The Relationship between the Role of a Principal and Quality of School Academic Service: The Mediating Function of Teacher Commitment

Aan Komariah[a], Dedy Achmad Kurniady[b], Rusdinal[c], [a,b]Lecturer of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, [c]Lecturer of Padang State University, Email: [a]aan.koma@upi.edu, [b]achmad@upi.edu, [c]anrusdinal@fip.unp.ac.id

Academic service quality focusses on the effectiveness and efficiency of education administration science. In this study, we test the relationship of the role of the principal and teacher commitment on academic service quality. Particularly, the research hypothesises that an excellent academic service quality can be realized by the principal's role and teachers' commitment. There will be a high level of teachers' commitment if principals play their role as a principal, compared to a low level as a result of the absence of its role comprehensively. The data were taken from teachers and principals in secondary schools in West Java, Indonesia. The method was by Explanatory Survey Method with path model data analysis technique. Results of the study show that role of principals have positive and direct relationships with academic service quality and operates through teacher commitment. The role of principals greatly influences teacher commitment and teacher commitment influences on the extent of academic service quality. There must be dominant role of principals in order to improve academic service quality that is developed through teacher commitment namely to apply encouraging leadership patterns as a skilled manager and conducting continuous and developing supervision. To improve academic service quality, it is recommended that role of principals can be more optimized as a leader, motivator, supervisor and manager.

Key words: *Academic Service Quality, Principal Role, Teacher Commitment.*

JEL Classification: I24, R58, M38

Introduction

There is a main problem with academic service in implementing current education, namely the absence of a condition in which enables any academic service customers to freely submit any complaints or dissatisfaction given by the school as service provider. In the context of service, such condition is extremely strategic; customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the basic of evaluation to improve sustainable service quality (Parasuraman, 1988). Output of the education process is the service meanwhile students and parents are the main customers of the education service. (Salis, 2006; Hamid, 2012). In fact, there is yet any condition and submission of such complaints or even any awareness on service weakness given by the school since service receivers don't have an understanding on their real rights as students serving as receivers of the school academic service.

It has been agreed that school academic services relate to learning convinience by students, so they can achieve optimal academic and non academic achievement (Razinkina, 2018; Savasci, 2013, Daniele, 2007). Students' success is influenced by level of their satisfaction in providing academic service given by principal and teachers simultaneously. Principal leadership does not only seek for qualified academic culture as its service standard, it must also be perfect in developing teacher commitment as the front guard facing students (Daniele, 2007; Celep, 2000; Hoog, 2005). Principals and teachers who simultaneously realize qualified academic service for students have been students broadly in national and international contexts in the last few years as an inseparable part to achieve quality education (Hulpia, 2011, Al Mahdy, 2018; Kean, 2017; Graham, 2014; Lung, 2013).

There are many researches conducted to analyze influences of the role of principals on improved teacher commitment as well as academic service quality. There are some previous researches that find the role of principals influences on teacher commitment both directly and indirectly on academic service quality. There are some researches findings the role of principal influences on service quality, such as results of researches by Edmonds (1979), Cheng (2002), and Marzano (2004). Meanwhile, through teacher commitment, it is concluded that results of the research by Mirza (2012), and Koh(1979), finding that principals serves as the one that can develop academic service quality through teacher commitment. Bolman emphasized the fact that leadership mediated by teacher activities contributes effectively on students' results (Bolametal., 1993).

There are still several researches on direct influences of role of school principals on service quality related to its indirect influences on teacher commitment in Indonesia. Even though these two variables serve a strategic and crucial role in trying to realize quality of education. The principal as a leader is seen as very effective in being able to implement and maintain innovative efforts in order to improve the school. Evidence from the school improvement

literature, starting with studies in the United States (Brookoveretal., 1979; Edmonds, 1982) and the United Kingdom (Mortimore, 2000; Rutteretal., 1979; Southworth, 1995), it highlights that effective leaders provide direct or indirect influences but school strong capacity to implement reforms and increase student achievement levels.

Literature Review

School academic service quality is a school management that has met standards and provided more service leading to customers' happiness and satisfaction. There is good quality when the quality meets and exceeds customers' expectation (Evans and Lindsay, 2005). To provide more service, principals must have orientation to the quality. There are eight strengths that can influence on the future quality; 1) partnering, 2) learning systems, 3) adaptability and speed of change, 4) environmental sustainability, 5) globalization, 6) knowledge focus, 7) customization and differentiation, 8) shifting demographics (Evans and Lindsay 2005). To keep in the good quality, schools must run its imperative obligations; obligations of morale, professionalism, competitiveness, and accountability (Sallis, 2006). The moral obligation relates to school feasibility to provide the best service to its customers, essentially, each customer is obliged to obtain the best service. Professionalism obligation is shown by its personnel, mainly principals and teachers; both as professionalism leading to provision of the best service. Competitive obligation is school serving as an arena to show excellence of students and teachers. Accountability obligation is school performance that can be accounted in a high manner in its programs and finance showing more solid governance. Qualified loyalty of school governance and developing a qualified school culture are forms of principal accountability (Kurniady, et al, 2018).

