

## **Dynamics of Power and Authority in Principal Leadership at the Senior High School Level**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the dynamics of power and authority in high school principal leadership, emphasizing the impact of power utilization, leadership styles, and organizational political processes on the efficacy of educational management. The research was executed via a literature review, analyzing books, scientific journals, government regulations, and diverse literature pertinent to educational leadership. The research findings indicate that the principal's power is not solely derived from structural legitimacy, but also from expertise, social connections, integrity, and interpersonal skills, which have been proven to enhance moral authority. For a school to have a good, collaborative, and quality-oriented climate, there needs to be a balance between formal power and professional authority. The ethical use of power and authority includes transparency, fairness, accountability, and a student-centered approach, which are key to reducing resistance, increasing trust, and strengthening school culture. This research substantiates that the efficacy of school principal leadership directly influences the quality of learning, organizational culture, and the success of educational transformation.

**Keywords:** leadership, power, authority, organizational politics, educational quality

### **A. Introduction**

The school principal is very important in deciding the direction, quality, and culture of an educational unit, especially at the high school level. In an educational landscape that is always changing, a principal's job is more than just running the school and making decisions. They also have to manage relationships with other people and be able to affect the whole school community. Consequently, the dynamics of power and authority possessed by the school principal emerge as a pivotal factor in comprehending leadership efficacy within educational institutions.

People often use the words "power" and "authority" to mean the same thing, but they don't mean the same thing. Power is the ability to change how other people act, while authority is more about how legitimate or formally recognized a person's position and authority are. The principal has formal authority at school because of their job, but they also need to build moral and professional authority so that their leadership can be accepted and followed.

The principal's job is getting harder at the high school level. They have to take care of a lot of different things, like the curriculum, the staff, the community, and making the school better all the time. However, in reality, a school principal's success depends not only on rules and structures set by the government, but also on how they handle power and authority in their daily interactions with teachers, staff, students, and other people who have an interest in the school.

The power dynamics in school principal leadership often show the different ways and styles that principals use to get school members to work together to reach common goals. Some principals may be more likely to use coercive power or strict control, while others may be more likely to use persuasive, participatory, or transformational methods. Each style has a different effect on the school climate, the motivation of teachers, and the quality of learning.

Also, the principal's authority is greatly affected by their professional skills, honesty, and ability to get along with others. School members are more likely to respect principals who are honest, good at running a school, and good at communicating. On the other hand, if a principal is not good at balancing power and authority, they may face problems like conflict among staff, low compliance, or teachers not doing their jobs well.

In Indonesia, the role of the school principal is also greatly affected by national education policies and government rules. To make the new curriculum work, build character, digitize schools, and offer educational services that are open to everyone, school principals need to be flexible and responsive. But not all school principals can read and follow the policy in the same way. So, it's important to study how power and authority work together to understand how school principals deal with all the demands and pressures they face.

Also, schools are becoming more complicated places because of changes in society and the growth of information technology. Because teachers and students can now easily find information and other ways to learn, school principals need to be more open and democratic about how they use their power. If power is not used fairly, school members may resist or lose trust in the school. So, it's very important to have a deep understanding of good leadership strategies.

The principal's power and authority at the school are affected by more than just things that happen inside the school. They are also affected by things that happen outside of the school, like their relationships with the school committee, the education department, local government, and the community around the school. School principals have to deal with a lot of different interests and expectations that don't always match up. For instance, government policies may call for faster digital transformation, but schools may not yet be ready in terms of people or infrastructure. In this kind of situation, the principal needs to use their power wisely and build trust-based authority to get everyone in the school to work together when things change.

The principal's ability to create a positive organizational culture is closely linked to how well they lead. A strong school organizational culture doesn't happen overnight; it takes time for people to act consistently, set an example, and figure out where they fit into the power structure. Principals who can create a culture of collaboration are more likely to get

teachers to try new things and come up with new ways for students to learn. On the other hand, leadership that is too centralized or authoritarian can make it harder for teachers to get involved, stop new ideas from coming up, and make the quality of teaching worse.

