Problem Solving Ability Of Preschool Principals

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Abstrak. Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah merupakan faktor yang penting dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan dan pembelajaran di sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana kemampuan *problem solving* kepala sekolah PAUD dalam menyikapi permasalahan-permasalahan yang muncul pada situasi sekolah. Pelaksanaan penelitian mengajak 20 kepala sekolah yang ada di kota Medan. Temuan dari penelitian ini bahwa dalam menyelesaikan dan mengatasi permasalahan yang terjadi di sekolah, para kepala sekolah cendrung menggunakan prinsip dalam merencanakan sesuatu hal dilakukan dengan para guru dan tenaga pendidik yang ada di sekolah

Kata Kunci : Kepala Sekolah, *Problem Solving* dan Guru.

Abstract. The principal's leadership is an important factor in improving the quality of education and learning in schools. This research aims to describe the problem solving abilities of kindergarten school principals in responding to problems that arise in school situations. The research involved 20 school principals in the city of Medan. The findings from this research are that in resolving and overcoming problems that occur in schools, school principals tend to use principles in planning things to do with the teachers and teaching staff at the school.

Keywords: Principal, Problem Solving and Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

School success essentially reflects the success of the principal as a leader. Principal leadership is the ability and readiness of the principal to influence, guide, direct and mobilize school staff so that they can work effectively in order to achieve the educational and teaching goals that have been set (Novitasari, D., Siswanto, E., Purwanto, A ., & Fahmi, K. : 2020).. The principal is the leader of an educational institution where the learning and teaching process takes place. Simply put, a school principal can be interpreted as a professional educator, who is given the additional task of leading an educational institution (school), where in this institution learning and teaching activities are carried out and there is interaction between educators and students. The principal is a teacher who is given the task of leading a school, where the teaching and learning process is held, or a place where the educational process takes place, namely interaction between teachers and students.

The principal must have the right strategy to establish a harmonious relationship with the environment, look for new ideas, integrate every activity, set an example for all educational staff in the school, and develop innovative learning models (Puccio, G. J., Burnett, C., Acar , S., Yudess, J. A., Holinger, M., & Cabra, J. F. : 2020). The Principal as an innovator is reflected in the ways he carries out his work in a constructive, creative, integrative, constructive manner. This means that the Principal in improving the educational staff must always encourage and develop them so that they can develop optimally in carrying out the tasks assigned to each of them (Fitri, A. A., & Permatasari, T. : 2022; Puccio, G. J., Burnett, C., Acar, S., Yudess, J. A., Holinger, M., & Cabra, J. F. (2020). and determining policy direction towards school success. The principal as a leader in the school has an obligation to manage and carry out his duties to facilitate all the potential that exists in the school (Latifah, I., & Panji Yudha, R.: 2023)., both the potential that exists in the human element as well as in the school equipment or facilities that can be used as well as possible so that the school's goals can be achieved as well as possible. The success of the school is the success of the principal.

The school principal has a crucial role in moving various elements in the school, so that teaching and learning activities (KBM) in the school can run well. The school principal, as a leader and educator, is a leader (teacher) who provides staff or school members with opportunities to participate in developing personal understanding and encourage creating conducive conditions and always making improvements in daily practice (Maryani, A., Lian, B., & Wardarita, R. : 2020).. As a leader, the principal has a role in influencing people to work together to achieve a common vision, so the principal must have a strong personality, be able to provide excellent service, open, honest, professional and able to understand the conditions of the school community.

Achieving the goal of running an effective and efficient school requires school managers who are able to pay attention to educators and educational staff as well as all residents in the school. The principal's attention can be in the form of meeting needs in the process of carrying out the duties and functions of education and educational staff, as well as attention to provide a sense of security, calm and comfort for educators and education staff while at school. School principals have a role in creating, shaping and supporting culture by strengthening effective attitudes in everything that is done at school (Alhabsyi, F., Pettalongi, S. S., & Wandi, W.: 2022). Effective school principals consist of three things: (1) why schools need quality education; (2) what strategies are being implemented to improve the quality of education implementation in schools; and (3) how to manage schools effectively to achieve achievement.

The principal as a manager must be able to manage all needs in the school. A good manager's activities certainly begin with careful and good planning (Anwar, R. N., & Alfina, A.: 2019). In planning, an approach is needed that can produce plans that can be realized in accordance with the desired goals. Steps that can be taken by school principals in preparing plans for early childhood education (PAUD) include the following: developing the vision, mission and goals of the PAUD institution. , Determine the strategy for achieving PAUD institutions, determine PAUD activity programs, determine PAUD activity program personnel, determine procedures for implementing PAUD activity programs, determine various facilities and infrastructure needed to implement PAUD activity programs and prepare evaluation instruments for PAUD activity programs.