The imperative obligations give more service that can be seen in high school performance, by characteristics: 1) A clear and shared focus, 2) High standards and expectations for all students, 3) Effective school leadership, 4) High levels of collaboration and communication, 5) Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards; 6) Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching, 7) Focused professional development, 8) a supportive learning environment, 9) High levels of family and community (Shannon and Bylsma, 2007). A school with a good quality service apply accountable principles; 1) high performance standard, 2) providing assistances to help the capacity in order to provide better education service, 3) school must improve its performance quality and quantity. (Hoy and Miskel, 2013).

Service quality largely depends on three issues; system, technology and human. The human factor serves the biggest contribution so it is hardly imitated service quality than product quality and price. One of the famous concepts of service quality is ServQual. Referring to this

concept, service quality is trusted to have five dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible (Parasuraman, 2001). Considering that educational field is a service that cannot be seen, smelt, and touched in a whole, then the tangible aspect plays an important role as a measurement of educational services, in addition to other quality service measurements in a unity.

Academic service quality is influenced by many factors, such as principal leadership, financing, teacher performance, organizational commitment, learning process, government policies, utilization of management information system, school climate, students, staff performance, curriculum, as well as educational facility and infrastructure. (Northouse, 2013, Smith, 2005; Robbins and Timothi A. Judge, 2011; Luthans, 2005; Wayne K. Hoy & Cecil G. Miskel, 2013). Leadership factor and employee commitment are two interconnected components that strongly influence academic service quality. Principals and teachers are seen as the party with strategic position in determining academic service quality. There can be increasing or decreasing teacher commitment by principal effects. Principal role also contributes to influence on increasing or decreasing teacher commitment. Teacher commitment is an attitude showing relatedness to school giving effects on teacher productivity, then teaching quality given to students also gives effects (Luthans,1995). By improving teacher commitment, there will be increasing teacher productivity in serving learning process and improved learning service is the core part of school academic service quality (Razak, 2009).

A good school service quality is seen from the school's success to meet its customers' expectation. There are four categories of school that are seen from its education quality and process; a bad school, a good school, effective school and excellence school. A bad school is a school with good or excellent inputs but there is not a good education process leading to unqualified outputs. A good school is a school with good inputs and good process as well as good outputs. An effective school is a school with good or less good inputs and excellent education process and lead to good or excellent outputs. Meanwhile, an excellence school is a school with good inputs and good process as well as lead to excellent outputs (graduation). Effectiveness can be resulted from its education process with high level of school performance (Tobroni , 2010).

Teacher commitment serves as an essential role in maintaining and improving academic service quality. Teachers must be supported to keep owning strong willingness to maintain and keep priceless relationships with their organization (Chan, et al, 2008). Teacher work commitment is an attitude reflecting their loyalty to school and dedication to their work in sustainable processes in which school personnel focuses on school success and progress (Luthans, 2005). Teacher commitment to school is the level of their willingness to identify themselves and willingness to continue active participation in school activities. It is greatly

necessary for teacher commitment as an education implementer to maintain the climate in order to improve academic service (Erkan and Omer, 2016). Teacher commitment can be explored from three-component models, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer dan Allen 1997; Boer & van Dick 2013; Garcia-Gabrera & Garcia-Soto 2012; Cohen 2007; Herrbach 2006). In turn, such commitment increases teacher spirit to serve at the best level in the learning process. School having teachers with high commitment will also have high school performance (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Principals as head of institutions influences greatly on growing teacher work commitment (Jackline, 2015; Abdullah, et al. 2017; Manolis, 2017). Through the roles as leader, manager, supervisor and motivator (Chevaillier, 2009, Ahmad & Ahmad, 2018), the principals are required to apply these roles based on educational standard. However, in Indonesia, principals are not only a pure person, they who are also recruited from professional teachers are assumed to face difficulty in applying their role as a professional principal without any knowledge in the form of qualification of bachelor or master in the field of principalship. Such issues are seen as problems in giving the best academic service quality as well as giving knowledge-based treatment in their role in improving teacher commitment. Through a training of preparing prospective principals and strengthening principal competence, the government tries to eliminate gaps and critics to less professional principal roles (Kurniady, et al 2018). This can be seen as a very strategic way in requirement of principal professionalism based on appropriate self-qualification, competence and development.

