

Development of School Leadership Preparation in Indonesia¹

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Abstract

The dynamics of school leadership ideas and practice in Indonesia changes through times. It is reflecting the spirit of each era and adoption of leadership theory/practices that available. Government system and socio-political situation influence to education sector and impact to how principals leading and managing schools in Indonesia. As the new independence country in 1945, the Colonial influence with different purpose of schooling give foundation distinctively into Indonesia's education. Significant development happened in 1970s when the New Order government expands the size of education sector, but little impact toward school leadership. The changing government system to decentralization in 2000s led to a drastic change about principalship in Indonesia. This new trend introduces principal standard requirement, systematic training and appointment by district government.

Introduction

Nowadays, the important concept of school leadership in order to get excellent achievement is widely accepted and acknowledged (Hallinger, 2011). Higher achievement for every student and better academic success can be associated directly to school leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Harris, 2014). Then, it is a logical thing to invest heavily in principals' preparation and development in the anticipation of improved performance and outcomes which practiced by many countries (Harris, 2008; Bush, 2011).

Recently, even though it is acknowledged that the cultural setting is so very different, many Asian countries, including Indonesia, there has been a propensity to follow Western approaches to leadership development and training, (Cravens & Hallinger 2012). It is interesting to know actual the situation as well as the previous system regard to principal preparation and training. This article, describe the development of the issues starting from Indonesia's independent to the recent time in the reform era. This will give perspective about the development of practices and ideas about principal and school leadership in developing countries context.

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Earlier Development

Formal schooling as we know now established in Indonesia, was started by the Dutch colonial government in the 1880s. The public school system previously exclusive for European descendants and use fully dutch language (Djajadiningrat, no date). The expansion of the school system happened in 1901 when the Netherland government implement policy to improve social-economic situation of marginalized indigenous population, called as ethical policy (*etische politiek*) (van der Veur, 1969).

The World War II has a big impact to Indonesian education sector, while in the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the *pribumi* (local people) have opportunity from previously they had been virtually excluded. Accordingly, school system in Indonesia expanded in short period of time, number of students rose significantly. However this expansion resulted in an acute shortage of teachers, because the Dutch teachers were imprisoned or fled the country. This era also the beginning of local people has opportunity managing the schooling system, where Bahasa Indonesia used as national language and potentials in each area are utilised to support education (Sumintono & Subekti, 2015).

Ten years after the independence, in 1955, the number of student enrollment reached 10 million, which was five times compare to Japanese occupation time (Jalal & Musthafa, 2001). The Indonesian government has to keep up the situation with provide schooling infrastructure and appoint many new teachers. Sporadic teacher training also implemented in many places with limited resources in order to improve teacher qualification (Mooney, 1962; Sumintono & Subekti, 2015).

The new republic drew up the education law, which based on the state ideology, *Pancasila* (literally, five principles), that became the fundamental basis of Indonesian education. The law also incorporated egalitarian principles such as a compulsory primary school system funded by the state, emphasize of nation building as *Bahasa Indonesia* became the language of instruction. Schools are therefore sites to prepare future citizens to be multicultural yet having common identity and aspirations. The school system was continuing from colonial era, where it was standardized and governed from the central government in the capital city (Poerbakawatja, 1970; Lee, 1995).

Similar like in the colonial era, there was no special preparation or principal training conducted in the public school system. It only emphasizes on good subject matter knowledge and pedagogy to be appointed as a principal. School inspectors play a significant role at this time where they assess teachers' personality and their report really influence decision to appoint him or her to

become a principal later. The report of teacher as a government employee, inform about "if the candidate met the conditions of capacity, honesty and loyalty" (Nasution, 1967: p. 32). According to Beeby (1979), principals at primary school in this era characterize as a male with nine years older compare to other teachers in his school, which have similar education level and socio-economic background with them. The returning some Indonesians who study education abroad especially in early 1960s, slowly made the school system introduced that school principals should not rely on school administration only, but also to guidance service and school supervision (Tahalele, 1971). At the same time the establishment of several teacher colleges in the big cities brought change especially to principals in secondary school, where they involved in short in-service education about educational leadership.

The public school principals in all level of education in old older era facing though situation. The era between 1955-1965 in Indonesia where difficult political stability (such as local rebellions) (Feith, 1963) and economic situation (high inflation and food rations), make schools cannot get enough support from the government, made them rely so much to parents and community. A Parent-Teacher Association that intentionally created to support school, become the main vehicle for the principals playing his other role which was to collect money from parents regularly. The main reason is to "pay a major share of the upkeep of schools including the allowance of teachers" (Lee, 1995, p. 171). This kind practices continue up to 2005 with led to some consequences that make principals' position at stake, especially regard to transparency and accountability of the fund since it become 'convention' in public institutions (Sumintono, 2006). It led to rumor that public school principals position, usually in big cities, is provide benefit that make teachers compete for it, rather than its function as an educational institution leader.

