

## THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN RURAL STATE HIGH SCHOOLS

Ruby Santamoko

STAB Dharma Widya, Indonesia

[Rbysantamoko@gmail.com](mailto:Rbysantamoko@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Women's leadership is still a pro and a con in the public sphere. Even though they have become leaders, women's ability to lead is still underestimated. In relation to school culture, principals who are successful in advancing the school are seen from their ability to develop a conducive organizational culture. A conducive organizational culture influences student achievement. So, it can lead to achieving the school's vision, mission and goals. The inhibiting factors that influence the leadership of female school principals are: 1) the domestic role of women, 2) gender stereotypes, 3) physical barriers, and 4) patriarchal culture, which are cultural factors that are deeply rooted and ingrained in the culture of our society. In society, culture still considers that domestic affairs are women's territory. So even though women work outside and are principals, women still have to carry out their responsibilities in the household, such as cooking, washing and as mothers and wives. This is what ultimately makes women who work end up having multiple roles that are heavier than men's responsibilities.

**Keywords:** Leadership Roles, Female Principals

### INTRODUCTION

Education is basically a conscious and planned effort carried out by a human being to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that individuals can actively develop their potential to have spiritual strength, self-control, good personality, intelligence, noble morals and the skills needed to oneself, the surrounding community, nation and state (Kaufman, D. M., 2003). In order to get what they want, humans can get it through educational institutions which are a place to develop existing potential so that potential can be formed in every human being and a place where people can develop towards a better future (Geake, 2008).

A leader is essentially someone who has the ability to influence the behavior of other people in their work by using power. Power is the ability to direct and influence subordinates regarding the tasks that must be carried out. According to Stone (Fattah, Nanang, 2013) the greater the number of sources of power available to a leader, the greater the potential for effective leadership. There are various types of leaders, there are formal leaders, which occur because the leader relies on formal authority. There are also non-formal leaders, which occur because leaders without formal authority succeed in influencing the behavior of other people.

The principal as a leader must demonstrate his existence in leading educational institutions. According to (Gardner et al, 2020) a leader must be able to lead and

manage an organization. Gardner's opinion, if related to educational leadership, is that educational leaders in carrying out their duties must be able to allocate and manage the various resources they have, make good use of the budget obtained from the government, and have the courage to start new businesses so that school residents are able to move towards the vision that has been set. determined. Furthermore, Gardner also suggested that educational leaders have managerial skills to overcome concrete, everyday problems in organizational life so that the organizational vision can be achieved. The expressions presented conclude that school principals should play a role and at the same time have skills as managers and leaders.

Talking about leadership in relation to a gender perspective, Cucchiari revealed that the gender phenomenon is a universal reality, occurring in all cultures both in the past and continuing to the present. Furthermore, it is revealed that the gender phenomenon is constructed, is a cultural characteristic, and is supported by the agent who created it, who is none other than humans themselves.

In achieving school goals, school principals need to pay attention to the leadership style that will be used. Leadership style can be seen from how the principal motivates the school community. Leadership style can be influenced by gender roles, where gender roles can be categorized into masculine and feminine types. The characteristics of the masculine gender role include being described as an individual who is strong, firm, brave, enthusiastic, aggressive, free, and less responsive to matters related to emotions. Meanwhile, characteristics of feminine gender roles include being more attentive to feelings, emotional, more sensitive, gentle, and more careful (Chen, J. C., & Silverthorne, C, 2005).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The study in this research is qualitative with literature. The literature study research method is a research approach that involves the analysis and synthesis of information from various literature sources that are relevant to a particular research topic. Documents taken from literature research are journals, books and references related to the discussion you want to research (Earley, M.A. 2014; Caruth, G.D. 2013).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Leadership Concept**

Leadership is the process of influencing subordinates, or giving an example from a leader to his followers, or is also the art of directing people through obedience, trust, honor and enthusiastic cooperation in an effort to achieve organizational goals. Leadership patterns basically mean the way a leader relates to his followers or subordinates (Sadler, P, 2003). Leadership as a management function is very important to achieve organizational goals.