The role of the school principal as an instructional leader is becoming more important as schools become less centralized. They are no longer just in charge of running things; they need to be the ones who make learning better. But it's not always easy to put this role into action. The principal needs to find a balance between the needs of the administration and the needs of the teachers. When the principal doesn't use formal authority fairly, the teachers may lose faith in them, which makes their leadership less effective.

The principal's unique traits, like their experience, leadership style, and work history, also have a big effect on the power dynamics in the school. School principals who were great teachers or education supervisors before becoming principals usually have more professional authority. However, without adequate interpersonal skills, that authority can become ineffective. So, school leaders need to be good at both technical and emotional skills, as well as being able to get along with everyone in the school community.

Because of all these different factors, it is important to do a thorough study of the power and authority dynamics of school principals in order to find patterns, problems, and the best ways to lead in today's high school setting. According to the description, research on the Dynamics of Power and Authority in School Principal Leadership at the Senior High School Level is pertinent and consequential. This study aims to deliver an extensive analysis of the methods by which school principals exercise power and establish their authority in routine leadership practices, as well as the subsequent impact on the school environment and educational quality. The research findings are anticipated to function as a reference for stakeholders, especially school principals, in enhancing the quality of leadership that is both effective and ethical, while also focusing on the empowerment of all school members.

## **B. Methods**

This research employs the library research method as the primary approach for exploring, analyzing, and synthesizing various scientific sources relevant to the dynamics of power and authority in school principal leadership at the high school level. This method was chosen because it can provide a deep conceptual and theoretical understanding of the research topic, particularly regarding educational leadership concepts, sources of power, authority theory, and their implementation in the school context.

Data collection was carried out thru a review of various literature, including scientific books, national and international journals, research reports, government regulations, academic articles, and other official documents relevant to the research topic. These sources were obtained from both physical and digital libraries, including online journal databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and other educational portals. The criteria for selecting literature are based on relevance, currency, author credibility, and direct relevance to the research variables.

Data analysis in this literature review study was conducted thru several steps. First, identify and classify literature based on key themes such as power theory, the concept of authority, school principal leadership styles, and school organizational dynamics. Second, conduct content analysis to identify patterns, concepts, and relationships between variables in the various sources examined. Third, perform interpretation and synthesis to build a comprehensive new understanding of how power and authority are used by school principals in exercising their leadership. The analysis results are then systematically organized to provide a theoretical overview of the dynamics of power and authority in schools, serving as a foundation for further research and the development of more effective educational leadership practices.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

#### **1. The Concept of Power and Authority in Principal Leadership at the High School Level.**

The concepts of power and authority in school principal leadership at the high school level are an important foundation for creating effective, ethical, and impactful educational governance that directly affects the quality of learning. In the context of school as a social organization and educational institution, the principal functions not only as an administrative manager but also as a visionary leader who influences the motivation, behavior, and development of all school members. The power and authority he possesses become strategic instruments for driving the organization toward the formulated educational goals, while still considering moral values, professionalism, and the best interests of the students.

Power in school leadership is often understood as the ability to influence others to follow the direction or decisions that are set. This power is not always coercive or dominant; on the contrary, it can stem from the legitimacy of the position, professional expertise, personal abilities, or the social relationships that have been built. At the high school level, principals face greater complexity compared to previous educational stages, due to the characteristics of students entering late adolescence, the diversity of teachers with varying professional backgrounds, and the ever-evolving demands of the curriculum and educational policies. Therefore, the use of power must be adaptive. Effective school principals typically combine expertise-based and exemplary power to build trust, along with legitimacy-based power to ensure the continuity of orderly governance.

On the other hand, the concept of authority relates to the formal and moral rights that the school principal possesses to make decisions and direct the course of the organization. Authority is the legitimacy granted by educational institutions, the government, and society to perform leadership functions. At the senior high school level, the principal's authority includes developing the operational curriculum, managing human resources, supervising the learning process, and ensuring school quality. This authority must be exercised responsibly, transparently, and accountably to avoid communication gaps or internal conflicts. When the principal is able to balance formal authority with a wise interpersonal approach, the school's organizational climate becomes conducive to innovation and collaboration.