Expansion of Education

The changing government happened in 1966 to so called the New Order, but the real impact to education sector started eight years after that, when oil revenue played their part. The education budget rose twelve times in five years' period after 1974, that make the country can do many things from construction thousand new schools which implementing one school for every village policy (Duflo, 2004), recruited hundred thousand new teachers (Raihani & Sumintono, 2010) and organize ambitious teacher in-service training program (Soedijarto, 1980; Nielsen, 2003). Beeby (1979, p. 2) illustrates the situation, "the improvement in the finances of the Education Department was even more dramatic than the rise in the price of oil". The result in terms of number was remarkable, for instance participation rate rose to universal education level (more than 90%) at primary schooling in less than ten years.

Tahalele (1971) was the one who suggested and designed about principal in-service training as well as principal preparation training during this era. He said that school administration where principal maintain good teaching and learning in class and conducting supervision to teachers was no longer adequate. Role of the school principals also should include "staff relationship, personnel administration and professional development" (p. 19). It is interesting to note that educational leadership ideas in Indonesia mirroring what happened in other countries, and try to base on relevant research too which emphasized on school management.

There is different situation for public primary and secondary principals. Only in secondary level, mostly public secondary school principals had previously held posts as a vice principal. They had been selected for the vice principal role by their principal based on good rapport and sometimes because of close proximity. So, unofficially, chosen as a vice principal in a secondary school is climb a ladder rank to higher position which make teachers compete to get special attention from their principal. In public primary, the education system designed a small school type across Indonesia, usually has one class in each of six grades that make mostly less than twelve active teachers in a school, which not has vice principal position structurally.

In the earlier part of the New Order, Beeby (1979) notes that at the primary school level, however there was no special training for principals and no clear job specification. At the secondary level, the situation was slightly different as the principal was usually a subject specialist, however the role was not specified or defined in any official way. In the next development, the central government, which appointed every public school principal in the country like in the previous era, introduced voluntary preparation training for principal candidates that lasted one week starting in the 1980s (Sumintono et al., 2015). Because teachers were civil servants, then content of the training was mostly concerned with public administration and management, and issue related to government employee which was provided by the education province office staff. The candidates were trained about public organization and regulation, official correspondence, public finance report, file and folder system, and Pancasila upgrading training.

The content of principal preparation is slightly different from what suggested by academician like Tahalele. Actually, it is showing where the government power is unquestionable and backed up with availability of fund, made them to implement their agenda become unstoppable. Nielsen (2003) argues that the New Order emphasized on economic stability, growth and efficiency in governing the nation, what he called as *bureaucratic authoritarian state*, which resulted a tremendous impact on the education sector. Principal preparation training for example, conducted similarly like any other public institution training as other civil servants, it is because quantitative achievement was the main type of achievement sought and reported such as number of teacher participated and funds allocation used as

planned. Education bureaucrats from top to lower level, "has tended to resort to 'goal displacement': substituting goals that can be reached for those that cannot" (Nielsen, 2003, p. 403). It is no surprise that uniformity of training content, even including something that not relevant to develop principal professionalism is practiced without any opposition.

As a result, centralization and authoritarianism of New Order impacted deeply to education sector where public school principals' role also become the main guard at lower level to maintain state control. Siswanto (2003) illustrates that public school principals tend to follow whatever instruction from their superior officers which make them difficult to initiate something different, let alone be creative and innovative in leading and managing their schools. Darmaningtyas (2005), argues that this situation is managed structurally in every district in Indonesia, where principals is part of *Kelompok Kerja Kepala Sekolah* (Principals' Working Group) or K3S, uniquely he mentioned one of the task of the K3S is managing teachers who are critical to government policy. It is not surprise as longitudinal study by Hofstede (1983) about Indonesia society cultural model found that higher hierarchical power can decide anything they like. Further, some decisions about education policy at school level is orchestrated and finalized in the K3S meeting. Later, because of its bad reputation, the K3S name changes to *Musyawarah Kepala Sekolah* (principals' forum) (Darmaningtyas, 2005).

It is interesting to note about real situation in the field based on empirical findings. Beeby (1979) points out, research conducted in three provinces where 33 principals participated, only four principals mention new teaching methods. He concluded that "principals played a fairly effective part in maintaining standards within accepted practices, but few could be regarded as agents of change except in minor matters" (page 92). In relation to training and professional development in early of the New Order era, Beeby (1979, p. 93) writes that the principal, "has had no special training for his job, and, apart from the mass reporting of a routine statistical kind that he is called upon to do, he is rather vague on the role of his position". This situation is one of the result of fast expansion of school system, which relate to qualification majority of principals at this era not having undergraduate degree, which means their ability were somehow limited and rely on their experiences beside impact of state control to education.

