

The Study of Improving the Quality of Education in the Perspective of Regional Autonomy (The Analysis of Principal Strategic Role)

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Abstract- The school principal has a strategic role in improving the quality of education in the era of regional autonomy. The development of work ethic, the establishment of harmonious cooperation, and the improvement of the quality of teachers and school staffs are determined to a great deal by the quality of school leadership. Therefore, the recruitment of school principal should be carried out in a professional way, not political interest. Education always overlaps with the powers, including the appointment of school principal, which cannot be separated from political interest of a regional leader. However, both school principals and educators should be free from the influence of local authorities in order not to be dragged into irrelevant matters to their core business.

Index Terms— Regional Autonomy, Education, Decentralization, Principal, Madrasah

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the national education policy is education equity, expansion of education access, improving the quality and education relevancy, education management, accountability and image. The quality of education needs to be improved to increase competitiveness, independence and dignity of the nation in international. The key of improving the quality of education is the principal quality. According to Deming in Sallis, 85% of the quality problem is from the manager. It is also supported by Juran said that the problem of low quality 80-85% is decided by the management. Ragil mentioned that the school principal has important role and becomes the central in running the education. While Yu mentioned that the school principal is the central agent in improving the school performance. In the other side, decentralization gives space to the head of district in making policy to rule and manage the area. In this context, Tanaka highlighted on the clutter of assignation and dismissal of the state apparatus. In addition to officers and officials, the same thing is also experienced by teachers and principals.

Many teachers and principals become victims of the excesses of decentralization and disorganized system of recruitment and promotion by local governments. According to Tanaka, teachers and principals should not involve politics which it is not their core business. The facts show that the delegation of authority areas mentioned above, tend to make the district or city became ruler indefinitely, including principal's recruitment as the regional apparatus. Besides that when the era of regional autonomy is running, the process of promotion and recruitment are not better. For example; Many principals' recruitment based on whether he supports the figure of certain officials or not.

As long as we are faced with the fact that the election of the school principal in Indonesia is still not based on competence and professionalism, the education quality will never be good. There are many facts show that the recruitment of principals is not following the procedures and mechanisms. Even both recruitment and dismissal are always related to politics rather than professionalism and applicable procedures. Some principals dismissed by just because they are identified as supporters of candidates or representatives of other parties. Conversely some teachers who are successfully in the election and support the party, they will be appointed as principal even though they are incompetence. There are also some people who out of range from education can be recruited as the principal.

Settings on the assignation of principals are set in *Permendiknas* Number 28 Year 2010. This regulation rules the preparation of candidates, recruitment, training, performance assessment, and licensing. However, local governments have ignored this rule. As a result, the recruitment or assignation of principals in the era of regional autonomy and decentralization of education enter a new phase, namely the politicization of the position. This resulted in the lack of achievement motivation for teachers and incompetence principals and do not have commitment in the implementation of education and learning. In this paper the author wants to analyze how the position of the principal strategic role in improving the quality of education in the era of regional autonomy when it has to deal with the political bomb at the same time from certain parties or candidate of regional head.

II. PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC ROLE IN REGIONAL AUTONOMY ERA

The society expects education institution capable of educating the young generation so they can be smart and have good character society in giving positive contribution for the country. Those expectations will depend on school as an educational institution. Schools are expected to prepare the young generation to become qualified human resources to face challenges. Reciprocation of an educational institution is determined by the quality of educator known as school administrators, especially principals.

The school principal is one of important parts of school inputs that can affect the continuity of the school. School or *Madrasah* Principals also known as a leader of school organization such as kindergarten, elementary or *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, junior high school or *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* and Senior High School or *Madrasah Aliyah* and Vocational School. The school principal is usually appointed and

determined by the Head of Department for public schools and by the chairman of the foundation for private schools. As a leader, the principal of school or *madrasah* has a very large role in developing the quality of education in schools. The tasks are to organize, build and develop the school effectively and efficiently in achieving the objectives of the school to keep pace with the development and demands of the times.

