that school employees can carry out their duties well. The placement of this organizational structure will increase the school's effectiveness in developing school resilience because by implementing the right placement, school employees will be able to carry out their duties more optimally. This is what Mitrohardjono and Rosyidin [44] said about the success of a school principal in determining policies and implementing the principle of the right man in the right place, namely placing someone according to their field or professionalism. This is of course a benchmark that by getting to know employees according to their field, a school employee can work more optimally and professionally.

Redesigning the organization is also important for school principals because the principal will be able to see the abilities of teachers and school employees in the process of carrying out school activities so that they can become a reference for the principal in structuring the school's organization or responsibilities. Principals, teachers, and employees according to the abilities and competencies of each teacher and staff. This will certainly increase school resilience because teachers and staff carry out their duties well and completely.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that: the role of the school principal as a director in developing the level of school resilience can be done in several ways: formulating the school's vision and mission, and making school decisions. and policy. through deliberation and wisdom, reviewing and updating policies that are considered inappropriate, improving relationships with school principals, increasing the number of students, understanding the school's priority scale, and carrying out evaluation and control. By carrying out the role of the school principal as a direction maker through various habits (school culture), such as discussion and deliberation, efforts to develop the level of school resilience will be greater because the principal's leadership can determine direction. The school follows what is expected based on the results of joint decisions agreed upon through the habit of discussion and deliberation.

In developing school resilience, school principals can do several things to build people: show enthusiasm and provide motivation, empower and provide equal opportunities to all school employees, and build teams and work together with the groups they form. By carrying out the leadership role of the school principal as a developing person, efforts to create a level of school resilience will be better because developing the school's human resources (HR) will indirectly enable all employees to develop all their existing potential. Alone voluntarily without requiring any effort. To create a level of school resilience. This is a requirement for school principals by the South Bangka Regency motto "*Junjung Besaoh*" which reflects the spirit of cooperation and the habit of providing experience and training to prepare for school regeneration.

To redesign the organization to develop school resilience, school principals can do several things, namely regenerating the organizational structure and placing employees according to their abilities based on their competencies. By carrying out the leadership role of the school principal as an organizational redesign, efforts to develop the level of school resilience will be stronger because it can avoid situations of no growth caused by the reluctance of humans as members of the organization to make changes, including changes, where moral changes are thought to cause this balance (loss of balance). moral). This will of course cause disease in humans as members of society or actions that are not by the provisions that apply to the organization. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the organization to carry out evaluation, adaptation, cadre formation, and innovation.

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