In fact, there is a lot conveyed by management experts, adapted to their respective points of view. As quoted by Mulyadi, Gary Yukl specifically stated that leadership is a process of influencing a group to achieve a common goal. The explanation is as follows: Leadership is defined broadly as influencing process affecting the interpretation of events for followers the choice of objectives for group organization of work activities to achieve the objectives, the motivation of followers to achieves, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and team work, and enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. (leadership is defined broadly as processes that influence the interpretation of events of followers, the choice of goals for a group or person, the organization of these activities to seek goals, the maintenance of relationships, cooperation and teamwork and the obtaining of relationships and cooperation from people -people who are outside the group) (Mulyadi, D., & Syafitri, A, 2015). Management experts are of the opinion that leadership as a management concept in organizational life has a strategic position, because leadership is a central point and dynamist of the entire organizational activity process. Leadership is an important strength in the framework of management, therefore the willingness to lead effectively is the key to organizational success (Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E, 2006).

There are almost as many different concepts of leadership definition as there are people who have attempted to define it. To make our understanding easier, a definition will be taken which can be used as a basis for discussing the concept of leadership itself. Leadership is a relationship of mutual influence between leaders and followers (subordinates) who want real change that reflects shared goals.

Leadership has several implications, including:

1. Leadership means involving other people or parties, namely employees or subordinates (followers). Employees or subordinates must have the willingness to accept direction from the leader. However, without employees, there will be no leaders.
2. An effective leader is someone who with his power (his or herpower) is able to inspire his followers to achieve satisfactory performance. Leaders can use different forms of power or strength to influence the behavior of subordinates in various situations.
3. Leadership must have honesty towards oneself (integrity), a sincere attitude of responsibility (compassion), knowledge (cignizance), courage to act with confidence (commitment), trust in oneself and others (confidence) and the ability to convince people others (communication) in building an organization (Hunter, S. T et al, 2007).

A leader must primarily have the function of activating or dynamizing and coordinating human resources, natural resources, all funds and facilities prepared by an organized group of people to achieve a goal.

Based on the definition of leadership above, leadership can be divided into two types, namely:

1. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is leadership that is still relatively new and is considered effective for dedicating change, especially in transitional environmental situations. The transformational leadership model essentially emphasizes that a leader needs to motivate his subordinates to carry out their responsibilities more than they expect. Transformational leaders must be able to define, communicate and articulate the organization's vision, and subordinates must accept and recognize the leader's credibility. Hater and Bass state that "the dynamic of transformational leadership involves strong personal identification with the leader, joining in a shared vision of the future, or going beyond the self-interest exchange of rewards for compliance" (Dwi Ari Wibawa, 2012).

A leader is said to be transformational by measuring the level of trust, obedience, grace, loyalty and respect of his followers. Followers of transformational leadership will be motivated to do better to achieve organizational goals.

2. Transactional Leadership

According to Burns, transactional leadership states that the relationship between a leader and his subordinates is based on a series of bargaining activities between the two. The characteristics of transactional leadership are contingent rewards and management by exception. On contingent rewards This can be in the form of appreciation from the leadership because the tasks have been carried out, in the form of bonuses or increased income or facilities. This is intended to reward and praise subordinates for their efforts. In addition, leaders transact with subordinates, by focusing on aspects of mistakes made by subordinates, delaying decisions or avoiding things that might influence the occurrence of errors.

Management by exception emphasizes the function of management as control. Leaders only see and evaluate whether errors have occurred to make corrections, leaders provide intervention to subordinates if standards are not met by subordinates. The practice of management by exception, leaders delegate responsibility to subordinates and follow up by giving subordinates praise to encourage subordinates and also with gifts if reports made by subordinates meet standards (Bass, B. M., et al, 2003).

### **Effectiveness of Women's Leadership as School Principals**

Women as school principals are able to create and foster a positive school climate in unique ways. They have the advantage of creating a positive school climate. It has been cited by Shakeshaft that women as school principals spend more time with teachers, administrative staff and students, care more about individual differences,

get to know and motivate them. Another dimension is a physical environment that is neat, clean and orderly. Women as school principals have concern and responsibility for the physical condition of the school. Shakeshaft and Jones said that women as principals more often control building conditions, visit classes and care about the physical environment of the school more often than men. Women as school principals are able to foster working relationships among residents so as to create a positive school climate. The implication is that women often bring domestic elements when facing the school environment (Helterbran, V. R., & Rieg, S. A, 2004).

