Principal Competencies and the Achievement of National Education Standard in Indonesia

[1]Dr. Malmuzzammil Yasin, [2]Mustamin, [3]Dr. Lokman Mohd Tahir
[1]Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
[2]Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
[3]Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

ABSTRACT: *This research aims to investigate the level of principal competencies among principals in the Southern Province of Sulawesi, Indonesia and determine if possible model could be built to show the relationship between principal competencies and the achievement of Indonesian Education Standard. There were 154 respondents of the senior assistant teachers from 40 State Secondary Schools (SMA) in the Southern Province of Sulawesi, Indonesia. The results of descriptive data analysis demonstrated that the competency level of school principals and the level of national education standard of Indonesia were scored at high level. Using these results, further analysis was done using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and the results showed that there were significant relationships between the competency levels of school principals and the achievement of the national education standard of Indonesia (SNP).*

KEYWORDS: *Principal competencies; school leadership; instructional leadership, national education standard.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership competencies are the foundations to propel the achievement of the organization (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Drucker, 1992). In school, principal competencies have always been related to the effectiveness and efficacy. School principals, as the education leaders are bestowed with the responsibilities to achieve the school goals (Wahjosumidjo, 2003; Lokman, Malmuzzamil, & Mislina, 2013). Thus school principals are expected to play their roles, including being the leader of the school, community and financial, material, and human resource, as well as to ensure the academic performance of their students (*Institute for Educational Leadership*, 2000; Owens, 2001). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) believed that the school principal as a leader, should own three major achievement aims which are focusing on the students, teachers and the school itself, and maintained that the accomplishment of an organisation is largely dependent on the motivation and the capacity of the school principal as the education leader. Research conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1998) indicated that school principals have great impacts on students' performance through schools' vision, mission and objectives. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) suggested that school principals as school leaders provide indirect impact to the learning outcome yet very significant towards education. The school principals must also be competent in executing their tasks as the leaders whether it is focusing on school, the instructional method or even the operational aspects to support the students' success (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Kotter, 1990; Katz, 1993; Hopkins, 2000; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; & *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium*, 2008). School principals' competency in terms of school leadership set off from the knowledge about leading their organization and the stakeholders, being able to respond and influence other people whether in social or political area (Bolman and Deal, 2003; *Florida Department of Education,* 2008). The competency of the principals in schools played an important role in promoting and preserving changes in schools in which without their efforts, schools will never experience transformation or improvement of the students' accomplishment whether academically or vice – versa, and also their preparation towards living with the society later.

The school competency development has becoming a national interest in several countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Both governments demand school principals to acquire competencies related to leadership and management (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Institute Aminuddin Baki, 2008 & Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008) However, in Indonesia the school competency development among the principals is obviously not commenced yet by the district rulers (Sudrajat, 2008 & Rancangan Strategis Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia, 2007) even though Indonesia has aimed for the achievement of National Education Standard (SNP) in 2013 (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia, 2007). Some references showed that the SNP efforts and achievement are far beyond realization as the principals do not acquire the competency towards accomplishing the set goals (Dharma, 2008; Rahman, 2005 &

Rakhmat, 2010). According to Mazzeo (2003), many developed countries utilize the strategy of competency development with the gradual licensed certificate system. Malaysia for instance, uses the high impact competency development of school principals programme (Institut Aminuddin Baki, 2010), by suggesting an effort in enhancing the competency of school principals with special training together with the course for national professional principalship qualification, while in Florida, United States of America, the Florida Principal Leadership Standards and Competencies approach is widely being used (Florida Department of Education, 2008). We believe that these efforts are worthwhile however, one big concern raised is regarding the kind of competencies that the principals should have since a vast volume of literatures pointing to different angles and perspectives towards competencies. Secondly if an instrument which takes into account all different perspectives can be built to make it more comprehensive so that the measurement of competencies can be used to reflect the training and practices in the school setting.

II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The first challenge in this research was to identify the suitable instruments to be used in measuring principal competencies as there are different dimensions of competency available in the literatures. A review on several school principals competency documents (Institut Aminuddin Baki, 2008); *Florida Department of Education*, 2008, & The Indonesia National Department of Education, 2007) showed that they are some dissimilarities in the prescribed competency dimensions. The development of the principal competencies concept in this research was based on the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2008), *Florida Department of Education* (2008) and the National Department of Education, Indonesia (2007) documents. The three documents were collaborated using Jackson and Trochim, (2002) explanation on concept making where 12 dimensions of competency were identified and successfully built into a questionnaire to be used in this study (refer Mustamin and Malmuzzammil, 2012). The final version of the questionnaire consists of 123 items which was administered to respondents in the Southern Province of Sulawesi. The 12 dimensions were then grouped into three bigger dimensions in this studies (1) school leadership (2) instructional leadership, and (3) instructional leadership, for analysis purpose. Besides that, another instrument was also built based on the Indonesian Education Standard (SNP) to measure the achievement of the SNP as perceived by the respondents. Finally, The SEM analysis was used to determine the correlation coefficient between the competency of school principals and the SNP achievement. Table 1 below shows the results of analysis from gathered data, using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.00 on the respondents' opinions of the competency categories of their school principals. In general, the result of descriptive analysis demonstrated that the competency level of school principals) were perceived at high level by respondents (high mean values).