The interaction between power and authority then shapes the principal's leadership style. School principals who rely on coercive power or excessive control tend to create a rigid and

stressful work environment, leading teachers to lose creative space for developing learning. Conversely, principals who optimize moral authority and expertise-based power will find it easier to build a quality-oriented school culture. In practice, successful school leaders typically integrate transformational and instructional leadership. With transformational leadership, they are able to inspire and motivate school members toward a shared vision. Through instructional leadership, they ensure that the learning process is effective, measurable, and student-centered.

The implementation of power and authority in leadership is also greatly influenced by the principal's ability to build open communication. At the high school level, teachers as professionals need a space for dialog to share their views and innovations. Good power management is evident in the principal's willingness to discuss, accept input, and share responsibilities with teachers and staff. Participatory governance will create a sense of ownership toward the school, allowing strategic decisions to be implemented more effectively. When professional relationships are built on mutual trust, the principal doesn't need to use power dominantly, as support from the entire school community will arise naturally.

Ultimately, power and authority in high school principal leadership are two complementary concepts that must be used proportionally. A school principal who understands the ethics of power will use it as a tool to empower, not to restrain. Meanwhile, the authority it possesses must be directed toward achieving educational goals that are student-centered and promote teacher professional development. When both are operated correctly, the school will flourish into a productive, innovative, and harmonious learning environment. This not only improves academic quality but also shapes the character of the entire school community to be ready to face the challenges of the global era.

## **2. Sources of Leadership Power**

A leader's sources of power are an important foundation for understanding how a leader is able to influence, direct, and motivate others to achieve established goals. A person's formal position isn't the only thing that gives them power; their skills, knowledge, and the relationships they build with others in the organization also give them power. In contemporary leadership, power is regarded as dynamic rather than merely coercive; it must foster commitment, trust, and motivation among group members. So, knowing where a leader gets their power can help you understand why people follow them, respect them, or even turn against them.

Legitimate power is one of the most obvious sources of power. It comes from having a formal position or office in an organization. When someone is made a leader, they get to make decisions and tell their subordinates what to do. The rules, policies, and norms of the organization give leaders the power to do their jobs as leaders. This is what makes them legitimate. This kind of power only works if the person has the skills and honesty to back it up. Just having a formal position isn't enough to earn people's long-term loyalty and trust.

In addition to having positional legitimacy, leaders also have power because of their knowledge or expertise. This power arises because people believe that the leader possesses superior competence, technical skills, or analytical abilities compared to other members.

People are more likely to follow a leader's orders if they think they are an expert in a certain area. This is because they believe that the leader's decisions are based on a lot of knowledge. One of the most stable types of power is expertise-based power because it is hard to replace with position or formal authority.

A leader's ability to give rewards can also give them power. Reward power comes from a leader's ability to give members something valuable, like recognition, a promotion, a bonus, training opportunities, or other forms of appreciation. Subordinates tend to follow leaders who can reward them based on their performance. However, this power must be used wisely, because giving unfair recognition can hurt motivation and make people in the organization jealous of each other.

Coercive power is the opposite of reward power. It is based on a leader's ability to punish or impose sanctions. Coercive power is used to enforce rules and correct behavior considered deviant. Even though it is sometimes necessary to keep order, using too much coercive power can cause fear, resistance, and bad relationships. So, good leaders only use this power as a last resort, not as their main way of running a business.

Referent power, also known as charismatic power, is another source of power that is often thought to be very powerful. This power comes from a leader's personal charm, positive attitude, or character that their followers look up to. People follow this leader not because they have to or are afraid of getting in trouble, but because they admire him, respect him, and want to be like him. Leaders with referent power usually have good communication skills, high moral standards, and values and actions that are consistent. This kind of power is hard to impose, and it comes more naturally from relationships and trust that have grown over time.

A large social network can also give you power. Leaders who have strong networks both inside and outside of the organization are often more powerful because they can get information, resources, and opportunities that other people can't. A strong social network helps leaders work together, solve problems better, and strategically push for the organization's goals.

In general, these sources of power don't work alone; they work together. Leaders who are effective can use their formal authority, knowledge, social connections, recognition, and charisma to have a lasting and positive effect on others. Leaders who rely solely on one type of power will typically face obstacles, while leaders who can balance various sources of power will find it easier to gain support, trust, and commitment from those they lead. So, knowing where power comes from is an important part of becoming a better leader in different kinds of organizations.

