

School Principal Role In Handling Online Learning Issues During Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The school principal took a significant role in running the education process at school. The role of a school principal has become more complex during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aimed to identify the school principals' roles in handling issues at school that the Covid-19 Pandemic caused. Specifically, this study identified the issues faced by students, parents, and teachers in the online learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic and how the school principal handled those issues. This study followed a literature review approach. The study data were collected from the research articles from indexed national and international journals and were analyzed qualitatively using the interactive data analysis model. The study results showed that students, parents, and teachers faced various problems in the online learning process. Those problems include infrastructure, time, financial, digital literacy, and psychological issues. Considering those problems, the school principals took a significant role in bridging students' and parents' demands with the issues faced by the teachers. The school principals took several strategies to solve the problems. The novel thing that this study offers is that the previous studies mostly viewed online learning issues from a specific point of view. However, this study tried to view those issues comprehensively and link those issues to the principal school roles. The researchers did that to get the bigger picture of the issues. Thus, the study results can be a basis for further studies that aim to improve the quality of online learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a planned effort to achieve the desired goal. The purpose of education itself is to improve human resources' quality even better. One form of education effort in realizing good quality human resources is through the teaching and learning process carried out in schools. Related to this problem, the principal's leadership has an essential role in realizing the quality of these human resources (Djuwarijah, 2008).

The task and role of the principal are to improve the professionalism of the teacher's work because the effectiveness of the school organization is primarily determined by the leadership of the principal (Yenni et al., 2020). The running of a conducive and comfortable organizational wheel cannot be separated from the principal's ability to plan, control, and mobilize teachers and staff in the organization's primary task of the principal (Sumarto, 2018). Therefore, with the principal's leadership, the principal here has the responsibility to advance

the quality of the school, such as improving the quality of students and making professional teachers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Dwi, 2016). In carrying out the responsibilities of the principal's leadership, of course, an effort is needed to achieve the desired results. In connection with these efforts, the school principals must have leadership skills, managerial skills, and learning skills (Hidayati et al., 2009; Sesra Budio, 2020).

The principal is a person who plays an essential role in improving the quality and quality of a school. A good principal will always motivate, direct, and supervise his subordinates to do the tasks and orders appropriately to achieve the planned goals (Setiyadi & Rosalina, 2021). The principal must not act arbitrarily; the principal must be willing to accept input and ideas from his subordinates to accommodate each member's ideas. The principal is a professional in the school organization. The principal manages all organizational resources and supports teachers in educating students to achieve educational goals (Tamin, 2007).

Based on the explanation above, in the Covid-19 pandemic situation, school principals' role is crucial because schools experience many challenges. These challenges come from internal schools and outside communities, especially parents, and from the government, in this case, the education office. For this reason, this research aims to identify the role of school principals in facing challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, which discusses the situation and conditions in Indonesia. Some studies have reported problems in the implementation of online learning in Indonesia (Mulyono et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Nasir et al., 2021; Sarosa, 2022; Suyadi & Selvi, 2022). However, those previous studies on the online learning issues focused on specific points of view, e.g., students, teachers, or parents' points view. Online learning quality is influenced by various factors (Damirchili & Tajari, 2011; Sun et al., 2008; Yekefallah et al., 2021). Therefore, we need to see online learning issues from different points of view. To the best of the writers' knowledge, no study has been done to study the online learning issues comprehensively from various points of view and link those issues to the role of the school principal. Thus, this study was conducted by combining the results of the previous studies to create a bigger picture of the e-learning implementation in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This research is a literature review that aims to evaluate existing empirical theories and data and formulate new things based on the evaluation results (Palmatier, Houston, & Hlland, 2018). According to this purpose, the researchers used an integrative review method in this study. There are four stages carried out according to this method, namely: designing a review, conducting a review, analyzing, and writing a report (Snyder, 2019). The data was collected from several scientific articles related to the challenges and role of school principals in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The study data were collected from