The principal is a trigger for academic service strength that is designed and implemented by schools in order to create customer satisfaction. But practically, there is still less optimal leadership; there is also no full affective commitment; all of which disrupt the smooth running of school academic services. Leadership roles are very urgent for the growth of employee commitment so that there will be ability to perform fully in providing academic services. This is very reasonable because leadership can motivate individuals to complete several objectives of an organization and leadership through their style and can influence employee trust in an organization (Chiang and Wang 2012; Gibson et al., 2012). It is expected that the principal's role as a leader reflects his role as a leader who has a major influence on the school progress through encouraging the growth of teacher commitment.

If studies on commitment in the company finds an effect on a low commitment on turnover rate (Watson Wyatt, 2007), then in the world of education, low commitment and lack of leadership can lead to high levels of employee reluctance in providing excellent academic services. Low commitment results in the absence of the best services in school management and one that can increase is role of leaders to motivate and influence employees to have such

commitment. Any committed employees contribute to their organization in terms of motivation. They are more enthusiastic and pay more attention to the performance (De Silva and Yamao, 2006; Pool and Pool, 2007; Johnson et al., 2010). There are fourteen roles of elementary school principals, namely: (1) principals as business manager, (2) principals as office manager, (3) principals as administrator, (4) principals as professional leader, (5) principals as organizers, (6) principals as staff motivators or movers, (7) principals as supervisors, (8) principals as curriculum consultants, (9) principals as educators, (10) principals as psychologists, (11) principals as school rulers, (12) principals as good executives, (13) principals as school relations officers with communities, and (14) principals as community leaders (Stoop & Johnson, 1967). In this study, the role of principals in building teacher commitment by applying four dimensions of principal roles in general, namely applying leadership patterns, conducting management, carrying out supervision and providing motivation was used (Komariah, 2018).

Research Methods

The method used in this study is *Explanatory Survey Method* where the data analysis technique used is the path analysis model. The populations in this study are secondary Schools in West Java with sample collections using *random sampling* technique with a total sample of 370 respondents. The instrument used by the researchers is a questionnaire using measurement scale in terms of an ordinal measurement scale. To find out the description of each variable, it used descriptive analysis techniques and to determine the magnitude of direct and indirect influences, it used inferential data analysis and for further analysis data analysis, it was performed using parametric statistical analysis, namely by multiple regression techniques.

Findings and Discussion

Description of the quality of school academic services is higher than empathy and assurance. Empathy has a percentage above 81%, while assurance and reliability are below 80%. Responsiveness and tangibles obtain a percentage above 80%. If sorted, the quality of school academic services is more prominent in showing empathy, the second is tangible, the third is responsiveness, the fourth assurance and finally reliability. The description of such quality service can be seen in Graph 1 below:

**Graph 1.** Description of Academic Service Quality (ASC)
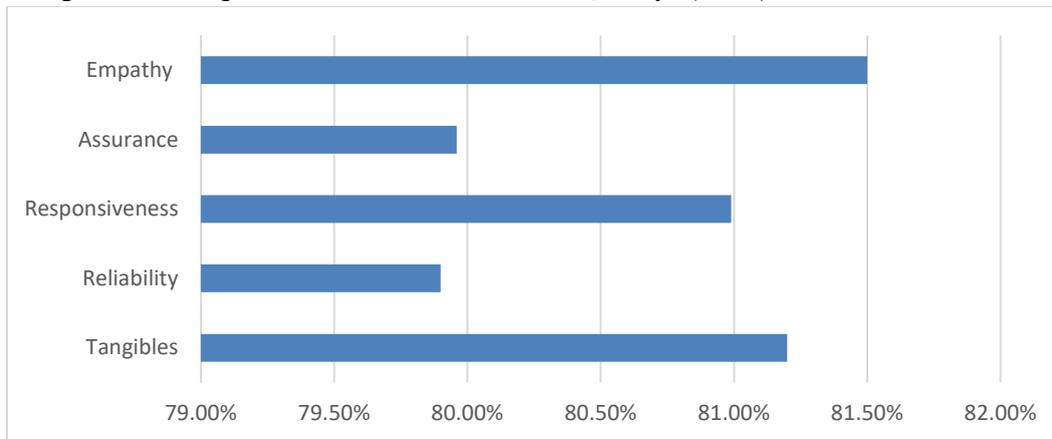
Principals play a role in four functions, leadership pattern, management, motivation and supervision. Field findings show that the leadership pattern of principals has been carried out based on the situation faced by obtaining the highest percentage among other leadership roles. It is followed by the principal roles as managers, supervisions and motivations. The following is data description on the principal role. The description of principal role can be seen in Graph 2 below:

