

KINDERGATEN TO HIGH SCHOOL: NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP MULTILEVEL INDONESIAN SCHOOL OF JEDDAH

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Abstract: *Multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah is a managerial approach where the principal oversees several educational levels, ranging from kindergarten to high school, by distributing responsibilities in a structured manner. This concept emphasizes the importance of distributed leadership, collaboration between levels, and the empowerment of all organizational members, including teachers, staff, students, and the community. The implementation of multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah is driven by the lack of human resources and the imbalance between the number of teachers and students at the school. This type of research is qualitative descriptive. The data collection methods include interviews with Mr. Sutikno M.Pd., the Principal of the Indonesian School in Jeddah, as well as observation and documentation. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the multilevel leadership concept at Indonesian School of Jeddah is an effort by the principal to improve efficiency, encourage collaboration among school members, strengthen accountability, and develop leadership at every level, ultimately enhancing the quality of education at Indonesian School of Jeddah.*

Keywords: *Principal, Leadership, Multilevel*

Abstrak: Kepemimpinan multilevel di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah merupakan sebuah pendekatan manajerial di mana kepala sekolah mengelola beberapa jenjang pendidikan, mulai dari TK hingga SMA, dengan membagi tanggung jawab secara terstruktur. Konsep kepemimpinan multilevel ini menekankan pentingnya distribusi kepemimpinan, kolaborasi antar level, serta pemberdayaan semua anggota organisasi, termasuk guru, staf, siswa, dan komunitas. Adanya kepemimpinan multilevel di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah ini di latar belakang karena kurangnya sumber daya manusia dan tidak seimbangnya jumlah pengajar dan siswa yang berada di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah. Jenis Penelitian ini merupakan deskriptif kualitatif. Adapun metode pengumpulan datanya adalah wawancara kepada Bapak Sutikno M.Pd. selaku Kepala Sekolah di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah, observasi dan dokumentasi. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa Penerapan konsep kepemimpinan multilevel di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah ini merupakan usaha kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan efisiensi, mendorong kolaborasi antar anggota sekolah, memperkuat akuntabilitas, serta mengembangkan kepemimpinan di setiap level, yang pada akhirnya dapat meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah.

Kata kunci: *Kepala Sekolah, Kepemimpinan, Multilevel*

INTRODUCTION

A leader is one of the most crucial resources in achieving an organization's goals. To achieve these goals and advance the organization, a great leader is needed. In managing and leading an organization, leadership always becomes an interesting subject to observe. A leader is a central figure in an organization; they are called a central figure because the strategic role of a leader is expected to realize the success in fulfilling the organization's vision and mission (Sony, 2015, p. 1).

The success of a leader can be measured by their ability to advance their organization and prioritize and fight for the interests of the people they lead. Every organization desires a leader who can bring positive changes to the organization they lead. As for the leader themselves, they must consider how their leadership role can bring about changes for the organization. Therefore, leaders are required to have practical goals that are meaningful for all stakeholders (the organization), so these goals can be achieved by individuals or groups within the organization (Sony, 2015, p. 5). If depicted, leadership is something that cannot be seen or touched but can be felt through the results it generates in its role. One of the roles and functions of a leader in an organization is to realize common goals, achieve maximum success for the organization, and provide well-being for the people they lead (Sony, 2015, p. 8). Academics and experts have analyzed and researched to explain leaders and leadership.

(Clark, 2004) argues that a leader is someone who builds and strengthens the future of an organization. (Terry, 1972) also states that a leader is an agent of

change whose actions can influence others more than others can influence them. This is supported by (Robbins, 2005), who state that a leader is someone who can influence others. (Bernardin & Russell, 1993) also add that a leader is someone who is at the top of the hierarchy, where if they voice something, others will follow. From these definitions, it can be concluded that a leader is someone who has the ability to influence others and whose influence can empower organizational resources to achieve established goals.