the research articles from indexed national and international journals. Data collection was carried out using the keywords "the role of school principals in the Covid-19 pandemic situation", "leadership of school principals in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic", "challenges faced by schools in the Covid-19 pandemic situation", "problems faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic". The Covid-19 pandemic", and "school coconut strategies in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic". Those articles were the ones published from 2020 to 2022. From the data collection process, the researchers collected 46 articles. The researchers analyzed the data qualitatively using the interactive data analysis model. Based on this analysis model, three stages were carried out: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). First, the data collected were selected to ensure that the data followed the criteria and topics studied. Second, the data were disaggregated according to the similarity of the results found in the article. Third, the researchers concluded by looking at the data grouped and displayed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collection results found that schools face various problems, and to deal with these problems, and the principal has played several important roles. In general, the problems faced by school principals during the Covid-19 pandemic can be grouped into problems faced by teachers, problems faced by students, and problems faced by parents. Likewise, the role of the principal can also be categorized into three types, namely problem solver, motivator, and source of information. The school principals' roles can be summarized as shown in Figure 1. Each of these findings will be described below.

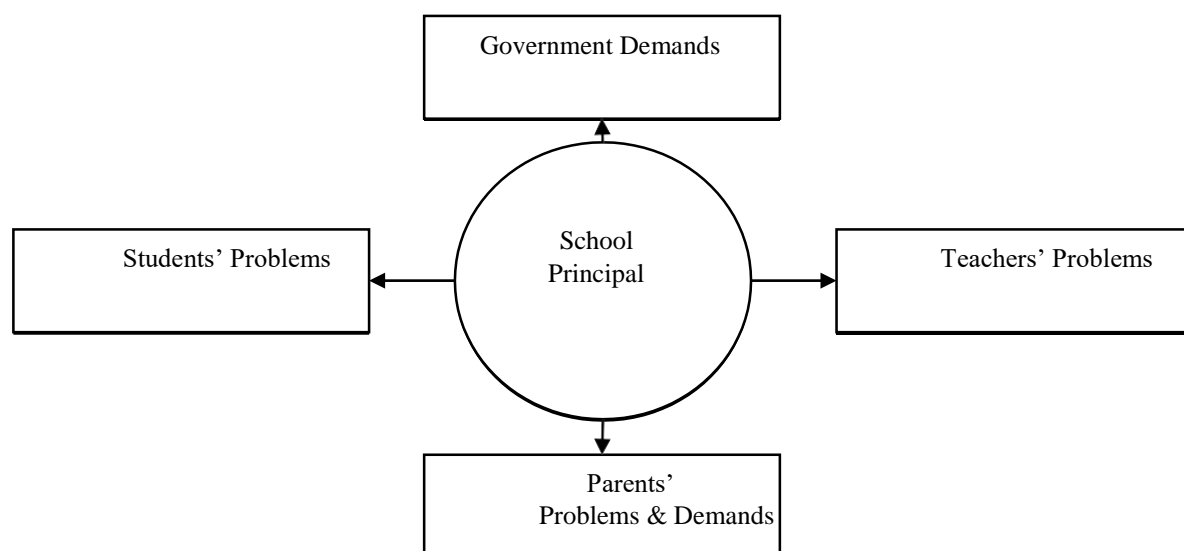


Figure 1. Principals' Role as a Bridge in Solving the School Issues

3.1. Problems faced by schools during the Covid-19 pandemic

As mentioned earlier, schools face three main problems (see Table 1). First, for the problems faced by students, the main problem was the difficulty of getting a stable internet connection that can support online learning (Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2021; Noori, 2021). Many students and teachers found that one of the challenges experienced by students in carrying out online learning was the unavailability of a reliable internet network (Cahyadi et al., 2021; Zamari et al., 2012). This problem was even the most critical problem for students because unstable internet connections made them challenging to follow the lessons and understand the teachers' explanations (Akman et al., 2005; Djalante et al., 2020; Handayani et al., 2018).

Besides internet connection, in terms of supporting facilities, some students also complained that they did not have a smartphone or computer that could be used specifically for the online learning process (Munastiwi & Puryono 2021; Syamsuddin et al., 2021). To carry out online learning, the presence of a smartphone or computer and an internet network is mandatory (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). So, if these facilities are not available, then online learning will be challenging to implement. In addition, students also felt that they got too many assignments without sufficient explanations about the assignments given by the teachers (Prasetyaningtyas, 2021; Yuzulia, 2021). It made students feel pressured and bored to learn (Damayanti et al., 2020; Suyadi & Selvi, 2022). When students feel bored, their learning motivation also decreases (Parker et al., 2021). It is proven that during the pandemic, with the online learning system, many students lose their motivation to learn and further reduce their learning achievement (Apriyanto & Herlina, 2020; Safi'i et al., 2021).