Based on the role and tasks above, it shows that the principal is a privileged position. It is because the principal must be able to ensure the system works and fulfill all the resources necessary to achieve best results with adequate quality. The school principal has a major role in developing the quality of education in schools with the harmony of education environment and teachers' qualities. Therefore, the principal must continuously reinvent themselves in order to become a professional leader of education.

A school principal should be professional in human relation, group processes, personnel administration, and assessing staff. The success of the school or *madrasah* principals is because of the support and appreciation of his staff. They will be success if they can make teachers and staff work professionally, loyal, and good attitude. However, the support and loyalty cannot be asked just like that from the staff, it is influenced by how the principal can create a professional and comfortable environment. Therefore the principal must be able to show wide knowledge, has good missions and visions and also has a strong willingness to develop education.

Principals should be involved in any process of changes in schools through the implementation of the principles of other schools total quality. There are four principles of total quality management schools namely; (i) attention should be focused on the process with continuously doing the quality improvement, (ii) quality should be determined by the users of school services; (iii) achievement should be obtained through the understanding of vision rather than by coercion rules; (iv) wise attitude, good character, and emotional maturity. Meanwhile, professional development in improving the capacity or capability of school or *madrasah* principal and others educators are to be done continuously.

There are many studies and research on principal that has been written in the form of scientific journals, books, papers, and media. Generally, it was agreed that the principal is a key figure success of a school. Hadi revealed that there are no good schools without competence principals. Therefore, it is naturally to be said that the key to be success in improving the quality of education in schools is the competence principal. Hallinger and Heck in Condon and Clifford showed that the principal influence on the achievement of learners. Even beside the leadership, the principal's attitude affects the student achievement. Yu also stated that the school principal has strategic role in improving school achievement.

Along with Yu, Maxfield and Flumerfelt said that the success of a school is also influenced by principal who has multi roles. While Huber underlined the school or *madrasah* principal has an active role in working together in teams in advancing the school. From some researchs and studies prove that the principal is the central character of education. Because of the role and the position, therefore the local government in assignating the school or *madrasah* principal should be based on competency, capacity and qualifications as required by the regulations.

Decentralization and education autonomy will succes if they are accompanied by the system and principal mechanism based on the principles of accountability, transparency, equality, rules, and strategic vision. By the principles above, they will strengthen and improve the quality of education in the era of regional autonomy and decentralization of education. Decentralization of education that ignores important aspects in the assignation of principals, will only deliver the autonomous region toward brittleness as Fishe, Mc Gin and Welsh studies in Colombia. Therefore, one of strategic roles in decentralization education management is the human resources especially for those who are dealing with education. Education needs people who have strong commitment and honesty in managing schools.

III. EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY

Regional autonomy as etymologically, the word autonomy comes from the Latin "*autos*" means self and "*nomos*" means rules. Thus, autonomy means it has its own rules or has the right or power or authority to make their own rules. Then this meaning evolved into "self-government". This includes arrangements or legislation itself, self implementation, and within certain limits also the courts and the police themselves.

Meanwhile, in the regulation number 32/2004 about Regional Government affirmed that regional autonomy is the rights, powers and obligations of autonomous regions to set up and manage their own affairs and interests of local communities in accordance with laws and regulations. Government affairs and interests of local communities that are organized and administered cover authorities which are submitted by the central government to the regions to be held at its own initiative based on the aspirations of society.

Real, dynamic and responsible autonomy principals are recognized in regulation number 5 years 1974 as one of the variations of the real autonomous system. In the Law on Local Government new, regulation number 22/1999, regional autonomy is implemented by giving wide authorities; real and responsible to the area proportionally realized with the settings, sharing and utilization of national resources with justice, and financial balance between the center and regions. In order to reach the goal the government is obliged to provide guidance as in research, development, planning and supervision. Beside that there are also standards, guidance, training, supervision, control, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Simultaneously, the government is obliged to provide facilities for the provision of opportunity, convenience, help, and encouragement to the area in order to implement the autonomy can be done efficiently and effectively according to the legislation.