Graph 2. Description of Principal Roles (PR)
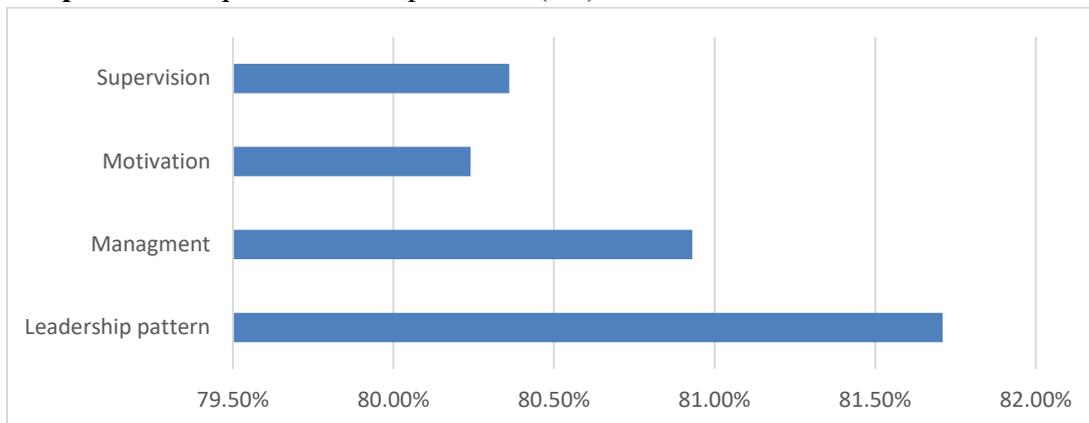
It is found high level of teacher affective commitment when implementing learning services and school services (> 82%), followed by normative and continuance commitments (> 77%). The description of teacher commitment can be seen in Graph 3 below:

Graph 3. Description of Teacher Commitment (TC)
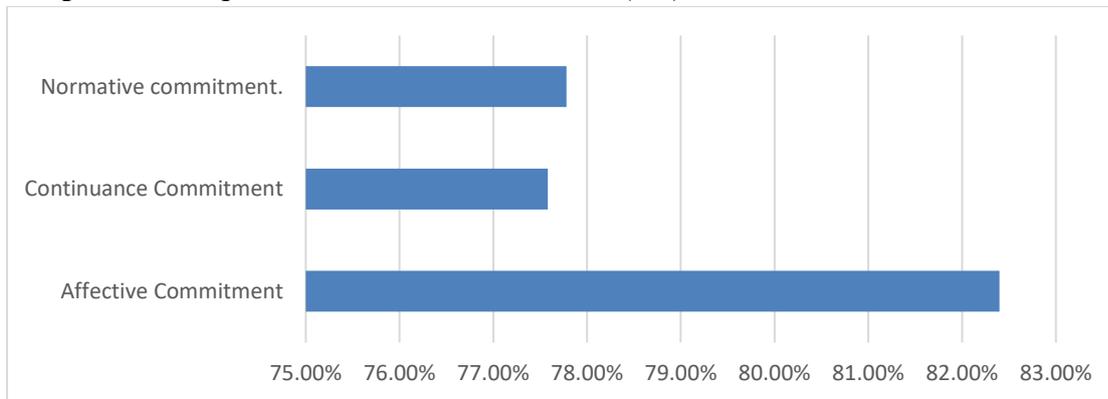
Calculation results of direct and indirect effects are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Direct Effects and Indirect Effects of Principal Role and Teacher Commitment on Academic Service Quality

Variable Effects	Causal Effects		Total
	Direct	Indirect through	
PR on TC	0.214	-	0,214
TC on ASQ	0.437	-	0.437
PR on ASQ through TC	0.174	0.136	0,310
PR on ASQ	0.526	-	0,526
Final Conclusion of PR on ASQ through TC			31,0%

Source: Processed Table and data based on field data

Referring to Table 1, it can be seen the effects of Principal Role (PR) on Academic Service Quality (ASQ) through Teacher Commitment (TC) by 31.0%. Principal Role and Teacher Commitment have direct and indirect effects on the quality of academic services. The calculation results show that the effects or coefficient of determination (R2) of Principal Role on Teacher Commitment (TC) is 21.4% and the remaining of 78.6% is influenced by other factors. The effect of teacher commitment (TC) on Academic Service Quality (ASQ) is 43.7% and the remaining of 56.3% is influenced by other factors. The effect of Principal Role (PR) on Academic Service Quality (ASQ) is 52.3% and the remaining of 47.7% is influenced by other factors. The direct effect of Principal Role (PR) on Teacher Commitment (TC) is 21.4%. Direct effect of Teacher Commitment (TC) on Academic Service Quality (ASQ) is 43.7% and the effect of Principal Leadership (PR) on Academic Service Quality (ASQ) through Teacher Commitment (TC) is 31.0%.