Second, from the teacher's point of view, teachers face various problems in carrying out online learning. Like students, some teachers also experienced problems with unstable internet connections (Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020; Hanafi et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021). Teachers' problems become significant when did not have an excellent ability to utilize information and communication technology (ICT). Several studies showed that several teachers were still experiencing problems in using ICT for online learning (Andriani et al., 2021; Dewantara, 2020). It made it difficult for teachers to deliver learning online, which harmed students' understanding (Ariesca et al., 2021; Prahani et al., 2020).

These technical constraints also further affected students' activeness in participating in learning. During online learning, some students were not actively involved in learning. Some of them turned off their cameras during learning (Hazfiarini et al., 2021; Yau et al., 2022). Furthermore, students who felt that the teacher's assignments were too many made them lazy to do these assignments (Prasetyo et al., 2021). So, teachers must always motivate them to do assignments (Wirani et al., 2021). In addition, another problem that was also an obstacle for teachers in implementing online learning was getting parents to want to be

involved in supervising and guiding their children to study at home (Chusna et al., 2021; Safi'i et al., 2021; Syahrudin et al., 2021). Moreover, some parents thought that online learning was ineffective, so they did not support its implementation of online learning (Amri et al., 2021; Dahlia & Supriatna, 2021).

Third, from the parents' point of view, providing facilities to support the implementation of learning was the most common problem. Some parents experienced problems providing smartphones or computers and a stable internet network for their children (Andriyani et al., 2021; Rahayu & Haningsih, 2021). In other words, parents could not provide the means their children needed for online learning. It was because many parents had difficulty getting money. This situation was influenced by the pandemic situation, which has caused many parents to lose their jobs or experience a significant decrease in income (Antipova, 2021; Karjadi et al., 2021; Syafiq et al., 2022). This situation made them more concerned with fulfilling their primary needs, namely the need for food, than other needs, including their children's schooling. In addition, other problems experienced by parents were difficulties in accompanying their children to study due to their busy schedule or due to the limited ability of parents to help explain the subject matter that their children do not understand (Nasir et al., 2021; Suyadi & Selvi, 2022). The Issues Faced by the Schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic can be summarized as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Issues Faced by the Schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Party	Issues
Students	Unstable internet connection Too much homework Do not have any computer/smartphone that supports the e-learning process Do not have sufficient explanation from the teachers
Teachers	Unstable internet connection ICT competency Activating students during the instruction Students' learning motivation and achievements were low Motivating low students to do their homework. Motivating the students' parents to help their child/children do their homework Building students' parents understanding that e-learning can be as effective as face to face instruction
Parents	Time to monitor their child/children to study Time and ability to explain the learning materials that they do not understand. They do not believe that e-learning is effective. Could not provide a computer/smartphone that supports the e-learning process Could not provide a reliable internet connection

3.2. Role of the School Principals

Based on the data collected from the results of previous research, it was found that, in general, the were three crucial roles of school principals during the Covid-19 pandemic can be categorized into three types, namely problem solver, motivator, and source of information.

3.2.1. Problem Solver

With the many problems schools faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, the central role of the principal was as a problem solver (Kurniawan & Hasanah, 2021). As a leader, the principal determines and takes policies to solve any problems that arise in schools during the pandemic (Sawitri, 2020). Given that many teachers have problems using ICT to implement effective and exciting learning, many school principals conducted online training to use ICT for teachers (Sholichin & Razak, 2021). It is because not all teachers can operate online platforms and have facilities such as the availability of quotas around the clock (Ufliasari et al., 2021).

The training included training on learning design following the Covid-19 emergency through optimizing the use of technology (Adisel & Pranansa, 2020). The principal assigned teachers who mastered the technology to accompany other teachers who could not so that the achievement of using and operating the platform could be carried out (Haryanto & Putra, 2020). The quota for teachers was included in the school operational fund according to the circular of the Minister of Education and Culture so that quota constraints did not become a barrier for teachers to operate online learning applications (Ana & Safitri, 2021).

