Competency of Elementary Schools Principals in Supporting the Standardization of Leadership in Education

Arismunandar*
Department of Educational Administration, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia.

*arismunandar@unm.ac.id

Abstract. The principal’s competencies play a vital role in supporting quality of leadership. According to the Indonesia government regulation, principal has to hold five competencies which are: personality competency, managerial competency, entrepreneurship competency, supervision competency, and social competency. This study was conducted to describe the three of five competencies of principals. They were managerial competency, entrepreneurship competency, and supervision competency of elementary schools principals. Based on the results of study towards 42 samples of elementary school principals in Makassar, it was found that the mean score on the test results of the three competencies was in middle category. When it was analyzed on each item of competencies, the managerial and entrepreneurship competencies were in middle category, while the supervision competency was in the low category. The results of the research indicated that the local government needs to prepare for school principals through pre-service training in some area of principals’ task.

1. Introduction
Principal leadership plays a vital role for the success of school management. It is reflected by the statements of the experts that only the principal who possesses a strong leadership can bring the school to make improvement to achieve the goals effectively and efficiently. [1,2] The statement was supported by the results of research which concluded that the conditions of the success of different schools strongly depend on a very prominent role of the school principal for school improvement. [3] Experience from Finland shows that pedagogical leadership, in fact, has been recognized as one of the key factors in today’s and future principals’ tasks. [4]

In a study of effective schools, leadership competencies needed in schools is reflected in some of the following leadership characteristics: (1) the principal who is fair and firm in making decisions, (2) the principal who delivers tasks equally to teachers, (3) the principal who appreciating the participation of staff, (4) the principal who understanding the feelings of teachers, (5) the principal who has a vision and seek to make changes, (6) the skilled and discipline principal, (7) the principal who is capable and work hard, (8) the principal who has the dedication and diligent, (9) the principal who is sincere, and (10) a confident principal. [5] Another study also shows that the effective principals are: (1) they were driven by a philosophy of social justice; (2) they ascribed to a strong notion of care; (3) they were highly ethical and morally responsible; (4) they demonstrated a high degree of resiliency and persistence; and most importantly (5) they were courageous. [6]
The leadership competencies at school are evidently published by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 13 Year 2007 about Standard of School/Madrasah Principals which has set standards for qualification and competency of principal and has decrypted the competencies that must be possessed by the principal. [7] These competencies are personal competency, managerial competency, entrepreneurship competency, supervision competency, and social competency.

This study was conducted to know the mastery of competencies of principal in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 13 Year 2007 on Standards of School/Madrasah Principal. This study was focused to know the competencies of elementary school principals especially in three of five competencies. Those were managerial competency, entrepreneurship competency, and supervision competency.

2. Research Methods

This study used a kind of test of principal competency to measure the mastery of those competencies. At the early stages of this test, it was developed into two series of questions that each of the tests consisted of 82 question items. In this study, the writers only used 1 series of question.

In order to obtain data of the principals’ competencies, the competency test was conducted for 42 elementary schools principals of 367 elementary schools principals in Makassar Municipality in which the 42 elementary schools were located in 14 districts in Makassar Municipality. The samples distributions were: (1) males = 17 and females = 25, and (2) undergraduates = 31 and post graduates = 11. They showed that most of samples were females and also great numbers of the samples were undergraduates (S1). These were consistent with the general trend that the positions of elementary schools principals were dominated by women and undergraduates (S1).

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research results, the following is the description of the principal competency, both the mean score of principal competency as well as the percentage of principal competency by category: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high of each principal competency.

Table 1 below displays the mean score of principal main competency test results which include general competency, managerial competency, entrepreneurship competency, and supervision competency. Table 1 below demonstrates the mean score of principal competency. It is 45.53. This score was obtained from the score of three main competencies which were managerial, entrepreneurship, and supervision competency. This result indicated that principal competency was far below the ideal score of 100. From the three main competencies, the slightly better score was entrepreneurship competency with a score of 54.40. But for two others, the mean score of managerial competency was below 50 and even the lowest mean score was supervision competency which was only 32.90.

| Competency     | N  | Ideal Score | Max. Score | Min. Score | Mean Score |
|----------------|----|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Managerial     | 42 | 100         | 75         | 27         | 49.30      |
| Entrepreneurship| 42 | 100         | 73         | 20         | 54.40      |
| Supervision    | 42 | 100         | 60         | 20         | 32.90      |
| General (Average) |   |             |            |            | 45.53      |

To describe more details of principals competencies according to three main competencies, table 2 below displays the frequency and percentage of principals competencies in managerial, entrepreneurial, and supervision competency.
Table 2. Percentage of principal managerial competency

| Competency     | Interval Score* | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|-------|
|                | Very Low | Low  | Moderate | High |       |
| Managerial     | 0        | 21.43| 66.67    | 11.9 | 100   |
| Entrepreneurship| 2.38     | 19.05| 47.62    | 30.95| 100   |
| Supervision    | 28.57    | 57.14| 14.29    | 0    | 100   |

*There is no respondent in interval score for very high.

Table 2 above explains that in general: (1) the managerial competency of principals was in moderate category with a percentage of 66.67 percent; (2) the majority of principals’ entrepreneurship competency were in moderate category with a percentage of 47.62 percent; and (3) most of principals had supervision competency at low category with a percentage of 57.14 percent.

The percentage of principals’ competencies by category moved from moderate to low. These results showed that there was no significant difference between the test result and the try out held in 2007 which indicated the low competency of principal.[8] The insufficient managerial competency of principals indicates the weakness of school principals in Indonesia, especially in Makassar. Therefore with this result, it can be presumed that the management of primary schools in Indonesia has not been fully running well. The other research findings also found the same phenomena which revealed that the present school managers faced difficulties to meet the new managerial expectations that were brought about by the transforming educational environment.[9]

The results of this study also indicate the weak competency of the principal in entrepreneurship. Differing from elementary schools principals, entrepreneurship competency has been applied at vocational school in Indonesia. There are facts that vocational school principals, whose leadership is based on the values of entrepreneurial leadership, hold these values in the management of the school: (1) visionary, (2) creative, (3) innovative, (4) independent, (5) hardworking, (6) risk-taking, and (7) entrepreneurial spirit.[10] In the future, principal’s entrepreneurship competency needs to be improved.[11]

The result is very surprising because principals as academic supervisors did not meet with the table results. They were lack of competency on supervising. In line with that, one research result supported that supervision behavior correlated to high student achievement. It showed that the needs for principals to understand their staff, to encourage them, and to empower the individuals within the school are by establishing a positive rapport with the staff and utilizing sound communication principles.[12] The other writers also argue that it is crucial to develop pedagogical leadership for principals.[13]

In general, the results of this research show that the elementary schools principals’ competency in Indonesia was not good. To solve this problem, some writers have proposed that the principal candidates have to complete a training program for school principals cadres in some area of principals task.[14] The lessons learned from Tehran show that there was a significant relationship between in-service training and empowerment of principals of public high schools.[15] Beside that, lack of formal preparation for principals job can be coped through the lessons of experience.[16]

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study revealed that the overall competency of elementary school principals was on middle category. For each of the three main competencies of principals, it could be concluded that the competency of managerial and entrepreneurship competencies were in middle or moderate category, while the supervision competency was still low. Due to this fact, it needs hard efforts to improve the competency of principal in Indonesia by applying various professional development approaches both by pre-service training and by in-service training. In addition, the recruitment system must be good for the principal candidates so that they have sufficient competency.
Acknowledgments
Publication of the presented results has received funding from the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia.

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