

TEPHES' SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dian Pratiwi^{1*}, Nora Saiva Jannana², Adhi Setiawan³
^{1,2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
* *corresponding author*: dianpratiwi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

COVID-19 has generated significant management issues, notably in school leadership. Special schools demand leadership innovation so that learning activities stay optimal. This paper addresses situational leadership in Children with Special Needs (ABK) at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta utilizing qualitative description and data collection through interviews, observation, and recording. A purposive sample of informants was used, and they were classified as important, primary, and supporting informants. Data analysis processes include transcripts, coding, grouping, comparing, contrasting, and interpretation. The findings of the SLB situational leadership research take into account the investigation of technology, economics, policy, health, environmental, and social (TEPHES) factors in school decision-making in the Pandemic-19 scenario.

ABSTRAK:

COVID-19 telah menciptakan tantangan manajemen global, khususnya kepemimpinan persekolahan. Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) membutuhkan inovasi kepemimpinan agar kegiatan pembelajaran tetap optimal. Artikel ini membahas kepemimpinan situasional pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) dengan menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif di SLB N 2 Yogyakarta. Pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Purposive sampling informan menjadi pilihan dan membagi informan kunci, utama, dan pendukung. Transkrip, coding, grouping, comparing, contrasting, dan interpretasi menjadi tahapan analisa data. Hasil penelitian kepemimpinan situasional SLB mempertimbangkan analisis technology, economics, policy, health, environmental and social (TEPHES) dalam pengambilan keputusan persekolahan di situasi Pandemic-19.

Kata Kunci: *Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, Pandemi COVID-19, Kepemimpinan Situasional.*

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received: 7 Maret 2022
Accepted: 20 April 2022
Published: 31 May 2022

KEYWORDS:

Children with Special Needs,
COVID-19 Pandemic,
Situational Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of government policies in the education aspect during the COVID-19 pandemic require schools to directly involve schools in determining their best teaching and learning activities during the pandemic (Suhendra et al., 2020). To carry out education during a pandemic, school principals must adjust how they lead it to the situation on the ground. In addition, unexpected crisis conditions challenge school principals in managing an educational institution.

School principals must be creative in different situations and become motivators to design curricula and learning following the COVID-19 pandemic. One of them is organizing all school members so that the learning process in schools can continue to be carried out correctly (Nadeak & Juwita, 2020). Meanwhile, innovations that school principals can carry out during a pandemic can be in the form of increasing the ability of teachers to operate technology, innovating infrastructure, and digitizing the school climate (Hidayat, 2021). Innovation involves several processes and needs long-term stability support (Adhi et al., 2022).

The adjustment of learning for schools and special schools is different. Special schools require special treatment with all the limitations they have. Therefore, educators and staff must use particular strategies and methods to keep learning. For example, Daipatama & Nuralan on special schools' teaching and learning process shows that learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is carried out offline (outside the network) and online (in the network). However, the study focused on researching offline learning for students with special needs because they cannot use technology in online learning (Nuralan & Daipatama, 2020).

This study explores the Principal's leadership in determining the learning process for special schools in a pandemic era. From various similar studies that have been conducted, this research focuses on the leadership of the principals of State Special School (SLB N) 2 Yogyakarta in ensuring that learning continues during an uncertain pandemic situation. SLB N 2 Yogyakarta is one of the special schools that educate children with special needs and continue to carry out education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this focus, this article discusses the situational leadership of school principals to carry out



learning for children with special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the obstacles they encountered while ensuring smooth learning.

METHODS

This study used the descriptive qualitative method. The data was collected by using interviews, observation, and documentation methods. Determination of informants in this study using purposive sampling method with a total of 8 (eight) informants classified into three types. The first vital informants consisted of one of the curriculum staff. Second, the primary informants consisted of the Principal, one grade 2 SMPLB student, one grade 2 SMPLB teacher, and the head of the Administrative Section. Third, the supporting informants consisted of a physical education subject teacher, a vice principal for curriculum, a history teacher, and a school committee member. Data analysis in this study used the methods of transcription, coding, grouping, comparing, contrasting, and interpretation. This study uses the source triangulation method to test the data's validity.

