

Does Servant Leadership Overcome Teacher Burnout? Principal's Strategic Approach

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Abstract:

This study analyses servant leadership in overcoming teacher burnout at an early childhood education institution in Jambi Province. This study uses a qualitative approach, in which observation, interviews and documentation are used as a medium for collecting data. The data analysis was carried out circularly, starting from data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The study results show several efforts made by the principal to overcome teacher boredom, including; establishing communication forums, stewardship, and community building. This research has implications for the importance of fostering teacher self-confidence and the ability of school principals to establish emotional closeness between school members to move school members to be actively involved in realizing common goals.

Keywords: *Servant Leadership, Bournout, Stewardship, Community Building*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang servant leadership dalam mengatasi burnout guru pada salah satu lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini di Propensi Jambi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, di mana observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi dijadikan sebagai media untuk mengumpulkan data. Analisis datanya dilakukan secara sirkuler, yang dimulai dari pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa upaya yang dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah dalam mengatasi kejenuhan guru diantaranya; membentuk forum komunikasi, stewardship, dan community building. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi tentang pentingnya menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri guru, kemampuan kepala sekolah dalam menjalin kedekatan emosional antara warga sekolah, sehingga mampu menggerakkan warga sekolah untuk terlibat aktif dalam mewujudkan tujuan bersama.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan yang Melayani, Bournout, Kemampuan Melayani, Membangun Komunitas*

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is education prior to primary education, with students aged 0-6 years. This age is commonly called the golden age (Zamroni et al., 2021; Widat et al., 2022). Early age provides stimulation so that the potential in children can develop optimally (Francis et al., 2020; Agustin, 2021). It is at this

time that children are experiencing a golden age or a golden age in which brain nerve cells are experiencing very rapid development (Watini, 2019; Lestari, 2020). Therefore, early childhood education must pay attention to the stages of child development so that children will be physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally ready to enter further education (Thalib et al., 2020; Hasanaha & Harmawati, 2020; Blewitt et al., 2021).

In early childhood education, especially in Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, there are teacher services that play a role in providing proper stimulation to students, especially in early childhood; teachers or education personnel who understand the characteristics of early childhood are needed so that the method used will be right on target. However, the problems in the field are that not all teachers can provide excellent and appropriate stimulation to children because internal and external factors cause it. Early childhood teachers must be friendly, compassionate, patient, agile and clever in dealing with their students. Furthermore, the demands of student guardians who expect output from students by the wishes of student parents, not to mention demands from institutions that require teachers to complete institutional administration promptly. This series of demands made teachers at the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, have a level of boredom; even the most profound level is the level of saturation which can be fatal if allowed to drag on.

The facts found in the field are Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, where the institution requires all school components to be perfectionists in carrying out their duties, teachers are required to be perfect in stimulating student development, perfect in dealing with the wishes of student parents and perfect in completing administrative tasks institution. However, not all teachers of the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, can carry out their duties perfectly because everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, there are indeed many factors that hinder it so that it can cause boredom or boredom for teachers, such as the many administrative tasks coupled with the burden borne by early childhood education teachers who are required to be extra not only in mind but also in overcoming the unique character of early childhood, for example dealing with children. Tantrums, dealing with hyperactive children, dealing with introverted children, dealing with children with defecation or urinating and dealing with parents of students with various characteristics; besides that, minimal salary with lots of demands also contributes to triggering teacher boredom.

The various problems in Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten teachers, Jambi, require a special handler who can balance the various parties, from institutions, teachers, students and guardians of students. Therefore, it is necessary to involve a leader who can provide services to all components of the school, especially to the teachers on duty, so that the boredom or boredom can be minimized as early as possible.

Servant leadership that is applied is expected to overcome problems that exist in institutions, including reducing burnout that arises in teachers; with excellent service, the principal can control existing inequalities. Services expressed several previous researchers who said that services sincerely provided

by leaders were able to minimize the level of boredom experienced by teachers, including; Mufassir et al. (2019); Otto (2021); Ortiz-Gómez et al. (2022) say that servant leadership d emphasizes the importance of aspirations for the organization rather than ambition for certain people, the presence of humility, collaboration, and work leads to positive results. Wuwung et al. (2020) and Kadarusman et al. (2021) stated that a servant leader is a leader who influences and serves, prioritizes, empowers, and assists followers in developing their entire personal capacity. Also confirmed by Solikin et al. (2017); Hi, (2021); Jesacher-Roessler, (2022); that leadership that serves with sincerity starts from within a leader. Leadership demands a transformation from within and a change in character. Servant leadership starts from within and moves outwards to serve those it leads.