Leadership is defined by several experts based on the behavior, influence, roles, and characteristics exhibited by leaders themselves. (Robbins, 2005) argues that leadership is the ability to influence a group towards achieving a common goal. (Griffin et al., 2004) also expresses that leadership is influencing members without coercion to shape organizational goals, motivate members, and help define the organization. (Daft, 2007) states that leadership is the application of motivation to influence members to achieve organizational goals. From the various definitions presented by experts, it can be concluded that leadership is the highest position in an organization, possessing roles, responsibilities, and authority over the organization they lead. Leadership directs all resources and members of the organization towards achieving common goals.

A leader in the educational context is none other than the principal. The principal is the leader at the education unit level who is responsible for the advancement or decline of the school they lead (Mulyasa, 2012). The principal is a school leader who essentially leads, directs, manages, and inspires the entire

school community to achieve educational goals. (Yuliatika et al., 2021). (Abdurahman & Ghoeir, 2022) also explain the principal is the key to improving the overall excellence of the school and is also a mentor. As the sole leader in the school, the principal organizes, manages, and conducts school activities. Additionally, the principal is one of the most significant components in enhancing the quality of education, as stated in Article 12, Paragraph 1 of Government Regulation No. 40 of 2021. The principal is responsible for improving the conduct of educational activities, performing managerial duties, fostering entrepreneurship development, and supervising teachers and educational staff. Therefore, the principal is required to be able to handle all issues within the school.

In the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a principal is defined as a teacher who leads a school. The term "a school" here signifies one, meaning that a principal is a teacher who leads one school. However, Indonesian School of Jeddah is different. The principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah has broad responsibilities because they lead four different educational levels: Kindergarten, Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School. One of the reasons the principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah can lead four levels at once is due to the lack of human resources.

The issue of the lack of human resources (HR) at Indonesian schools in Jeddah is significant and requires serious attention. Indonesian schools abroad, including those in Jeddah, play a crucial role in providing education for the children of Indonesian citizens living abroad. They not only function as educational institutions but also as places

to preserve culture and national identity among young Indonesians in the diaspora. One of the main causes of the HR shortage at Indonesian schools in Jeddah is the difficulty in recruiting educators. This is due to several factors such as budget constraints, the challenges of living in a foreign country, and the need to adapt to a different working environment, which make these positions less attractive. Additionally, the difficulty in managing administrative processes from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia also poses an obstacle. The challenge in recruiting educators makes the entire community, including teachers, feel burdened by the large number of students and unable to provide adequate individual attention.

The shortage of human resources at Indonesian School of Jeddah highlights the importance of the principal's role in leading the school. In leading Indonesian School of Jeddah, the principal oversees four educational levels simultaneously by applying multilevel leadership. According to (Robbins, 2006) Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence a group of members to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organization (Andang, 2018). According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word "multi" means more than one or multiple, while "level" means a grade or rank. Therefore, multilevel refers to something that has several grades or different ranks. Thus, multilevel leadership is the ability of a person to influence several levels of groups to work together to achieve common goals and objectives.

The principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah plays a very crucial role in the educational system. They act as decision-makers, oversee the implementation of

school activities, and supervise various aspects such as administration, curriculum, and human resources across the four educational levels. In carrying out their role, the principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah certainly has their own patterns and strategies for leading the four levels simultaneously. These patterns and strategies must have an influence on several aspects that impact the school environment. In the research by (Lubis & Bahri, 2023), and (Latifah & Yudha, 2023), it was revealed that the leadership patterns of schools influence the improvement of teacher performance. Previously, (Noprika et al., 2020) had anticipated their findings, testing that the strategies of principals affect the improvement of educational quality in schools. These studies represent the role of principals in a specific school level. The research has not yet addressed how a principal would lead across four different school levels simultaneously, from Kindergarten, Elementary School, Junior High School, to Senior High School

The intriguing issue of how to control multilevel leadership requires proportional attention and answers through scientific research. Especially in the context of leadership implementation at Indonesian schools abroad with excellent accreditation status, it creates its own novelty attraction. Therefore, this research attempts to explore the management of multilevel leadership carried out by the principal at various levels in Indonesian School of Jeddah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. The study was carried out through methods

such as observation, monitoring, and analyzing issues that occurred over two months (from January 30 to April 2, 2024) at Indonesian School of Jeddah related to the principal's leadership, supported by previous research data. The subject of this study is the principal, while the object is multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah. Data collection techniques include field observation, interviews, and documentation carried out on March 14, 2024. The interview was conducted with Mr. Sutikno M.Pd, the principal of Indonesian School of Jeddah. The data analysis technique was carried out in several stages, such as developing questions based on interview guidelines, analyzing all received data, and concluding the research results in a descriptive qualitative form.