Table 1: The Competencies of School Principals in Indonesia.

Dimensions of competency	Mean	SD	Dimensions of competency	Mean	SD
1. Policies and direction	3.972	0.510	7. Learning environment management	4.004	0.520
2. Building the cooperation among staff, stakeholders and society	4.131	0.465	8. Responsibility for learning and assessment	3.940	0.553
3. The management of the school programme	3.911	0.509	9. Managing transformation and innovation	3.950	0.534
4. Understanding the diversity	3.960	0.487	10. Managing operations and technology resources	3.905	0.550
5. Instruction and accomplishment	4.005	0.534	11. The Ethics of leadership	4.148	0.497
6. Instructional leadership	3.867	0.535	12. Building the human resource	3.986	0.505

SD: Standard Deviation

Table 2 below shows the respondents' scores on the achievement of the SNP. Generally, all the means were scored at high values. This standard aligns with the guideline standard published by the Badan

Standardisasi Nasional Pendidikan Indonesia (National Standardization Agency of Education, Indonesia, BSNP, 2005) which is the Standard III category.

Table 2: The Achievement of Indonesian Education Standard (SNP)

Dimension of Standard	SNP categories according to respondents		Mean	SD
	Percentage	Category		
The curriculum readiness	14.94	High	4.378	0.343
	72.08	Average		
	12.98	Low		
The readiness of teachers and educational staff	16.23	High	4.162	0.342
	68.83	Average		
	14.94	Low		
The readiness of facilities	13.64	High	3.880	0.495
	74.68	Average		
	11.68	Low		
The readiness of cost	18.18	High	3.642	0.743
	62.99	Average		
	18.83	Low		
The state of management process	20.78	High	4.173	0.260
	65.58	Average		
	13.64	Low		
The state of teaching and learning process	20.13	High	4.282	0.410
	68.18	Average		
	11.69	Low		
The state of evaluation process	16.88	High	3.479	0.354
	70.13	Average		
	12.99	Low		
The state of graduates' competency	21.43	High	3.978	0.434
	66.23	Average		
	12.34	Low		

SD: Standard Deviation

SEM Analysis Findings

The first step in the analysis of SEM is the hypothesis analysis from the measured dimensions of competency. The rejection or acceptance of the hypothesis is recognised through the analysis method of acceptance Ho if the value of $r_{xy} < r_{table}$ at significant level of p = 0.010 ($r_{table} = 0.208$; dk = n − k = 142). The analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The correlation coefficient between the principal' competencies and the SNP achievement

The dimensions of competency	The dimensions of SNP			
School leadership (X_1)	Curriculum ($Y_{1.1}$)	Staff ($Y_{1.2}$)	Facility ($Y_{1.3}$)	Cost ($Y_{1.4}$)
Policies and directions ($X_{1.1}$)	0.585^{**}	0.611^{**}	0.492^{**}	0.477^{**}
Building the cooperation among staff, stakeholders and society ($X_{1.2}$)	0.615^{**}	0.632^{**}	0.504^{**}	0.504^{**}
The management of the school programme ($X_{1.3}$)	0.585^{**}	0.593^{**}	0.474^{**}	0.490^{**}
Understanding the diversity ($X_{1.4}$)	0.618^{**}	0.630^{**}	0.503	0.524^{**}
Instructional leadership (X_2)	Instruction ($Y_{2.1}$)	Management ($Y_{2.2}$)	Assessment ($Y_{2.3}$)	
Instruction and accomplishment ($X_{2.1}$)	0.718^{**}	0.669^{**}	0.611^{**}	
Instructional leadership ($X_{2.2}$)	0.692^{**}	0.626^{**}	0.539^{**}	
Learning environment management ($X_{2.3}$)	0.731^{**}	0.690^{**}	0.616^{**}	
Responsibility for learning and assessment ($X_{2.4}$)	0.713^{**}	0.671^{**}	0.572^{**}	
Operational leadership (X_3)	The competency of graduates (Y_3)			
Managing transformation and innovation ($X_{3.1}$)	0.564^{**}			
Managing operations and technology resources ($X_{3.2}$)	0.604^{**}			

The Ethics of leadership ($X_{3.3}$)	0.608[**]
Building the human resource ($X_{3.4}$)	0.559[**]

The correlation results in Table 3 indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected but the study hypothesis was supported because the correlation coefficient produced passed the standard of 0.208. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between the competency of school principals and the achievement of the SNP standard as perceived by the respondents.