Etymologically, the term comes from the Latin "*de*" means release and "*centrum*", means the center, so that can be understood as release from the center. While, in Law number 32 of 2004, Chapter I, Article 1 stated that decentralization is the devolution of government authority from the center of government to autonomous regions to set up and administer governmental affairs in the system of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, according to Endrigna decentralization is defined as a systematic and rational of governmental authority to lower level institutions so as to allow multi-sectoral decision making as close as possible to the problem area". If autonomy

refers to the rights, authorities and obligations of autonomous regions to set up and manage their own affairs and interests of the community, then it is only possible if the central government to decentralize or devolve authority to local autonomous governments. This is called decentralization.

Conceptually, the application of the principle of decentralization is based on the desire to create a democracy, equity and efficiency. It is assumed that decentralization will create democracy through participation of local communities. Meanwhile, Kotter stated that a decentralized institute has several advantages, among others, resulted in higher morale, more commitment and more productive. Fifteen terms appear in the decentralization law package which the implementation is motivated by the desire of all levels of society to carry out reforms in all areas of government. While the decentralization of education is a process in which a lower level of institution receives the delegation of authority to carry out all education tasks including the use of all existing facilities and the development of policies and financing.

Decentralization of education is management system is to fulfill the development of education that emphasizes diversity, as well as the delegation of authority and power in decision-making to solve the various problems as a consequence of geographical and cultural inequality, either in relation to the substance of national, international or even universal. Why education is decentralized? There are variety opinions from experts. Husen and Postlethwaite outlined the reasons for decentralization; (a) the improvement of schools, (b) the belief that local participation is a logical form of governance in a democracy, and (c) in relation to the fundamental values of liberty, equality, fraternity, efficiency, and economic growth.

Meanwhile, after conducting studies in different countries, Fiske said there are at least four reasons of rational implementation of the decentralization system, including education, namely; (a) political reasons to maintain stability in order to acquire legitimacy of the central government from local communities, as a form of application of socialist ideology and laissez-faire and to foster democratic life, (b) socio-cultural reasons is to empower local communities, (c) administrative and pedagogical technical reasons are to cut the management of middle society in order to pay teachers' salaries on time or to increase the enthusiasm of teachers in the learning process, (d) financial-economic reasons, such as increasing financing additional resources for education and as a tool for economic development.

The purpose of education decentralization is to improve the decision-making process by involving more stakeholders in the area, to produce the integration of schools with local communities continuously, to bring the school closer to the needs and conditions of society, and finally to improve motivation, attendance and student achievement. In addition, decentralization also in order to give an opportunity to the people or wider community to participate actively and creatively so the education capable of producing qualified human resources that will be beneficial for regional development. It is inevitable that educational activities are always linked and tied to another dimension in public life, such as social, cultural, economic, and political.

The connection between these dimensions leads to a pattern fluctuated interplay between them through varied intensity. Moreover to the dimensions of political life, the relationship with the implementation of education covers the entire

important area, namely power. This is in line with Fraire's statement that education is always in contact with powers. According to Stevens and George H. Wood both of them actually sourced from the same system of beliefs. Through this system, the goal of the society and education will be built and understood as ideology. Therefore, according to Makkulau the implementation of education is always determined by the ideology of a country. In this case ideology is intended as a set of lessons (the body doctrine), myths, symbols, and others shaped the values of how a social ideals to be fulfilled.

As for the educational institutions is one of tools to achieve the social ideals. According to Fakhri education that finally shocked and realized that education which full with goodness contain oppression. Why ruler tends to use his power to get his wish? In the context of regional autonomy and the assignation of officials and principals, the explanation of the theory of power for leader becomes relevant. The first pioneers who use the term power is a well-known sociologist Weber. Weber formulated the rule as a possibility that makes an actor within a social relationship are in a position to carry out his own desires and removal of barriers.

The use of power always makes changes to be what people want it. These changes are formulated by Rogers as an influence. Thus, the space for influence is narrower than power. It is a person's ability to change another person or group in a specific way, for example in power and its implementation. Recruitment in education plays a very important in improving the quality of education. The urgency is because this is a very decisive stage to decide the subjects in education or schooling. In the context of the school principal as a leader, recruitment is very important because it affects the improvement of the quality of learning. This is consistent with Hackman and Wanat that preparation or recruitment of principals substantively influence on school reform, especially in improving the quality of learning of students. Starting from the socio-political reality, education always relate with the power, so the recruitment and assignation to certain positions, including the principal, can not be separated from political recruitment that is done by a regional leader. Political recruitment is the selection process or recruitment of members of the group to represent the group in administrative positions and politics. The function of recruitment according to Surbakti (2003) is a continuation of the function to find and retain power.