The Concept of Multilevel Leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with the principal of Indonesian School of Jeddah, the implementation of multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah Indonesian School of Jeddah is a managerial approach where a leader or principal supervises and manages various levels within an organization. In the educational context, such as at Indonesian School of Jeddah, the principal who leads four educational levels (Kindergarten, Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School) applies the concept of multilevel leadership. This concept includes several key principles and practices to ensure that all educational levels can operate effectively and efficiently under a unified management.

The concept of multilevel leadership in schools is an approach where

leadership responsibilities and authority are distributed across various levels within the organization, so they do not rely solely on one person or a top position. This model emphasizes collaboration and the empowerment of individuals at every level of the organization, from the principal to teachers and administrative staff, and even involves students in some contexts. The implementation of multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah encompasses several aspects:

1. Leadership Distribution

a. Principal

The principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah acts as a visionary, policy maker, and strategic decision-maker. They also serve as a facilitator, providing space for deputies, coordinators, and teachers to take on leadership roles in their respective areas.

b. Vice Principal

The vice principals hold specific responsibilities in various fields, such as academics, student affairs, public relations, human resources, and facilities. They function to ensure the smooth implementation of school programs.

c. Coordinators and Teachers

At this level, teachers and subject coordinators lead in the areas of teaching, manage the curriculum, and ensure that students receive an optimal learning experience. They can also lead special projects such as clubs or extracurricular activities.

2. Community Involvement

In implementing multilevel leadership, the principal involves parents and the community in the decision-making process. This is because the parent community at Indonesian School of Jeddah plays a significant role in supervising or developing policies related to students.

3. International Collaboration

Because SIJ (Sekolah Indonesia Jeddah) is located abroad, multilevel leadership also includes collaboration with the Indonesian government, the Ministry of Education, and local authorities in Saudi Arabia. This is important to maintain the sustainability of educational programs and meet Indonesian academic standards while adhering to local regulations.

The implementation of the multilevel leadership concept at Indonesian School of Jeddah is an effort by the principal to enhance efficiency, encourage collaboration among school members, strengthen accountability, and develop leadership at every level, ultimately improving the quality of education.

Multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah can occur due to various reasons related to operational context, practical needs, and unique challenges faced by Indonesian schools abroad. The primary factor leading to the implementation of multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah is the limited human resources. The Indonesian school in Jeddah faces limitations in the number of educators and administrative staff.

With one principal leading all levels, the school can optimize the use of available human resources.

Multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah arises from the need to optimize resources, adapt to operational complexities abroad, and ensure consistency and quality of education for students. With a single principal managing various educational levels, the school can operate more efficiently, maintain educational standards, and meet the specific needs of students in the diaspora. Support from the government and appropriate policies also play a crucial role in supporting this leadership structure.

The Multilevel Leadership implemented at Indonesian School of Jeddah aligns with the definition of educational leadership put forward by several experts. Educational leadership refers to various activities and actions undertaken by the principal to mobilize teachers, staff, students, and community members to execute the educational programs at the school. (Santika, 2017). (Abdurahman & Ghoer, 2022) also argues that the principal plays a very important role in mobilizing and aligning all educational resources in the school. Furthermore, the principal's leadership is one of the factors that can realize the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives through programs that have been implemented in a planned and gradual manner. Meanwhile, state that the principal is required to have good management and leadership skills to be able to take the initiative

and come up with ideas to improve the quality of education at the school.

Complexity Leadership Theory, developed by Mary Uhl-Bien and Russ Marion, focuses on how leaders manage complexity within organizations. Leadership is seen as an interaction among leaders at various levels of the organization, working to adapt and respond to changes in the external environment. This theory emphasizes non-linear dynamics, where leadership can emerge at different levels within the context of a complex system. (Bien et al., 2007).