According to Supriadi (1999), the New Order government has stipulated regulation about educational personnel, regulation no 38 year 1992, which inside it stated principals has to be recruited from teachers after completing special training. However, in practice there was no 'special training' designed and implemented up until 18 years later. This show that the government tend to rely on status quo in terms of developing school leaders. Danim (2002) found that without distinctive preparation for school principals, they tend to have lack of understanding about changes that happened outside education system. Their

relationship patterns with teachers mirroring what practiced by the central government, incline to feudalism and authoritative, at the same time they have low anticipative capacity to many educational issues (Nielsen, 2003; Danim, 2002).

Other empirical research findings in this era reveal some interesting facts. At the primary school level, study by PEQIP [primary education quality improvement program] (*in* Supriadi 1999), found that school quality mostly depends on principal leadership quality. School leaders who rely on routine jobs as illustrated by van der Werf et al., (2000, p. 352) “the principals of the PEQIP schools focused too much on administrative tasks (keeping records of student results, financial tasks) rather than on educational leadership tasks”, impact on low students’ achievement. Good school leaders try to solve management related problems that appeared in PEQIP schools such as high teacher and student absence, inefficient use of instruction time, and underqualified or unmotivated teachers (van der Werf et al., 2000).

Study at secondary school level by Supriadi (1995 *in* Supriadi, 1999) found that good quality schools that has high preferences in the society are different from others schools, its characteristics such as students’ study passion, teachers’ motivation and improvement of their teaching skills, increase academic achievement and, orderly and friendly school climate, is attributed by the principal’s leadership. This study in line with feature of effective principals in international research about educational effectiveness. Dikmenjur’s (1997) study on vocational schools at secondary level found that a rigorous selection of school principal result in significant changes in school activities, where its performance continues increase. This shows that school leadership potential is available even in the era where strong state influence restricts leadership development at school level.

Recent trends

Following the Asian financial crisis in 1997 there was a different effect in Indonesia, it impacted to a regime changed when Suharto step down in May 1998. The New Order collapsed brought Indonesia to what called as the Reform Order up to know, which have five presidents elected compare to previous era. The significant development then happened, which was change the government system when the parliament passed two new laws relating to regional autonomy. Starting from 2001, many public sectors including education were transferred and administered at district level rather than in the previously centralised and bureaucratic manner that practiced since the colonial era. Aspinall and Fealy (2003, p. 3) for example, observed that these developments produced “one of the most radical decentralisation programmes attempted anywhere in the world”.

At the same time this era also brings so many progress, several new policies regard to education sector, reshape and redefine educational provision across the country. These included: school final examination, school operational support that did not differentiate students who came from public or private school started in 2005 (Fitriah et al., 2013), a new Teacher Law and teacher certification program (Raihani & Sumintono, 2010) and an international standard school policy (Sumintono et al., 2014).

Role of the Ministry of Education changed to emphasize on design and establishing policy. For instance, regard to disparities that happened between districts who has rich natural resources and those who not, the central government enacted regulation number 65 year 2005 about minimum service standard for educational provision. The intention is to closing the gap and maintain national unity. Further, more regulation released by the central government such as about national education standard, compulsory education, and funding of education in order to make 500 more district governments across Indonesia, know the direction for educational development and apply its standard in their area.

Since year 2001, process of selection, training and appointment of public school principals has transferred to district governments, local initiative plays their part. As Sumintono's (2006) study found out, many district governments in autonomy era tend to follow previous practices. The reason is simple, it is about limited capacity and experiences they have in terms of managing educational sector. This is the result of centralisms manner that long practiced in the previous era, that make initiative and creativity not flourish even when the power and resources already transferred. Few districts collaborate with provincial governments, local universities or other institutions in terms of selection process to appoint principal.

However, new development starting from 2005 happened, where mayor position in every regent or city is appointed based on direct election from the people. This situation makes it difficult, especially for public school principals. Their positions can be changed easily if not in favor of new elected mayor (Sumintono et al., 2015). Something salient because of this, public school principals' appointment is based on personal connections and their individual influence with certain power at district level will eventually play important part.

In order to avoid this kind favoritism of school leader appointment, the central government stipulated some regulations regarding principal requirement. Ministry of National Education (MoNE) decree number 13 year 2007 explains about set of requirement standard to become principal. Beside regular administrative prerequisite such as candidate has undergraduate degree and at least has five-year experience as a teacher, new things from the decree is the principal has to possess five competencies. Indonesian principals require to hold competency in

personality, managerial, entrepreneurship, social and supervision. How to implement this at district level, unfortunately it is up to district government to assess principals' candidate competency.