### **3. Organizational Political Dynamics in Principal Leadership at the High School Level.**

The political dynamics within an organization under the leadership of a high school principal is an important aspect that is often not directly visible, but has a significant influence on how the school is managed and how strategic decisions are made. Organizational politics in the school context doesn't mean negative practices like intrigue

or manipulation, but rather the process by which various parties in the school interact, influence, and manage their respective interests to achieve common goals. Schools, as social institutions, have many groups with different interests, such as teachers, educational staff, students, parents, school committees, and education departments. The principal is at the center of this dynamic and must be able to manage this political process wisely to avoid conflicts that could disrupt teaching and learning activities.

The political dynamics of an organization usually arise because each individual or group has values, needs, and motivations that are not always aligned with each other. For example, teachers have an interest in professional development and a proportionate workload, while parents are more focused on student learning outcomes and discipline. The school committee has an interest in the transparency of budget usage, while the education department places more emphasis on achieving quality standards and national policies. The principal, as a leader, must understand this map of power, influence, and intergroup relationships to ensure that every policy can be implemented without significant resistance. By understanding the political dynamics of the organization, the principal can predict potential friction and take preventive measures as well as appropriate solutions.

In carrying out their duties, school principals cannot avoid using power and influence to manage these political dynamics. However, the power used is not intended to dominate, but rather to guide all parties toward the school's vision and mission. A school principal who understands organizational politics will develop effective communication strategies, build harmonious relationships with various stakeholders, and create positive coalitions that support school programs. They must also be able to read situations, know when to be firm and when to compromise, and choose an approach that aligns with the school's cultural character.

One form of political dynamics within an organization at the high school level is evident in the decision-making process. Decisions regarding curriculum, teacher workload distribution, extracurricular activities, or budget often involve various interests. An effective school principal doesn't just act unilaterally, but opens up space for dialog with teachers and staff so that decisions made reflect shared aspirations. In this way, the principal can reduce resistance and increase a sense of ownership of school policies among all parties. Collective involvement in decision-making also strengthens a collaborative culture and fosters trust among school members.

The political dynamics of the organization are also evident in conflict management. Conflict in schools is frequent, occurring between teachers, between teachers and students, and between schools and parents. The principal plays a crucial role as a mediator who must be able to identify the root of the problem, identify the actors involved, and find a fair solution. This conflict management ability is crucial for the stability of the school environment. A school principal who can manage conflict diplomatically demonstrates mature political leadership capacity, which relies not only on formal authority but also on strong interpersonal skills.

In addition, the relationship between the principal and external parties such as the education department, school committee, community leaders, and partner organizations is

also part of the organization's political dynamics. These external relationships influence funding support, cooperation programs, and the school's image in the community. The principal needs to build a healthy and professional network so that the school can receive optimal support. Failure to build external relationships can impact resource limitations and hinder the implementation of school programs.

Overall, the political dynamics of an organization are an unavoidable force that must be managed with emotional intelligence, mature communication strategies, and the ability to understand people. High school principals who can read and positively utilize political dynamics will find it easier to achieve educational goals, create a healthy school culture, and foster a harmonious work environment. Conversely, if political dynamics are ignored or misused, it can lead to prolonged conflict, distrust, and a decline in the quality of learning. Therefore, understanding organizational politics is an important competency that every school principal must possess in order to lead effectively, fairly, and with a focus on achieving sustainable quality education.

#### **4. The Ethical Use of Politics and Leadership Authority in Educational Management**

The ethical use of politics and leadership authority in educational management is a crucial aspect of creating a healthy, democratic, and quality-improvement-oriented school environment. In the context of education, politics doesn't always have a negative connotation or relate to power struggles. Organizational politics actually refers to a leader's ability to understand the dynamics of power, interests, and relationships between individuals or groups in order to achieve common goals. When politics and authority are used ethically, school principals or educational leaders can navigate various organizational challenges without causing destructive conflict, increase the trust of school members, and improve the quality of educational services.