In the context of multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah, the author agrees with the Complexity Leadership Theory developed by Mary Uhl-Bien and Russ Marion, as this theory is one of the most relevant in the context of multilevel leadership. This theory emphasizes the importance of dynamic interaction between leaders at various levels of the organization. It is highly relevant in modern organizations that operate in complex and rapidly changing environments. Complexity leadership focuses on how leaders can manage and respond to complexity within the organization. It includes not only the influence of formal leaders but also how leadership emerges among team members and across different organizational levels. Additionally, this theory views organizations as complex adaptive systems, where leadership is not just a function of specific individuals, but the result of

interactions among various elements within the organization.

Multilevel Leadership Style at Indonesian School of Jeddah.

Based on the interview with the principal of Indonesian School of Jeddah, the leadership style adopted by the principal is democratic. This democratic leadership style emphasizes deliberation in decision-making, which is applied at every level and within each unit (Andang, 2018). (Robbins, 2005) reveals that this democratic leadership style depicts a leader who tends to involve employees in the decision-making process, delegate authority, and encourage participation in deciding work methods and objectives (Sony, 2015, p. 54).

This democratic leadership style focuses on the principles of effectiveness and efficiency in managing organizational resources and taking a humane approach towards subordinates. The concept of this democratic leadership style is "learning organization," which strives to improve the skills and capacities of human resources through continuous learning processes. For instance, members are encouraged to participate in training, seminars, benchmarking, and other learning processes with the expectation that they will become more skilled, creative, successful, independent, competitive, and capable of working as a team, which will positively impact the achievement of organizational goals (Sony, 2015, p. 55).

Given the numerous responsibilities assigned to the principal, the democratic leadership style is well-suited for implementation at Indonesian School of Jeddah. The principal employs a democratic approach by collaborating and

maximizing the roles of teachers and educational staff. With a student capacity of 1,230 and only 60 educators and administrative staff, the principal emphasizes effective task distribution alongside the five vice principals, which include the Vice Principal of Human Resources, Vice Principal of Curriculum, Vice Principal of Facilities and Infrastructure, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, and Vice Principal of Public Relations.

Due to the presence of multiple educational levels at Indonesian School of Jeddah, the principal also appoints academic coordinators for each level, with one coordinator for Kindergarten and Elementary School, and another for Junior High School and Senior High School. The responsibilities of the academic coordinators at each level include managing all curriculum activities, such as scheduling and assigning teacher duties

The leadership style implemented by the principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah is expected to encourage all members and the entire school community to empower themselves and take responsibility for the tasks assigned to them. This will also affect their sense of compliance, which will no longer be based on external control, but rather, members will develop from their own inner motivation accompanied by rational considerations.

The leadership style implemented by the principal in multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah aligns with the Participative Leadership Theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of involving team members or followers in the decision-making process. A participative leader does not monopolize

decisions but provides space for followers to offer input, ideas, and feedback, which are then considered in the final decision-making process (Likert, 1961).

Relevance of this theory to the democratic leadership style implemented by the principal in Multilevel Leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah :

1. Strengthening Communication

Across Levels

To strengthen communication across levels, the principal appoints coordinators at each educational level to enhance communication and coordination between the principal and various educational levels. This ensures that strategic decisions are made with accurate information from different educational levels.

2. Creating Inclusion and Involvement

The principal involves individuals with different skills and perspectives to encourage engagement at all levels. In this case, the principal ensures that various viewpoints are considered in the decision-making process.

Multilevel Leadership Strategy at Indonesian School of Jeddah.

The leadership strategy consists of a set of methods to implement planning within the organization over a certain period. Based on the interview with the principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah, the school's strategy is adjusted to the conditions of Indonesian School of Jeddah, which comprises several levels. Therefore, the leadership strategy used by the principal is a multilevel strategy. This multilevel strategy is applied by the principal to manage the various levels at Indonesian School of Jeddah. The implementation of this multilevel strategy involves sharing obligations and

responsibilities with the components within the school, including five vice principals and their respective teams.