Another significant development about principal selection and preparation happened when the Ministry of Education released a regulation number 6 year 2009 about establishing a national agency called with *Lembaga Pengembangan dan Pemberdayaan Kepala Sekolah* (LP2KS) or the 'Agency for School Principal Empowerment and Development' (LP2KS, 2016). This new agency is national certification institution that provide training for future public and private school principals in all level education across Indonesia. This initiative is actually implementing what already stated about principal competency and the training itself trying inculcated those.

The total hours minimal of principal training in the LP2KS is 100 hours face to face session and three-month field work/on the job learning (Hendarman, 2015). Teachers can nominate themselves to join this training, and all the selection process done at district level. Teachers who pass the selection join the training that was called the 'Development of Principals Managerial Skills'. Its syllabus covers areas of student management, human resource management, curriculum development, school development planning, monitoring and evaluation, and information and communication technology in school. This part takes 70 hours teaching session (a week program) held in LP2KS office in Solo, Central Java.

The second part of the training is three months (which is equal to 200 hours) of on the job learning (OJL) (apprenticeship) in two schools. The candidates' own school and another school in his/her district, where the participants are asked to prepare an action plan for school improvement. During this activities, officials from education district office will supervise the activities. The last stage of the training is three days training (equal to 30 hours), again in the LP2KS office which mostly consists of completing a portfolio of the activities undertaken during the on the job learning and a presentation of the portfolio to the panel. The total time principal training spent on this program is 300 hours.

Once every candidate have completed all the training and assessments in LP2KS and pass, then they will be awarded a *nomor unik kepala sekolah* (or NUKS, a principal registration number). This number then makes them eligible to be appointed by the mayor at regent or city as a public school principal in primary or secondary level in their respective district (LP2KS, 2016). The central government very clear regard to appointment of public school principals, whenever district governments appoint teachers become principal without NUKS, then certain education assistance from central government will not be provided in the near future to the district.

Although this new training program has been in place for few years, early findings report the development is promising. Research by Sumintono et al., (2015), found that principals' candidate who join LP2KS training express better impression compare to other principal trainings preparation that usually conducted by the district government, this include varieties of approach, training's content and method that they think will support them better as future principals. The district governments also aware of the NUKS, and slowly more principals with NUKS appointed especially at primary school level (LP2KS, 2016). The future development yet to wait and need more study to know the effectiveness of this policy.

Several study portray educational leadership situation in this reform era. Bjork research (2005) in East Java that focus on local content curriculum previously, also explain about decision making and management at school level. He found that school principals seem do not have enough capacity, in terms of expertise and experience, to handle the challenges and opportunities of education in the autonomy era. It is in line with what Mr. Fadjar, then a minister of education in 2002, even stated that "the Indonesian government did not educate school leaders to be independent in many aspects of school administration" (as cited in Sofo et al., 2012, p. 503).

Two studies conducted in Sumatra, one in Lampung (Hariri et al., 2012) and one in Padang (Damanik, 2014) also revealed new findings. The Lampung study found that teacher's job satisfaction improves if the principals' decision making style was less coercive and bureaucratic (Hariri et al., 2012). Meanwhile Damanik's (2014) study emphasizes that the leadership behaviors of the principals and its influence on elements of the school climate are important for school improvement, in this case teacher self-efficacy, in the context of education reform. In another study completed by Jawas (2014) in Malang, she found that there are four areas of improvement (curriculum, teachers' professionalism, learning facilities, and students' learning outcomes) where instructional leadership actually supports the practices of managing, promoting, improving and assessing instruction by the school principal. But, perceptions between principals and teachers were found to be different, and they do not necessarily lead to the increased frequency of practices that influence instructional improvement. These three studies inform that research about principal in Indonesia has slightly move from school management to educational leadership.

An interesting qualitative study by Raihani (2007) based on successful school leadership perspectives, come up with unique findings. Involving three principals from Yogyakarta, he found that all embraced "Islamic and cultural beliefs and values that underpinned their leadership...which were articulated in the school leadership and strategies" (p. 481). This study reveals the potential that not touch yet by the principal training and develop in principal professionalism program,

which could be an important feature of the principals' leadership in the contemporary Indonesia.

Conclusion

This article portrays the development of educational leadership in Indonesia, which shows unique challenge in different eras. The political, cultural and social factors influence much to the leadership in Indonesian schools, extending their role as principal such as to find supporting fund, securing government policy that not relate to education and strategically to put themselves in line with micro-political impact. The changing government system to autonomy after more than fifty years Independence, led to a drastic change about principalship issues in Indonesia. The new policy include the introduction of principal standard competency requirement, systematic training managed by the central government, and the hope to change emphasis on school management change to leadership and development.

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