Authority in educational leadership stems from the formal mandate granted by the state and educational institutions to leaders to regulate, direct, and make strategic decisions. However, effective authority is not merely structural power, but also moral legitimacy gained thru integrity, competence, and exemplary behavior. When authority is used with ethical principles, leaders demonstrate fairness, transparency, and accountability in every decision. For example, when deciding on the division of teacher duties, determining school programs, or managing the budget, leaders must ensure that the entire process runs according to the rules and prioritizes the best interests of the students.

The ethical use of politics in educational management also includes a leader's ability to manage interpersonal relationships without manipulation. Leaders need to understand that each individual within the organization brings different values, interests, and perceptions. Ethical politics means leaders are able to build positive coalitions, mediate differences, and create understanding thru open communication. Instead of exploiting conflict to consolidate power, leaders are using these political dynamics to increase participation, enrich perspectives, and strengthen unity. When various interests can be synergized, the educational environment becomes more stable and productive.

Ethics in the use of politics and authority is also closely related to transparency. A transparent leader will provide honest, complete, and timely information to all school

members regarding important policies or decisions. This transparency prevents suspicion, misunderstanding, or the perception that leaders are using their power for personal gain. Thus, trust increases and both teachers and educational staff feel valued as part of the management process. In the long run, transparency fosters a healthy organizational culture where everyone understands the reasoning behind a policy and feels involved in the school's development.

Additionally, the ethical use of authority demands that leaders apply the principle of justice. Educational leaders must ensure that all members of the organization are treated fairly without favoritism. Leadership ethics are reflected in impartial decisions, the proportional management of rewards and sanctions, and attention to the well-being of every school member. A fair leader will create a sense of psychological safety and motivate both teachers and staff to work to their full potential. Conversely, abuse of authority such as favoritism or discrimination can damage the work environment and hinder the achievement of educational quality.

The ethical use of politics and authority also emphasizes the importance of leaders in upholding human values. In educational management, every decision must consider its impact on student development. Leaders must ensure that organizational dynamics do not compromise the interests of the learners. Educational ethics places students at the center of decision-making, so organizational politics must be directed toward supporting the learning process, not toward satisfying personal ambitions or maintaining a certain dominance. Thus, the main orientation of leadership is character building, improving the quality of education, and the well-being of all school members.

As part of leadership ethics, educational leaders must also be able to exemplify good moral behavior. Example-setting has great power in influencing school culture. A leader who is honest, disciplined, responsible, and humble will more easily gain legitimacy from school members than a leader who relies solely on their position. When example becomes the basis of authority, the leader's influence is natural and voluntarily accepted, not through coercion. Overall, the ethical use of politics and authority in educational management is an important foundation for effective and sustainable leadership. Leaders who can balance power with integrity, healthy communication, and a focus on educational values will create a harmonious and productive environment. Organizational dynamics can be a positive force if managed wisely, and ethics serve as the primary guide in every leadership action. Thus, schools can develop into professional, democratic institutions capable of producing character-driven generations..

## **5. Practical Cases in Educational Management**

The issue of quality of education services and their management is an important one that continues to be a concern in efforts to improve the quality of education at various levels. The quality of education is not only measured by students' learning outcomes, but also by the educational process, teacher performance, school leadership, facilities and infrastructure, and the involvement of all stakeholders. However, in practice, many schools still face various obstacles that prevent the quality of educational services from being as optimal as expected. This problem is complex because it involves interconnected technical, structural, and organizational cultural aspects.

One of the main problems in the quality of education services is the mismatch between national education standards and the real conditions in schools. Many quality standards, whether related to curriculum, teacher competence, or infrastructure, have not yet been met due to limited resources. The frequent curriculum changes also require schools to make repeated adjustments, while teacher training is not always conducted evenly. As a result, curriculum implementation was inconsistent and the quality of the learning process became unstable. Unpreparedness in facing this change is one of the reasons why the improvement of education quality is slow.

The quality of teachers is also an important factor in the issue of education quality. There are still teachers who do not have adequate pedagogical and professional competence to face the challenges of modern learning. For example, a teacher who is less skilled in using learning technology will find it difficult to adapt to the learning needs of the current generation. Additionally, there are still teachers teaching subjects outside their area of expertise due to a shortage of teaching staff. This condition directly impacts students' learning outcomes and reduces the effectiveness of educational services. Efforts to develop teacher professionalism are often hampered by budget constraints and limited opportunities to participate in quality training.