Table 4: The criteria evaluation of Goodness of Fit Index

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut – off Value	Model 1	Modification model 1	Modification model 2	Model evaluation
χ^2 (Chi-squares)	Expected to be smaller	348.521	163.863	153.155	Good
Significance Probability	≥ 0.050	0.000	0.082	0.123	Good
NFI	≥ 0.900	0.927	0.965	0.968	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.080	0.086	0.033	0.031	Good
CMIN/DF	≥ 2.000	2.138	1.170	1.143	Average
GFI	≥ 0.900	0.821	0.907	0.913	Good
TLI	≥ 0.950	0.953	0.993	0.994	Good
CFI	≥ 0.950	0.959	0.995	0.996	Good
AIC	$<$ AIC Independence Model	420.000	303.863	305.155	Good
ECVI	$<$ ECVI Independence Model	2.748	1.986	1.994	Good

Based on the results from Table 4, the value of statistic χ^2 (Chi-squares) is = 153.155, with the value of the Significance Probability = 0.123 > 0.050, which explains that the proposed model is significant with the data obtained. The value of Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.968 is closer to the value of 1.000, which shows that the proposed model has more than 90% compatibility with the data. The value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.031 ≤ 0.080 shows that this value which is based on residual analysis shows that the model becomes more compatible with the data when the residual value obtained is smaller. The value of The Minimum Sample Discrepancy Function divided with the Degree of Freedom (CMIN/DF) = 1.143 < 2.000, shows that the model and the data has average category to be agreed to. The value of Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.913 ≥ 0.900, shows that the proposed model in this study suits the data collected. The value of Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.994 ≥ 0.950, indicates that the comparison of fit index model being studied is better than other models (baseline). The value of Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.996 ≥ 0.950, shows that the index indicated the fit level inclined towards the high level. The value of Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) = 305.155 < Independence AIC, shows that AIC model is better than IAIC because it contains more character of independence to measure the compatibility of the model using the capacity of the parameters. The value of Expected Cross Validation Index (ECVI) = 1.994 < Independence ECVI, which shows that the compatibility of the model towards data is better as the value has more Independence ECVI character. The model based on the findings is presented by Figure 1 below:
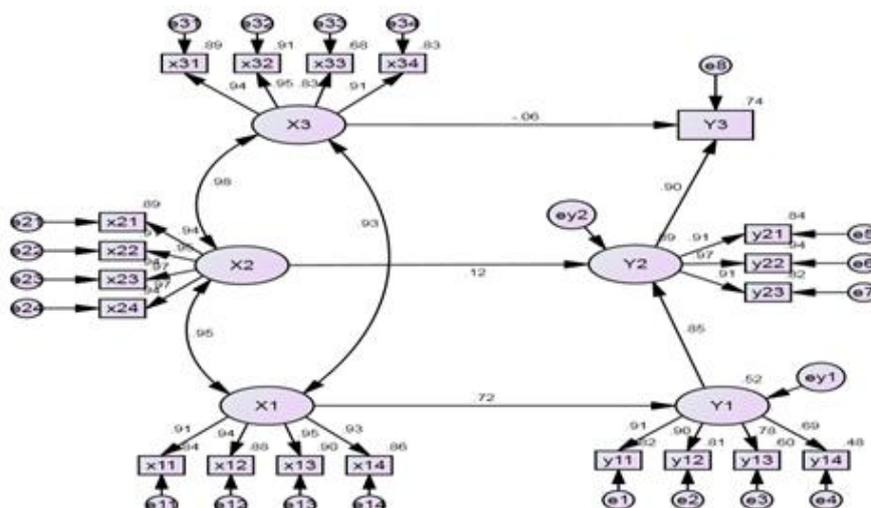
Figure 1: The relationship model between competency and the achievement of SNP in Indonesia

Based on the model suggested in the above figure, the focal research findings were (1) the competency of school principals in terms of school leadership (X1) had direct significant impact on the school achievement of the standard (Y1); path coefficient analysis = 0.720 and the standardized direct effects = 0.722   (2) the competency of school principals in terms of instructional leadership (X2) also had direct significant effect on achievement of SNP standard (Y2); path coefficient analysis = 0.120 and the standardized direct effects = 0.122 (3) the school competency of school principals in terms of school operational leadership (X3) did not show any significant impact on the achievement of SNP standard (Y3); path coefficient analysis = -0.060.

III.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of descriptive analysis demonstrated that the competency levels of school principals) were perceived at high level by respondents (high mean values), and the respondents' scores on the schools' achievement of the SNP standard were high. The results also showed that the principals' competencies in term of school leadership and instructional leadership had direct significant impact on the achievement of the SNP standard. Other finding aligned with this research was the one by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), which demonstrated that leadership influence has indirect impact on school output even though later study by Hallinger and Heck (1998) revealed that the competency of school principals was actually never had an effect on school achievement but because of other various intermediate variables. Thus further in depth research should be conducted to clarify some gaps in the literatures in regard to principal competencies discussion.

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