There are three forms of political recruitment used by the political elite depends on political values espoused. First, the patronage system is a particular form of recruitment over people who are considered suitable with the wishes of the political elite to have political office or other power structures. Second, spoil system, which is a form of recruitment based on rewarding or factor of service. Third, cooption system is a form of recruiting people from outside the group or organization, which because of their expertise in certain positions in the structure of political bureaucracy or power

The cause of the unobjective working assessment and assignation for some positions is because there is a political working assessment by the leaders. This concept was developed by Poon and translated into several indicators. In the assessment and assignation of school principals, the government should avoid this condition. Here, politic means an act of leadership to conduct the assessment is not based on established standards, but based on other personal factors such

as lowering the value to penalize or raise the value of a gift, in which it has nothing to do with the actual performance of the person being assessed.

Another weakness according to Moore is a lot of principals assessment process is based on top-down pattern, which is represented by a supervisor. Therefore, in order to produce good recruitment of principals, the principles that should be applied in the recruitment by applying the principles of good governance. These principles include; accountability, transparency, equality, sensitivity, structuring or law enforcement, strategic vision, professionalism, and work culture.

During this time, the selections of school or *madrasah* principals in Indonesia are based on whether the principals support the certain official or not based on competence and professionalism. Decentralization provides flexibility for regional heads in making policy to organize and manage resources of the area such as; officials, officers, principals and other education personnel. Many teachers and principals become victims of the excesses of decentralization and chaos system of recruitment and promotion by local governments. Education always connects with the power of the recruitment and assignation to certain positions, including the principal and it can not be separated from political recruitment.

However, educational institutions as well as educators are supposedly sterile out from local authorities. Teachers and principals should not be conditioned to join practical politics in order not to be dragged on matters that are not their core business. If in a school there are two or more candidates for the school or *madrasah* principals who have the same qualifications and competence, then it should set clear mechanism who deserves to be the principal and not on the basis of like and dislike for some political reason and pressure that does not educate from a head of district.

According to the writer, the mechanism is each candidate deliver the vision and mission in front of the stakeholder such as; Head of Office, school committees, teachers, and supervisors. Delivery of the vision and mission become very important instrument and can be seen the character and integrity in achieving the goal. Why is it important? First, the school or *madrasah* principals should know exactly what you want to accomplish (vision) and how to achieve it (the mission). When there is no vision and mission it means there is no leader or principal. Second, school or *madrasah* principal should have the competence to carry out a number of missions in order to realize the vision, and the third, the principal must have a certain character that shows integrity.

IV. CONCLUSION

During this time we are confronted with the fact that the election of the principals in Indonesia is not based on competence and professionalism. Selection of school principals still based on whether they support the important officials or not. Decentralization provides flexibility for head of regional in making policy to organize and manage the region. Besides the officers and officials, the same thing is also experienced by teachers and principals.

Many teachers and principals become victims of the excesses of decentralization and disorder system of recruitment and promotion by local governments. Predicate of school or *madrasah* principals is a unique position as compared with a series of other positions. It is because of their involvement is quite complex because naturally in organizing education and by combining working relationship which is not only in the context of the school and the organization, but the relationship with a number of other stakeholders. Otherwise, the principal is the leader of school or education and learning or instructional leader demanded high responsibilities.

Related to those situations, the principals deserve to get reward on their high responsible in making education better such as; the provision of adequate office allowances, beyond basic salary and allowances of profession as a teacher. Principal position is not a permanent position. It should have period of time and given appreciative reward. It means that if the school or *madrasah* principals succeed in managing school significantly through the indicators for examples the value of accreditation, won the school competition, and etc, the principals can be given the opportunity to have second period or promoted to other higher strategic positions. In the other hand, if after the principals are selected but then become dull or incompetence and having bad professional commitments morale, it may be dismissed before their term ends but not because the basis of like and dislike.

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