Women as school principals are responsible for carrying out their dual roles for the success of the school, and must have the courage to make decisions and act with full consideration. The role of a female school principal as an educator is naturally inherent to her, for example she must give birth, care for, guide, set an example and educate. This continues to be socialized in an evolutionary manner and slowly influences the emotional development, vision and ideology of female school principals in carrying out their role as educators. Furthermore, regarding the role as leaders, Rogan and Brookes (1995) show that women as leaders pay more attention to collaboration, caring, non-dominant empathy and respect for everyone. As stated by Robinson (2014), the characteristics of leadership effectiveness are persuasive and non-dominant.

Concerning the role of administrator, several research findings show that women have the same potential as men and women even show many advantages in the position of school administrator compared to men (Owen, 1991). Likewise, women are more careful, wiser and more collegial than men and are quicker in making decisions (Lambert in Adler, 1993). Female school principals must carry out their duties as educators, leaders, administrators and supervisors. The implication is that women tend to be careful, wise and maintain the availability of resources so that school activities run effectively and efficiently (Kana, R. P., Indriani, E., & Lubis, M. J, 2022).

Supervision of the school principal is carried out based on the work program. The correctness of the preparation of the supervision program is not in doubt, because women tend to follow the rules from the center. According to Beason (2002), women are more loyal in following the rules because when they first served as school principals they taught longer and were older than men. The school principal prepares a written supervision program at the beginning of the year. Women tend to be more procedural and open in developing supervision programs. Teaching supervision helps teachers improve their performance. This is in line with the opinion of Shakeshaft (1994) that the advantage of women as supervisors compared to men is that they know teachers better and supervise teachers directly. The implication is that the relationship between women as supervisors and teachers is based on understanding the needs and increasing teacher maturity.

## **Barriers and Efforts of Female School Principals in Improving Effective Schools**

### **Patriarchal Culture**

Women still experience obstacles in becoming leaders, one of which is the cultural factors that develop in society which then influence the culture in the bureaucracy. The culture attached to the rules of relations in Indonesian society is generally patriarchal, although there are some areas where it is not patriarchal. This patriarchy is a view where men usually have a higher position than women.

This patriarchal culture also influences people's understanding that the public sphere is the work area of men. Lestari stated that cultural factors are the main cause of women's roles in the public sphere in general being in a subordinate position to men. Cultural factors are indeed very influential because culture that has been embedded for a long time usually becomes one of the references in carrying out interactions or relationships. Thus, certain perspectives regarding male and female gender in terms of leadership are also influenced by these interaction patterns (Thornton, P. H., et al, 2011). This then becomes the basis for a relationship pattern that prevents women from playing many roles as leaders.

### **Women's Domestic Role**

The patriarchal culture described above has many implications for women's lives. One of them is that there is still an opinion that women have the obligation to take care of the household. The domestic role of women which has been embedded in society's mindset tends to mean that women do not have free space in the public sphere. Furthermore, when women are still identified with their domestic roles and also careers in the public sphere, there is a double burden which can hinder women's career development (Mahmood, N., 2002). The double burden here refers to the condition where women have to carry out their roles as wives and mothers as well as doing other work in their field of work. This is what can then hinder women's leadership.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

The construction of people's thoughts is basically triggered by gender stereotypes which contain impressions or beliefs about what behavior is appropriate for men or women to carry out. This is in line with what Faikh stated in Mahmud (2011), stating that gender differences which have given rise to gender inequality have resulted in the birth of traits and stereotypes which society considers to be natural provisions or even God's provisions. Likewise, in the world of work, there are unequal relations between men and women due to the "brand" that is often identified with one type of gender. For example, women tend to be considered less competent in

leading compared to men. Apart from that, female leaders are often identified as being moody, unable to control their emotions, bringing feelings to work, and so on. Another example of a form of stereotype is the type of work that is considered "normal" for women, namely those related to the administrative field. This is based on the idea that women do not have the physical qualities and competencies of men and are therefore not considered suitable for this type of work in the field.