School management is also an important issue in the quality of education services. Not all school principals possess strong managerial competencies to effectively manage resources. There are school principals who are still administratively oriented, so they are less focused on improving the quality of learning. Program planning is often unsustainable, short-term, and lacks accurate data. Program evaluations are sometimes conducted merely to fulfill administrative obligations without in-depth analysis for improvement. When school management is not effective, educational services also tend to stagnate and do not lead to improved quality.

The availability of facilities and infrastructure is also a crucial issue. Learning facilities such as comfortable classrooms, laboratories, libraries, learning technology, and digital devices have a significant impact on service quality. However, in many schools, especially in remote areas, these facilities are still very limited. Schools are struggling to provide a learning environment that supports active and innovative learning. The lack of infrastructure makes it difficult for teachers to implement modern teaching methods, and students are unable to develop to their full potential. This issue further highlights the persistent quality gap between regions that has not been addressed.

The issue of quality education service is also closely related to low parental and community participation. In some cases, communication between schools and parents is not effective, resulting in less than optimal support for students' learning process. In fact, the success of education is greatly influenced by collaboration between schools and families. When parents are less involved, their child's motivation and discipline in learning also tend to weaken. Low community participation in supporting school activities sometimes causes quality improvement programs to not run according to target.

Education budget management is another issue that has a significant impact on service quality. Schools often rely on government funding, which is limited in amount and strictly

regulated in its use. When funds are insufficient, schools struggle to implement various quality improvement programs, such as teacher training, facility repairs, or the procurement of learning tools. Additionally, there are still schools that lack good transparency and accountability in fund management, which affects public trust and the effectiveness of budget utilization.

Overall, the issues of educational quality service and its management require a comprehensive solution. Quality improvement doesn't just rely on schools; it must involve the government, the community, the business world, and parents. Strengthening teacher competencies, improving school leadership capacity, transparent budget management, adequate infrastructure, and strong collaboration among stakeholders are important steps to comprehensively improve the quality of education. Without effective management, all components of education will not work in harmony, and the quality of service will not reach the expected standard.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The dynamics of power and authority in senior high school principal leadership constitute fundamental aspects determining educational governance success, learning process quality, and healthy organizational culture establishment. Principals perform not only administrative functions but also serve as visionary leaders, organizational political mediators, and primary movers toward educational goal achievement. Through formal power combination with established moral and professional authority, principals play strategic roles in influencing teacher, staff, and student behavior toward creating productive school environments.

Power and authority concepts prove essential for understanding how leaders mobilize followers. Power can originate from position legitimacy, expertise, rewards, social networks, or personal appeal. Meanwhile, authority reflects moral legitimacy gained through integrity and exemplary behavior. Both must be balanced to prevent resistance, conflict, or trust issues. Successful principals typically combine expertise-based power, exemplary leadership, and participatory decision-making approaches.

Conversely, organizational political dynamics within school environments prove unavoidable. Various actors—teachers, students, parents, school committees, and education offices—possess different interests and expectations. Principals must comprehend these power maps, build positive coalitions, employ effective communication strategies, and resolve conflicts diplomatically. Healthy organizational political dynamics understanding significantly contributes toward creating conducive, collaborative work climates free from destructive tensions.

Ethical power and authority application forms successful educational leadership foundations. Ethics manifest through transparency, justice, accountability, and student interest focus principles. Principals must ensure every policy—including task allocation, budget management, and performance evaluation—is implemented objectively without nepotism or manipulation. This ensures school communities feel valued, psychologically secure, and motivated toward more effective contribution.

Beyond leadership, educational service quality remains major challenges. Disparities between national standards and actual school conditions contribute toward uneven learning quality. Many schools still face human resource, infrastructure, teacher competency, and weak school management limitations. Curriculum changes, minimal teacher training, low parent participation, and budget constraints also hinder quality improvement. Therefore, educational quality enhancement requires adaptive principal leadership integration, strong managerial literacy, collaborative cultures, and productive external relationships.