FINDINGS

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching and learning activities at State Special School (SLB N) 2 Yogyakarta used the distance learning (PJJ) model. However, the Principal does not yet understand the ideal method for implementing PJJ. Under these conditions, teachers are instructed to give many tasks at home. However, it turns out that this does not have a good impact on students. As a result, most students do not want to collect assignments because the learning model differs from before. Before the pandemic, when face to face, lessons were given in class and done right away. The works are also collected on the same day.

The distance learning process makes students have to take turns coming to school. SLB N 2 Yogyakarta students only come two days in five school days. Apart from the days that have been determined, students study from home using the facilities that have been prepared, such as looking through WhatsApp groups, watching learning videos made or designed by the teacher, or through assignments given. The number of students in one class is limited, so each class per day is only filled by two or three students. These are because one class

consists of 5-7 students. The class determination of children with special needs in SLB N 2 Yogyakarta is grouped based on the child's ability.

For the smooth learning of particular school students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the school principal of State Special School 2 Yogyakarta arranges everything to adjust to the existing situation. There is curriculum innovation, increasing human resource competence, expanding the mental resilience of human resources, improving communication with parents, and preparing infrastructure for the prevention of COVID-19.

First, create a pandemic curriculum for State Special School (SLB N) 2 Yogyakarta. Seeing the situation of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta, following the assistance of the Yogyakarta Special Region Youth and Sports Office, the Principal made a new regulation called the emergency curriculum. The pandemic curriculum is an innovation of the ongoing KTSP curriculum. The pandemic curriculum is an innovation from the Principal to respond to the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers may or may not use the curriculum. In the pandemic curriculum, learning content is reduced, students' study time is set to only two hours per day, and the Principal instructs teachers not to give too many assignments.

Learning time is more flexible in the SLB N 2 Yogyakarta pandemic curriculum. The duration of time doing assignments for students with special needs affects students' enthusiasm and learning outcomes. In addition, learning materials are made to adapt to the existing situation (thematic). The goal is that students do not have difficulty following the lesson. The severity and severity of students' intellectual disabilities affect the difficulties faced by students in the learning process. So that in determining learning materials, it is better directed at skills lessons.

Second, improve teacher competence in technology literacy. Facing the Distance Learning (PJJ) and classroom (PTMT) models, the main focus on the aspect of human resources is educators' readiness. Teachers with various ability levels must be technology literate because learning tools during the pandemic involve technology such as zoom, WhatsApp groups, and other learning media. The SLB N 2 Yogyakarta principals instructed teachers and education staff to attend workshops or training held by the education office. Faced with a suddenly



changing situation, teachers and staff must have good competence in literacy (Setiyawan, 2021), science, and technology for learning.

If students have difficulty accessing or using predetermined online learning media, the school provides relief by preparing printed material. The material can then be taken by parents at school and brought home to study, or if it is an assignment, it will be done at home. The school uses a delivery service to send printed materials if this method cannot be solved.

Third, increase the mental resilience of school residents during the pandemic. To overcome the mental problems of school residents, the Principal of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta held a virtual recitation. The Principal believes one can maintain mental stability by getting closer to Allah. The difficulty of learning in a pandemic situation has made teachers, students, and guardians mentally unstable. Virtual recitation is one of the Principal's efforts to tackle mental health problems and stress management for school residents, especially educators and education staff.

Fourth, the principals have intensive communication with parents. SLB N 2 Yogyakarta principals communicate to parents through the school committee. This communication is done to help parents of students who have difficulty learning at home. The school principal said that the role of parents as a companion for learning at home is significant for the success of the learning process of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta students.

Fifth, prepare infrastructure facilities to break the chain of covid 19 spread. Prepare facilities by providing hand washing and hand sanitizers in several strategic places in schools and spraying disinfectants regularly. The cost for infrastructure provision is obtained from the budget reallocation of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta.

The Obstacles of Learning in Pandemic at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta

The principals of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta found several obstacles in the implementation of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. First is long-distance communication between school residents. Class teachers are more concerned about communication difficulties with students during learning activities from home. Communication during the pandemic is a little uncomfortable because it

allows for different perceptions. The administrative division also experiences communication barriers. Communication that acts as a coordination step sometimes takes a long time because coordinating through media such as WhatsApp groups or zoom is not as fast as communicating directly. Referring to the communication barriers experienced by most school members during the COVID-19 pandemic, Endah Retno Hutami's research entitled "Distance Learning Constraints During a Pandemic for Elementary School Students, Teachers, and Parents" shows that there are other obstacles in the form of limitations. Media, inadequate technology, additional internet quota fees, additional work for parents in learning assistance, and the unlimited duration of teacher work.