Furthermore, Andriani & Wibawanta (2020) convey that a leader who serves must be able to see himself primarily as a servant who naturally wants to serve and is consciously inspired to lead so that those who are served grow to be healthier, wiser, more accessible, more independent, and more likely to be inspired to serve, with the hope that the followers who are served will humbly be infected to continue serving leadership. The concept of servant leadership is providing excellent service to all school members, and optimizing the empowerment and development of school members, with the essence being that the principal serves others. Servant leadership focuses on performance and growth, as well as the impact on the progress of schools and society (Spears et al., 2021; Hermawan et al., 2022). In other words, teachers who are appointed as school principals do not only serve as leaders who master managerial, entrepreneurship and supervision knowledge but school principals who master organizational, entrepreneurship and supervision knowledge who are ready to provide services to teachers, education staff, students, parents, the community and all stakeholders related to education

Presentations from several researchers explained the importance of servant leadership in overcoming teacher burnout. With the existence of servant leadership, it can provide enthusiasm and foster enthusiasm for the teacher so that the boredom or level of boredom that comes to the teacher can be reduced. Departing from the above, researchers are interested in studying servant leadership in overcoming teacher burnout in early childhood education institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive qualitative research. The focus is an overall description of the principal's leadership who adheres to the servant leadership style in overcoming teacher burnout at TK Islam Ar-Rahimah, Jambi. This descriptive research aims to make systematic, factual and accurate descriptions, drawings or drawings regarding the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena investigated in the form of language and text in specific natural contexts and using various natural methods. Research subjects and informants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Research informants at Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi

NO	INFORMANTS	TOTAL	CODE
1	Leader	1	Intv1_MH
2	Teacher	2	Intv2_LS, Intv3_KH, Intv4_RM
3	Committee	1	Intv5_HL
4	Student Guardian	1	Intv6_RF

Observations were conducted by observing field conditions and conducting semi-structured interview sessions with several teachers, committee members and student guardians who were determined randomly to obtain authentic information. To strengthen the data, researchers used documentation of the various data needed.

The data analysis technique was carried out circularly, in which the researcher collected the overall data obtained in the field and made reductions according to the research theme. Furthermore, the researcher presents the data neatly and systematically and concludes with concluding this study's final findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi involved leaders who could serve all components of the institution, especially the teachers who served in the institution so that the vision and mission of the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi could be fulfilled. The research results show that the servant leadership applied by the leaders in overcoming teacher burnout can be described as follows;

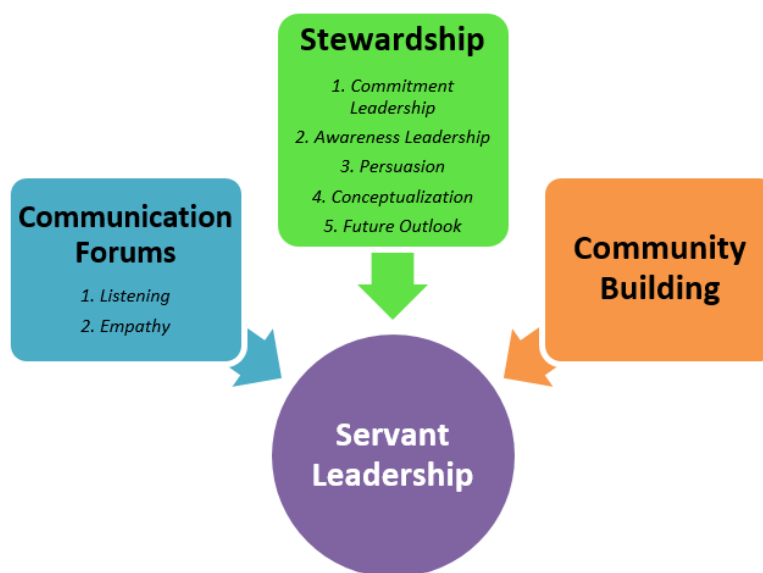


Figure 1. Servant Leadership Model in Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten

Communication Forums

Steps taken by the principal make several rules that must be carried out by all components of the school, including teachers having access to communication forums; in this forum, teachers can express all forms of

complaints, input, suggestions and ideas. In listening to suggestions and ideas from subordinates, principals and subordinates carry out interpersonal communication through casual conversations conducted in private forums. The communication forum is held once a week, on Saturday; at this stage, the principal invites the teachers one by one to face and explain all forms of expression that are felt. In this forum, several things were done by the Head of Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, including:

Listening

The ability of school principals to carry out various functions is thought to improve teacher performance in carrying out tasks (Husnah et al., 2021). Therefore the head must also be able to listen to the teachers in pouring out their hearts. As a servant leader, the principal wants to hear the school residents' every need, dream and hope. The findings in the field show that the Head of Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi understands what is expected of all institution components.

As expressed by one of the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten teachers, Jambi, said, "Our teachers are always very fond of the character highlighted by the school principal because he responds well to everything conveyed by teachers and staff, always asking for the approval of fellow teachers first." and staff, always prioritize common interests and always listen to suggestions and input from all school members (Intv2_LS).

This statement is in line with what was conveyed by the principal, who said that "when we are going to make a work program, we as heads do not necessarily use our power to govern, but first we conduct outreach to all fellow teachers in the form of joint deliberation meeting, if there is a joint decision then the program can be implemented" (Intv1_MH).

What the informant conveyed shows that the institution's leadership is button-up, meaning that the leader always listens to various kinds of aspirations, suggestions, and problems conveyed by his subordinates. They listen to the complaints of their subordinates and follow up on a common problems. With the attitude shown by the principal, giving a positive response to all school members and being able to create a conducive work climate and culture so that boredom and boredom faced by teachers can be overcome properly. This is in line with the opinion of Greenleaf (2002) that servant leadership is the attitude of a leader who serves, loves and is more concerned with the interests of his subordinates than his interests in order to create a more caring and better organization (Mufassir et al., 2019).

Empathy

The empathy shown in the servant leadership system is the principal's ability to understand and empathize with other people. The embodiment of the principal's behaviour as someone with social competence is empathy for his subordinates in implementing his leadership (Supandi, 2023). Leadership style, empathy, and high work motivation will improve the work culture of the principal in the organization (Elvarina, 2015).

Based on the statement submitted by the teacher at the institution, information was obtained that "in the communication room, we as teachers express all our feelings, especially the complaints and problems we face. The school principal listens carefully and empathizes with our complaints, such as enormous demands but very minimal salaries, and so on. This is also homework for the school principal (Intv4_RM).

The principal understands the obstacles faced by teachers because the head seems to always coordinate with the committee if there are gaps encountered; the head is very empathetic to teachers by constantly trying to understand the thoughts and feelings of teachers and staff, trying to find solutions to the problems they face institutional components, especially teachers (Intv3_KH).

In this case, the School Committee said, "The school principal is trying to find a solution to all complaints, especially on minimal salaries, by allowing teachers to leave merchandise in the institutional canteen to increase teachers' income. The empathy shown by the principal is extraordinary so that the teachers and staff feel comfortable and at ease despite the financial limitations of the institution" (Intv5_HL).

The informant's statement shows the amount of empathy for the leader who applies the servant leadership style in responding to the aspirations of his subordinates. Theoretically, this is in line with the opinion that empathy is part of emotional intelligence in the form of the ability to recognize our feelings and the feelings of others, the ability to motivate ourselves and the ability to manage emotions well in ourselves and relate to others (Andriani & Wibawanta, 2020). With the empathy shown by the principal, the teacher can easily express their feelings relaxed; the teacher will feel increasingly valued and more motivated to move forward by finding a partner leader who can listen, guide and direct.

Stewardship

Servant Leadership has its advantages if applied to school organizational leadership. The advantage of servant leadership is influencing other people so they have the motivation to realize organizational goals and objectives (Waruwu et al., 2021). Service is providing services (service delivery) from producers to customers (customers). Quality services are services that can meet or even exceed the needs expected of service users (Suarga, 2017).

The serving ability shown by the head of the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, reduced the burnout faced by the school component. One of the teachers confirmed this: "We are very grateful to have a school principal who is able to serve all our needs, starting from serving students, parents and teachers so that we can be helped from the burdens we carry. The service in the form of the principal's concern raised our fighting spirit, even with the minimum honorarium received (Intv4_RM).