When planning matters related to learning and social relations, the principal must have problem solving skills so that every matter carried out by the principal can be resolved and carried out well. Problem solving is an approach that trains students to think creatively by solving problems through predetermined stages. In other words, problem solving requires planning to achieve the final goal. So problem solving abilities must begin to be developed not only when they reach adulthood but from an early age. Bearing in mind that problem solving abilities are really needed as you get older because as you get older the problems that arise will be even greater (Habibie, D.: 2020). Therefore, problem solving skills must be developed from school. Practicing problem solving skills can improve a person's cognitive abilities. Cognitive abilities and creativity in solving problems will increase if children are accustomed to practicing their problem solving abilities.

Problem solving is generally considered the most important cognitive activity both in everyday contexts and in professional contexts. Apart from cognitive abilities, it can also increase a person's creativity (Umi, R., & Nopriansyah, U.: 2019). Problem solving can be interpreted as a student's first step in developing ideas or creativity in building new knowledge. So it can be said that if problem solving abilities are embedded, other abilities will appear by themselves.

Problem solving abilities can have an influence on increasing other personal abilities so they must be instilled from an early age. To measure the extent to which problem solving has been applied, it can be measured from the problem solving indicators as follows: (1) identifying problems, understanding existing problems, mentioning what is known and asked, (2) Plan to solve the problem, state and write down the model or formula that will be used to solve the problem, (3) solve the problem according to what has been planned, calculate well and correctly, (4) Evaluate the results, draw conclusions from the results obtained, and checking the results of the calculations (Purnamasari & Setiawan, 2019) and according to (Hamiyah andjauhar, 2014) the steps of the problem solving method consist of (1)

preparing the issue/problem to be solved, (2) presenting the problem that has been prepared , (3) collect data or information that can be used to solve problems, (4) formulate hypotheses, (5) test hypotheses, (6) draw conclusions from the results.

Based on the learning motivation indicators above, the researcher describes the motivation indicators as follows:

Table 1. Problem solving indicators

Indikator	Sub - Indikator
1. Identifying Problems	• Define concepts or categories learning materials • Determine information/data related to the problem given • Determine what the problem is with the problem at hand
2. Checking for Problems	• Identify the root of the problem • Connect the problem
3. Planning Solutions	• Select theories, principles and approaches to solve problem • Map sub problems and sub solutions • Develop a problem solving process based on the root of the problem
4. Implementing the Plans That Have Been Made	• Interpret the information given into forms mathematics • Resolve problems
5. Evaluate	• Checking the Feasibility of the solution • Check the important information that has been identified • See if there are other solutions • Check whether the answer is correct

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a quantitative approach with survey methods. Survey research is a quantitative research procedure carried out to obtain a description of the attitudes, behavior and characteristics of a population obtained through samples in the population. In this research, what will be studied is to see how the problem

solving abilities of PAUD level school principals are. This study used five indicators with a total of 14 item numbers. The score used for each item number uses a Likert scale value with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum of 4.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are based on data obtained from the results of a survey completed by 20 school principals. Using five indicators, namely identifying problems, examining problems, planning solutions, implementing plans made, and evaluating. The following are the results of data processing based on survey results filled out by school principals.

Table 2. Recapitulation of School Principal Survey

Indicator	Number of Items	Maximum Score	Earn Score
Identifying Problems	3	240	200
Checking for Problems	2	160	149
Planning Solutions	3	240	235
Implementing the Plan	2	160	130
Evaluate	4	320	290
Amount	**14**	**1120**	**1004**

Based on the results in Table 2, it shows that school principals who filled out the survey to see problem solving skills, that planning solutions was the strongest point compared to other indicators. The difference between the maximum score and the maximum score is only five points. School principals who have problem solving skills include having the readiness and ability to plan solutions.

The principal works together with fellow teachers and educational staff to solve problems that arise, by planning solutions that can be applied. A unified, expanded and integrated plan that links the company's strategic advantages with environmental challenges and which is designed to ensure that the main objectives of the company can be achieved through the appropriate implementation by the strategic management organization of a number of decisions and actions leading to the development of a strategy or strategies effective way to help achieve company goals. The strategic management process is the way in which strategic planners determine goals and make decisions.

The school principal as a leader must have a strong personality, understand the conditions of teachers and other education personnel, have short-term and long-term programs, and be a visionary, able to make appropriate and wise decisions and able to communicate well with all school members. Professional school principals in the new paradigm of educational management must provide positive impacts and fundamental changes in the renewal of the education system in schools, these impacts include educational effectiveness, strong school leadership, effective management of educational resources with an orientation towards improving quality, team work which is compact, intelligent and dynamic, independent, participatory with school members and the community, open, managerial, innovative, continuous evaluation and improvement, responsive and anticipating needs and accountability. The school principal must really know the personalities of his fellow teachers and teaching staff, in order to place the right people to be able to provide solutions and help resolve problems that occur in the school environment.

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