3.2.2. Motivator

Another essential role of school principals during the pandemic was as a motivator. The condition of schools experiencing various problems made teachers need more enthusiasm to carry out their duties properly. In general, internal and external motivation can affect a teacher's performance (Sadeghi et al., 2021; Thommen et al., 2021). For this reason, to build the teachers' motivation, principals need to motivate teachers in schools. Several studies on the role of school principals during the Covid-19 pandemic have also shown that school principals had implemented their teaching as a motivator for teachers, students, and parents (Dindin, 2020; Hartawan, 2020).

The motivation given by the principal to the teacher included the motivation to carry out learning well during the pandemic. This motivation has been proven to positively affect the quality of teachers' learning implementation (Noviardila, 2020). By getting motivated, teachers feel more cared for and enthusiastic about learning and could improve their performance (Mahmud et al., 2021; Rubén Trigueros et al., 2020). Furthermore, the attention given by school principals during the Covid-19 pandemic was also able to motivate teachers to be more innovative in developing learning materials and media (Kurniawan &

Hasanah, 2021; Zainal & Mohd Matore, 2021).

For students during the pandemic, the principal also played an essential role in motivating students to stay enthusiastic about participating in online learning (Firmawati, 2017; Taghavinia et al., 2021; R Trigueros et al., 2020). To be able to increase student learning motivation, the efforts made by school principals include improving facilities and infrastructure for the implementation of online learning so that learning can be carried out without any technical problems that can interfere with learning (Agustina, 2021). As for the parents of students, the principal also motivated parents to remain enthusiastic in accompanying their children to participate in online learning (Carrión-Martínez et al., 2021; Oppermann et al., 2021; Rosadi et al., 2021). Online learning can be an effective learning process if it is supported by parental support (Garrote et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Pratama & Firmansyah, 2021; Santoso & Suparman, 2020).

3.2.3. Source of Information

The Covid-19 pandemic was very concerning, and of course, the school must take part in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The principal builds good communication with parents and teachers to minimize misunderstandings (Ana & Safitri, 2021). The principal helped teachers provide parents with information about school conditions and the importance of distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. By providing an understanding to parents, it was hoped that parents understood the conditions faced by schools during the pandemic and were willing to be actively involved in supporting school policies. Effective and empathetic communication from the school to parents has a crucial role in the success of distance learning (Liu et al., 2022; Pahmi et al., 2021). For this reason, teachers and parents must collaborate to support each other (Álvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Öçal et al., 2021; Tomczyk & Walker, 2021). Parents will become motivators, facilitators, and companions for students learning from home (Adevita & Widodo, 2021; Klootwijk et al., 2021; Panagouli et al., 2021).

In addition, school principals also transform task reports into online forms for the Education Office. All assigned school stakeholders need to prepare emergency work plans to be reported regularly (Azzahra, 2020). The reports are detailed, such as descriptions of activities and physical evidence such as photographs. Reports are sent via Google form to make it easier for all school stakeholders to report and be responsible for their respective tasks and performance. The role of the school principles can be summarized as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Role of the School Principles

Role	Description
Problem Solver	Solving students', Teachers', and parents' problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting workshops to improve teachers' ICT competencies and the e-learning methods • Providing ICT facilities and an internet connection to facilitate e-learning • Helping the teachers to explain the benefits and importance of the e-learning to the students and parents • Providing an alternative learning method for students who do not have a computer/smartphone
Motivator	Motivating the students, teachers, and parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating the students to join and actively participate during the e-learning process • Motivating the students' parents to get involved in monitoring their child/children's learning process • Motivating the teachers to enhance their ICT competency
Source of Information	Explaining the school situation and condition to the stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining school situation and condition to the students' parents • Explaining school situation and condition to the education office

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the problems in online learning in Indonesia can be classified into students', parents', and teachers' problems. Those problems include infrastructure, time, financial, digital literacy, and psychological issues. Considering those problems, the school principals have significant roles in ensuring the students' and parents' demands were with the issues faced by the teachers. Specifically, the school principals' roles can be classified into a problem solver, motivator, and source of information. This study has some limitations that need to be taken into account. First, this study was conducted based on Indonesia's education situation and conditions. It means that the result of the study may not apply to the education situation and conditions in other countries. Second, this study did not specify the level of education; the data were taken from the studies done in primary and secondary education. Thus, further study needs to be conducted to identify the specific situation and conditions in primary and secondary schools in Indonesia to get a clearer picture of whether the two levels of education have the same issues.

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