The form of serviceability shown by the principal based on the results of research in the field is shown as follows;

Commitment Leadership

Leadership requires commitment and integrity. With a strong commitment, the foundation built will be more vital to reach the future through the vision and mission carried out by an institution (Muis et al., 2018). The existence of alignments or tendencies can prove commitment because they feel they have a bond with something, be it a relationship, promise, job, trust, activity, etc. Commitment describes the meaning of responsibility; commitment must be implemented in institutions so that the components within can work responsibly based on agreed commitments.

According to one teacher at the institution, "The principal has a solid commitment to togetherness. If teachers have problems, the principal quickly provides assistance and solves their obstacles. The head also provides us with increased knowledge by assigning teachers to take turns attending training, seminars, research and so on, as a commitment to add insight and more profound knowledge in their respective fields (Intv3_KH).

The development commitment carried out by the school principal is also carried out for students by applying for several unique programs in order to be able to improve the quality and quality of the institution. Some of the flagship programs that are carried out in quality improvement and quality include; smart at reciting, good at reading, and memorizing short letters and hadiths. At this stage, not only the principal but all components of the school work together and are committed to achieving the goals according to the targets set.

Awareness Leadership

In addition to having a high commitment, school principals also need the self-awareness to serve, guide and direct; with this awareness, leaders will be more sensitive to the needs required of the organization they lead (Winbaktianur & Sutono, 2019). Leadership that is sensitive or aware of the needs of an organization is fundamental and is needed by organizations to continue to survive, develop and even innovate (Renouw & Antonio, 2020).

One of the teachers at the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, said that the school principal's awareness or sensitivity is always to guide subordinates to achieve the organization's goals. The principal's guidance is in the form of directions or invitations to teachers to be teachers and good educators for students. Guidance is given to schools for teachers and staff by reminding them of tasks that must be done or not done (Intv2_LS).

Awareness of oneself and also of the mandate that is carried out as a leader will also be directly proportional to the awareness possessed by school members because this can arise because they trust in their leaders. With the embedded trust that has implications for the performance of school members, they will carry out all obligations with a sense of obedience and responsibility. To obtain such an obedient attitude, leaders must also obey themselves, for example, always keeping promises, not changing direction quickly (consistent), being careful in making decisions, daring to admit one's shortcomings, and so on. Concepts like this are by the concept of Islam by following the example of the Apostles, especially the Prophet Muhammad SAW with the leadership pattern of *siddiq, amanah, and fatonah*.

Persuasion

Building persuasive power in servant leadership referred to in this study is the ability of school principals to influence school members properly without using the authority and power that comes from their position in making decisions at school (Djafri, 2017). Leadership involves elements of a leader, namely people who will influence the behaviour of followers (influence or influence) and their followers in certain situations to build persuasive power (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2020).

One of the teachers revealed that the principal builds persuasive power in improving institutions' education quality. The strength built started with cooperation between the head, teachers, committees and foundations. Besides that, the principal also collaborated with student guardians in every activity carried out by the institution (Intv4_RM). In addition, the principal also involves parents in every activity at school. According to a statement from a student's guardian, it was stated that "We are often involved in every activity carried out by the school such as religious events (mauled, isro' mi'roj, Ramadhan cottage), social service events, recreation, final class events, art performances, etc. With the participation of the parents of students, it will be easier for the institution to build strength through cooperation to achieve the school's vision and mission (Intv6_RF).

Thus, the servant leadership displayed by the principal can build persuasive power in improving the quality of education in the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi. The school principal always prioritizes togetherness, consensus and deliberation objectively and respectfully, makes decisions as fair as possible and gives school members freedom of thought and opinion to create a democracy and be responsible for the decisions taken. Likewise, the policies carried out by the school principal always prioritize democratic principles in decision-making, and subordinates are included in decision-making.

Conceptualization

Principals are required to be able to improve the progress and quality of the schools they lead. Therefore, the principal must have a managerial concept and direction for developing all components in his institution. Having a clear concept makes it easier for school components to implement and produce maximum results. Leaders must be role models for their subordinates; this is a concept upheld in Islam by setting an excellent example for subordinates, so indirectly, subordinates will imitate the behaviour their leaders apply.

In the observation activities, the researcher saw that the principal in improving his conceptualization at the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, was carried out by constantly trying to be an excellent example for all school members. The example built and developed by the principal is totality. Habituation carried out in madrasas solely wants to invite school members to behave and behave by Islamic values because Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, is under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion and should adhere to Islamic teachings.