Second is the difficulty of understanding the pandemic situation for special-needs students. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Principal had a problem understanding the existence and dangers of COVID-19 to students. In addition to having intellectual limitations, students with special needs also have motor skills. However, the Principal revealed that the role of teachers, parents, and the media was to help provide an understanding of COVID-19 to students. And even though they have limitations, students with special needs have the advantage of being honest and having high values of togetherness and concern. The role of parents in giving children an understanding of the COVID-19 situation is no less important than the role of teachers in schools. Because parents who are resilient or have overcome and faced existing problems can help provide a positive influence as long as children take part in learning both the PJJ learning model and Limited Face-to-face Learning.

Third, difficulty focusing on learning when at home. For students, the obstacles experienced learning during the pandemic, especially distance learning, are in the form of disruption of focus on learning while at home. They are caused by many things, one of which is that they must help their parents at home. During learning at home, the family should have an important role. Because when at home, the parents take the part of the teacher. Reinforcement from family and parents to the emotional and enthusiasm of children to learn determines the success of learning at home, given that the family is the first and foremost place of education for children.



From the overall results of the research, the learning management process and adaptation of the principals of State Special Schools (SLB N) 2 Yogyakarta leads to a situational leadership style. The school principal can direct his citizens in adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions to prioritize health and achieve learning goals.

DISCUSSION

The research data shows that the leadership and managerial functions that are continuously carried out by the Head of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta make teaching and learning activities at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other research confirms that school principals lead differently during the covid 19 pandemic. The Principal's role is significant in directing the situation and completing learning satisfactorily (Ramos-Pla et al., 2021).

Leadership for an organization's adaptability differs from traditional leadership or leading change (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). The results of the research review confirm that the existence of space indicates the adaptation process of the organization for actualizing the ideas of organizational members, which were sparked through the presence of entrepreneurial leaders and transformational leadership so that they can produce system innovations to meet adaptation needs (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). The results of this article have not explored the adaptive abilities of special schools and have only described the Principal's strategic steps to ensure learning continues during the pandemic. Leadership style significantly impacts job satisfaction by satisfying the needs of school residents, especially teachers (Haerens et al., 2022).

Research data analysis confirms that emergency curriculum design is the best choice for modifying learning during the covid 19 pandemic. The curriculum changes allow teachers and students to learn according to flexible conditions. Other research suggests that curriculum innovation can also help stress management of students during the covid 19 pandemic (King & Kabat-Farr, 2022).

Several factors support the success of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the study revealed that the information technology skills possessed by the teacher provided support for the success of distance

learning for students with special needs at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta. About mastering technology for learning, other research has revealed that the use of interactive digital technology has an impact on student's academic achievement (Burvill et al., 2022).

The head of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta increases the intensity of communication with the guardians of students to assist the learning of mentally disabled students at home. These results support other studies that suggested that increasing parental involvement was identified as the single principal leadership practice teachers felt was most important for growth in school reading and math performance across grade levels (Shen et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the findings of this study raise several things that need to be considered in situational leadership at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta. Aspects identified in SLB N 2 Yogyakarta's administration include instructional technology, economics, policy, healthy, environmental, and social (TEPHES). These six aspects help make school decisions in the Pandemic-19 situation. TEPHES analyzes external factors to assist the development of research-based strategies. TEPHES analyzes various macro-environmental factors (technology, economics, policy, health, environmental and social) that are considered when developing strategies. TEPHES deals with SWOT analysis which helps uncover some opportunities and threats that may be overlooked.

The COVID-19 epidemic has altered the innovation of instructional technology (Adhi et al., 2022). Situational leadership at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta impacts the technology aspect. Many scholars have identified computer-aided instructional advances. The pandemic curriculum reduces learning material, limits pupils' study time to two hours each day, and urges instructors not to issue too many assignments. The curriculum may or may not be used by teachers.