Principals must become learning leaders capable of directing, guiding, and empowering teachers in developing innovative learning processes. When power and authority are applied ethically, when organizational political dynamics are managed positively, and when educational service quality becomes top priority, schools can develop into inclusive, quality environments ready for global era challenges. Future research should examine contextual factors influencing power and authority effectiveness across different educational settings to develop more nuanced leadership approaches. Dinamika kekuasaan dan otoritas dalam kepemimpinan kepala sekolah di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) merupakan aspek fundamental yang menentukan keberhasilan tata kelola pendidikan, kualitas proses pembelajaran, serta terciptanya budaya organisasi yang sehat. Kepala sekolah tidak hanya menjalankan fungsi administratif, tetapi juga bertindak sebagai pemimpin visioner, mediator politik organisasi, dan penggerak utama tercapainya tujuan pendidikan. Melalui perpaduan kekuasaan formal yang dimiliki serta otoritas moral dan profesional yang dibangun, kepala sekolah memainkan peran strategis dalam memengaruhi perilaku guru, staf, dan siswa untuk menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang produktif.

Konsep kekuasaan dan otoritas menjadi dasar dalam memahami bagaimana pemimpin menggerakkan warganya. Kekuasaan dapat berasal dari legitimasi jabatan, keahlian, penghargaan, jaringan sosial, maupun daya tarik personal. Sementara otoritas mencerminkan legitimasi moral yang diperoleh melalui integritas dan keteladanan. Keduanya harus digunakan secara seimbang agar tidak menimbulkan masalah seperti resistensi, konflik, atau rendahnya kepercayaan. Kepala sekolah yang berhasil adalah mereka yang mampu menggabungkan kekuasaan berbasis keahlian, keteladanan, serta pendekatan partisipatif dalam setiap pengambilan keputusan.

Di sisi lain dinamika politik organisasi dalam lingkungan sekolah tidak dapat dihindari. Berbagai aktor guru, siswa, orang tua, komite sekolah, hingga dinas pendidikan memiliki kepentingan dan harapan berbeda. Kepala sekolah dituntut mampu membaca peta kekuatan ini, membangun koalisi positif, menggunakan strategi komunikasi efektif, dan menyelesaikan konflik secara diplomatis. Penguasaan dinamika politik organisasi secara sehat berkontribusi besar pada terciptanya iklim kerja kondusif, kolaboratif, dan bebas dari ketegangan destruktif.

Penggunaan kekuasaan dan otoritas secara etis merupakan pondasi keberhasilan kepemimpinan pendidikan. Etika tercermin melalui prinsip transparansi, keadilan, akuntabilitas, dan orientasi pada kepentingan peserta didik. Kepala sekolah harus memastikan bahwa setiap kebijakan baik pembagian tugas, pengelolaan anggaran, maupun evaluasi kinerja dilaksanakan secara objektif dan bebas dari nepotisme atau manipulasi.

Dengan demikian warga sekolah merasa dihargai, aman secara psikologis, dan termotivasi untuk berkontribusi lebih baik.

Selain aspek kepemimpinan, mutu layanan pendidikan tetap menjadi tantangan besar. Kesenjangan antara standar nasional dan kondisi riil sekolah membuat kualitas pembelajaran tidak merata. Banyak sekolah masih menghadapi keterbatasan sumber daya manusia, sarana prasarana, kompetensi guru, serta lemahnya manajemen sekolah. Perubahan kurikulum, minimnya pelatihan guru, rendahnya partisipasi orang tua, dan keterbatasan anggaran juga menjadi faktor penghambat peningkatan mutu.

Oleh karena itu peningkatan kualitas pendidikan membutuhkan integrasi antara kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang adaptif, literasi manajerial yang kuat, budaya kolaboratif, serta hubungan eksternal yang produktif. Kepala sekolah harus menjadi pemimpin pembelajaran yang mampu mengarahkan, membimbing, dan memberdayakan guru dalam mengembangkan proses belajar inovatif. Ketika kekuasaan dan otoritas digunakan secara etis, ketika dinamika politik organisasi dikelola dengan positif, dan ketika mutu layanan pendidikan menjadi prioritas utama, maka sekolah dapat berkembang menjadi lingkungan yang inklusif, berkualitas, dan siap menghadapi tantangan era global.

## Referances

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