Being an exemplary leader in all aspects is also very important. Exemplary can be interpreted by giving an excellent example in all aspects (Manan, 2017). An exemplary leader can set an excellent example in all areas, such as discipline, attitude, etc. Exemplary should be easy, just as the leader sets an example to be followed.

Future Outlook

The foresight of the future in serving leadership, namely the principal in taking into account all situations related to decisions or policies taken and the possible consequences of decisions taken in the future. According to one of the teachers at the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, information was obtained that the principal prioritized the progress of the institution in the future by continuing to carry out school branding to the public in order to get positive recognition and be able to attract the public's interest in choosing this institution. The flagship program with the most priority is that the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi graduates can recite the Koran and read. Various simulations were carried out by the teachers under the guidance of the school principal to display the branding of being able to recite the Koran and read (Intv3_KH).

The ability to see the future in servant leadership shown by the head of the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, by taking opportunities that trigger people to be attracted to this school, can benefit the institution both now and in the future. Principals who serve have good managerial skills, including foresight; in realizing this, the principal needs to be assisted by various parties (school components) to realize school goals.

The principal's leadership will be respected and valued if he can develop, maintain and maintain his authority. During operational activities, there is an opportunity to review each of the decisions made, and everyone has a vast opportunity to express creativity. Principals with a solid future outlook will dare to make innovative changes in their schools, including changes in matters related to the student learning process and the competence of their teachers. The extent to which school principals can realize the above roles, directly or indirectly, can contribute to increasing teacher competence, which can affect improving the quality of education in schools.

Community Building

The final step in servant leadership is to build a relationship (community building). The ability to build community in serving the leadership in question is the ability possessed by the school principal to build a close relationship like a family among school members (Nurhayati et al., 2022). Building a solid relationship requires openness and mutual respect; the principal's attitude is the most supportive in establishing good relations with the school community. Therefore, the principal must have a wise and prudent attitude. Being wise and wise in leading means being intelligent, clever, knowledgeable, in leading and always using common sense when making decisions. Not prioritizing "ego" and not "pronouncing" oneself as a school principal.

The principal said we tried maintaining attitudes, behaviour and speech to avoid jealousy or misunderstanding from all school members. We also

establish open communication and always involve all components of the school in deciding a problem by way of deliberation in order to maintain good relations with all school members (Intv1_MH).

The principal's statement is in line with the narrative of one of the teachers who said that "good relations do not only occur at school but are also established at home (family), because of the closeness built by the principal so that all components of the school are splashed by considering each other family if there is one those who are sick or in trouble, everyone will feel it and vice versa if there are school members who get happiness, everyone will be happy too" (Intv4_RM).

These findings indicate that the principal as a leader has human relations in his leadership, starting from small pleasant things such as smiles, nodding his head as a sign of appreciation and gentle greetings, friendly nature that is not artificial. The school principal always shows good qualities in leadership behaviour, use of language, and attitude. The small things shown by the principal will grow into big things with the growing cohesiveness of the relationships in the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi.

The occurrence of harmony in good relationships or interactions between superiors and subordinates, besides being influenced by the background of having leaders, such as self-motivation for achievement, maturity and flexibility in social relations with attitudes of human relations, can eliminate the burnout felt by the teacher. The principal's behaviour as a leader in the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi, involves all stakeholders in making educational policies to create a climate of harmony. This kind of harmonious climate can shift the pattern of authoritarian leadership and eliminate the saturation of demands on teachers. Therefore, the ability of school principals to build community in improving the quality of education in Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi occupies an important position and role in taking responsibility for developing and advancing each teacher and staff to advance the school as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Servant leadership displayed by the principal wholeheartedly by thinking of various solutions and points of view can minimize the boredom or burnout of teachers with multiple workloads and many obstacles. Servant leadership is carried out in three stages. Namely the first stage is a communication forum; in this forum, the principal listens to complaints and input from school components; in this forum, the principal also provides empathy and provides solutions; the second stage is serving leadership, the head can serve with the strength of commitment, awareness/openness, strength, conceptual and future outlook. The third stage is that the school principal builds a community with a sense of kinship and togetherness; the cohesiveness to achieve the quality and quality of the institution will be even greater. In general, the servant leadership that was carried out reduced teacher burnout at the Ar-Rahimah Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi.

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