Prepare infrastructure and facilities to disrupt the spread of Covid 19. Prepare facilities by placing hand washing stations and hand sanitizers in critical locations throughout schools and spraying disinfectants regularly. The cost of infrastructure provision is derived from SLB N 2 Yogyakarta's budget reallocation. Situational leadership at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta impacts the technology aspect of policy. Situational leadership at SLB N 2 Yogyakarta affects the technology aspect of economics. The Principal created a new rule known as



the emergency curriculum. The pandemic curriculum is an extension of the KTSP curriculum. The pandemic curriculum is an idea developed by the Principal in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

The COVID-19 epidemic has priority healthy. Teachers, kids, and guardians have become psychologically unstable due to the difficulties of learning in a pandemic environment. Virtual recitation is one of the Principal's initiatives to address mental health issues and stress management for school residents, particularly educators and education personnel.

Situational leadership in SLB N 2 Yogyakarta is seen in environmental and social aspects. In an environment that maintains a distance, canteen activities that allow the opening of masks and crowding are preventive measures. Teachers, students, and staff affected by COVID are given an understanding so as not to be ostracized. Those affected by Covid are monitored for isolation. Environmental and social at the time of covid following the PPKM restriction policy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Head of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta takes a flexible attitude in his leadership to make student learning successful during the covid 19 pandemic. The main thing to do is to design an emergency curriculum so that the learning process can still be carried out with interaction between teachers and students. He is improving the competence of IT teachers and communication with students' parents to support learning success. The hygiene infrastructure is intended to help break the chain of covid 19. The main obstacle detected in this study was the limited communication between teachers and students during the covid 19 pandemic. The heterogeneous ability of parents to assist mentally disabled students in studying from home also contributes to the learning success of SLB N 2 Yogyakarta students.

REFERENCES

Adhi, S., Achmad, D., & Herminarto, S. (2022). Developing a Blended Learning Model in Islamic Religious Education to Improve Learning Outcomes. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 12(2), 100–107. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2022.12.2.1592>

- Burvill, S., Owens, S., & Organ, K. (2022). The digital explosion: It's impact on international student achievement. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2021.100585>
- Haerens, L., Matos, L., Koc, A., Benita, M., & Abos, A. (2022). Examining school boards' chaotic leadership style in relation to teachers' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 118, 103821. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103821>
- Hidayat, S. (2021). *Inovasi dalam kepemimpinan pada situasi pandemi Covid-19 di SMAN 1 Menganti Gresik* [UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya]. <https://digilib.uinsby.ac.id/51065/>
- King, F. D., & Kabat-Farr, D. (2022). Student stress in focus: Short-term fixes and long-term pedagogical change in business school curriculum. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100605>
- Nadeak, B., & Juwita, C. P. (2020). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Menjaga Tata Kelola Sekolah Selama Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Konseling Dan Pendidikan, Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy (IICET)*, 8(3), 207–216. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29210/149400>
- Nuralan, S., & Daipatama, S. T. (2020). Analisis Proses Mengajar Guru Kelas Dalam Pembelajaran Luring Pada Masa Pandemi Covid - 19 Terhadap Siswa Tunagrahita Di Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Tolitoli. *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 1(2), 47–57. https://ojs.umada.ac.id/index.php/nusantara_umada/article/view/131
- Ramos-Pla, A., Tintore, M., & Arco, I. dek. (2021). Leadership in times of crisis. School principals facing COVID-19. *Heliyon*, 7(11). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/J.HELIYON.2021.E08443>
- Setiawan, A. (2021). Desain Laboratorium Pendidikan Berbasis Keterampilan Literasi Digital. *Edulab : Majalah Ilmiah Laboratorium Pendidikan*, 6(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.14421/edulab.2021.61.05>
- Shen, J., Ma, X., Mansberger, N., Wu, H., Palmer, L. A. B., Poppink, S., & Reeves, P. L. (2021). The relationship between growth in principal leadership and growth in school performance: The teacher perspective. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 70, 101023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101023>
- Suhendra, A. D., Asworowati, R. D., & Ismawati, T. (2020). Pendidikan di Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Akrab Juara*, 5(1), 43–54. <http://www.akrabjuara.com/index.php/akrabjuara/article/view/919>
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Arena, M. (2018). Leadership for organizational adaptability: A theoretical synthesis and integrative framework. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(1), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2017.12.009>



Wang, H.-J., Demerouti, E., & Le Blanc, P. (2017). Transformational leadership, adaptability, and job crafting: The moderating role of organizational identification. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *100*, 185–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.03.009>