## **CONCLUSION**

The principal's leadership is one of the factors that encourages schools to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the leadership effectiveness of both women and men as school principals is required which can be seen from the duties and responsibilities of school principalship. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that women's leadership as school principals is effective, although acceptance of innovation tends to be slow. Several characteristics of the leadership effectiveness of school principals at both sites appear in the ability to formulate the school's vision, mission, goals and objectives and socialize them to the school community in order to gain support from the school community. In other words, the two principals understand the new paradigm in educational management so that they can formulate the school's vision, mission, goals and objectives. This is also supported by the experience and education of women as school principals at both sites, which makes it easier to understand new concepts and innovations.

Women as school principals are able to work in accordance with the school program, and are able to maintain and foster a positive school climate. In other words, they are able to carry out their dual duties and functions as educators, leaders, administrators and supervisors so that school activities can run effectively and efficiently. Women as school principals at both sites have the ability to establish harmonious working relationships with both students' parents and the community. Women as school principals are able to use their leadership in establishing two-way communication between the school, parents and the community, so that harmonious cooperation can be achieved to carry out teaching and learning activities at school.

From the theoretical findings, conclusions can be drawn, namely: The leadership role of women as heads of Rural State High Schools is effective even though acceptance of innovation tends to be slow. The behavior of women as school principals is the result of socialization carried out in local culture and the different division of tasks between women and men which results in psychological differences between genders.

## REFERENCES

- Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of applied psychology*, 88(2), 207.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). Transformational leadership.
- Beason, R. C., & Semm, P. (2002). Responses of neurons to an amplitude modulated microwave stimulus. *Neuroscience Letters*, 333(3), 175-178.
- Caruth, G. D. (2013). Demystifying mixed methods research design: A review of the literature. *Online Submission*, 3 (2), 112-122
- Chen, J. C., & Silverthorne, C. (2005). Leadership effectiveness, leadership style and employee readiness. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26(4), 280-288.
- Dwi Ari Wibawa. (2012). *Kepemimpinan Transaksional dan Kepemimpinan Transformasional*.
- Earley, M.A (2014). A synthesis of the literature on research methods education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19 (3), 242-253
- Fattah, Nanang. (2013). *Landasan Manajemen Pendidikan*, Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya
- Gardner, W. L., Lowe, K. B., Meuser, J. D., Noghani, F., Gullifor, D. P., & Cogliser, C. C. (2020). The leadership trilogy: A review of the third decade of the leadership quarterly. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 31(1), 101379.
- Geake, J. (2008). Neuromythologies in education. *Educational research*, 50(2), 123-133.
- Kana, R. P., Indriani, E., & Lubis, M. J. (2022). Kepemimpinan Perempuan Sebagai Kepala Sekolah. *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian*, 3(1), 4591-4598.
- Kaufman, D. M. (2003). Applying educational theory in practice. *Bmj*, 326(7382), 213-216.
- Helterbran, V. R., & Rieg, S. A. (2004). Women as school principals: what is the challenge?.
- Hunter, S. T., Bedell-Avers, K. E., & Mumford, M. D. (2007). The typical leadership study: Assumptions, implications, and potential remedies. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(5), 435-446.
- Mahmood, N. (2002). Women's role in domestic decision-making in Pakistan: implications for reproductive behaviour. *The Pakistan development review*, 121-148.
- Mahmud, M. M. (2011). Pengaruh kepemimpinan instruksional guru besar ke atas efikasi guru (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Utara Malaysia).
- Mulyadi, D., & Syafitri, A. (2015). Pengaruh kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja terhadap kinerja karyawan di Bank BJB Syariah cabang Bogor. *Jurnal Ilmiah Binaniaga*, 11(2).
- Robinson, I. M. (2014). The Influence of one School District's Policies, Practices, and Ethos in Hiring Women as Principals. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheurs et chercheurs en éducation*, 5(3).
- Sadler, P. (2003). *Leadership*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Thornton, P. H., Ribeiro-Soriano, D., & Urbano, D. (2011). Socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial activity: An overview. *International small business journal*, 29(2), 105-118.