This collaboration strategy has been adopted by the principal to align with the conditions at the school, which has several levels and cannot be managed alone. Moreover, the communal sense, which is an integral part of the school, encourages the principal to implement this collaboration strategy due to the mutual cooperation that leads to shared success. This strategy is applied not only internally but also externally. The external strategy implemented by the principal involves collaborating with the Indonesian Consulate General (KJRI), which acts as a guarantor for the school's security and licensing.

Additionally, based on observations conducted at Indonesian School of Jeddah, the leadership strategy implemented by the principal ensures that the institution operates effectively and efficiently in providing quality education to students. Here are some leadership strategies applied by the principal within the environment of Indonesian School of Jeddah :

1. Visionary Leadership

The principal has a clear vision and mission for the future of the school, especially in the context of international education. The principal's vision and mission include improving the quality of education, developing students' character, and adapting the curriculum to be relevant with international standards.

2. Strengthening Community Relationships

The principal builds strong relationships with various

stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, students, and the Indonesian community in Jeddah. The principal actively involves the community, listens to feedback, and ensures collaboration between the school and the community through social activities, open discussions, and regular meetings.

3. Improving Teacher and Human Resource Quality

The principal conducts training, workshops, and seminars to enhance teachers' competencies and adopts the latest teaching methods that suit the needs of students in an international environment. This is done to ensure that the teaching staff at the school continues to develop professionally.

4. Curriculum Management

The principal implements the same curriculum at Indonesian School of Jeddah as in Indonesia, but also adjusts to the international context by considering local culture and the education system of Saudi Arabia.

5. Transformational Leadership

The principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah sets a good example by inspiring and motivating the entire school community.

6. Focus on Character and Moral Education

Besides academics, the principal at Indonesian School of Jeddah also prioritizes character and moral education in line with Indonesian national values and Islam. Programs such as Qur'an literacy, tahfidz (Qur'an memorization), and soft skills training are implemented to shape the character of students at Indonesian School of Jeddah.

7. Enhancing School Facilities

The principal strives to improve facilities that support learning, such as laboratories, libraries, classrooms, and educational technology.

Leadership strategy is a very important aspect for a leader to have in managing an organization. This is because it affects the success and growth of the organization. The leadership strategy that has been developed will impact the performance of the members. A leadership strategy is a method or strategic plan held by a leader aimed at bringing about change in the company or organization, implementing strategies with effective leadership qualities, and making employees understand the goals and challenges faced by the organization. (Darmaesti et al., 2023, p. 64). A leadership strategy is also defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals (Darmaesti et al., 2023, p. 64).

Leadership strategy is an intriguing aspect as it pertains to the advancement or stagnation of an organization. If a leader is ineffective in executing their strategy, it can negatively affect the performance of the members. When the members' performance falters, it impacts the organization's overall performance and reputation, which could hinder the achievement of the organization's goals. Strategy implementation involves the process of translating strategic management and policies into actions through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures (Darmaesti et al., 2023, p. 66).

Based on the strategies implemented by the principal, they align with the Distributive Leadership theory proposed by Spillane (2006). This theory is a leadership model that emphasizes that leadership responsibilities and functions are not confined to a single individual (such as the principal), but are distributed among many people within the organization. In distributive leadership, leadership roles are collectively carried out by various parties such as teachers, staff, and even students. This approach involves collaboration, sharing responsibilities, and encouraging the involvement of all members of the organization in decision-making and task execution (Harris & Alma, 2008, p. 20).

CONCLUSION

Multilevel leadership at Indonesian School of Jeddah is an approach aimed at managing and optimizing various educational levels from Kindergarten to Senior High School within a single institution. The principal plays a crucial role as the highest leader, but leadership responsibilities are shared with vice principals, academic coordinators, teachers, and staff to ensure effective collaboration. This concept is relevant as it adapts to the limitations of human resources and the unique needs of a school abroad.

The implementation of this leadership is based on the distribution of responsibilities and collaboration at all levels, involving the school community as well as local and international authorities. The participative democratic leadership style also serves as the foundation, where the principal encourages the active participation of all parties in decision-

making. The strategies implemented by the principal emphasize the importance of adaptation and collaboration in a complex environment. Ultimately, this multilevel leadership aims to improve the quality of education, empower all school components, and maintain the sustainability of education within the Indonesian community abroad.

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