Results of model significance test (F-test) for the first hypothesis indicates that F-count of all variables is greater than F-Table which means that the model is significant. Likewise for the t-test for the first hypothesis, it shows that the t-count for all the variables is greater than the t-table of 1.971271. This shows that the Principal role variable influences on the Teacher Commitment, Teacher Commitment influences on the Academic Service Quality and Principal Role influences on the Quality of Academic Services through Teacher Commitment.

Direct evidence of tangibles serving as a measure of academic service quality is characterized by availability of facilities, equipment, supporting management, various activities that are clearly visible and felt by students; all of which are already owned by secondary schools in Indonesia. Evidence of reliability can be seen from ability to provide promised services immediately, accurately and satisfactorily which still shows a degree below other aspects so that teachers and principals must at their best effort transform the paradigm to be served into giving service. Responsiveness which is seen as desire of teachers and principals to help students and provide responsive service still requires significant improvement through teacher commitment and principal leadership. However, the most important thing to pay attention to is assurance including abilities, skills and attitudes that show school authority as an educational institution having capable organizational standards and mechanisms in order to create reliable and superior graduates; it is necessary to add some efforts to foster public trust (Doherty, 2012). However, there is an exciting issue about this field finding, namely the measure of empathy shown by the teachers and principals to their students who have deficiencies and problems. Principals and teachers in general have opened their hearts to make it easy to have good communication relationships, personal attention, and understand the needs of students who are specifically challenged and having problems (Zeithaml, et al, 1988; Parasuraman, 1988).

Some of the previous research findings state that obtaining effective school services, improve culture and increase commitment, all of which depend on the principal roles (Pam Sammons and Mortimore, 1995, Komariah, 2016). The principal roles through leadership have led to increased teacher commitment, they are committed to carrying out every teaching and learning activity and their responsibilities in the academic environment. The leadership role plays a stronger role on influencing teachers to have high commitment. However, other aspects such as management, supervision and motivation also influence on optimization of teacher commitment. Principals are encouraged to absorb characteristics of service leadership, namely listening, empathy, restoring, awareness, persuasion, conceptual, foresight, trust, commitment and building communities in order to have the ability to reach the sense of teacher commitment so they are more willing to serve (Larry C. Spears, 2005) . Through serving leadership, principals help each member of organization to be committed to their work professionally in order to continue to grow, assist organizations to be more

productive through commitments that are built on each teacher and principal.

Organizational commitment plays an important role for every organizational member at school, especially for teachers. Teachers have a major role in academic activities which have implications for quality of academic services in State Junior High Schools in Greater Bandung. The existence of teachers is one of the most highlighted in academic activities, poor quality of school service depends on teacher quality itself and their commitment to remain professional in academic activities.

Teacher commitment is very important in academic activities considering its very basic role in improving learning quality. The learning quality is the core business in education services (Baráth, 2015). Serving leadership can increase organizational commitment (Olesia. S. Wekesa, Namusonge. S.G, and Iravo. E. Mike, 2013). The position of principal leadership is so strategic in increasing organizational commitment and organizational committees play a role in helping to improve academic service quality. Based on this, it means that leadership has a strategic position in order to improve organizational commitment which has implications for academic service quality that is controlled by principal leadership. High and low level of organizational commitment as well as good and bad quality of academic services depend on principal leadership role in serving on learning activities at school. To be able to optimize quality academic services, it is necessary for principals to have full awareness to implement principal performance standards who not only focus on leading innovation but also on managing complexity, namely through school management (Jackline, 2014).

Principals who have carried out their roles as leaders should have high scores in motivating. However, based on the field findings, it is still necessary to improve principals' ability to motivate. Especially if the principal carries out his role as a supervisor and a manager, this shows that existing applied leadership role has not been fully charged with the theory that requires any leaders as a great motivator and qualified academic supervisor. (Kurniady, 2018). Any principals with good leadership role application do not necessarily have good supervision skills. Since such supervision ability is related to improvisation and increased learning. All schools require principals who can apply their role as leaders in teaching and are able to ensure teaching quality (Portin et al. 2003). Thus, the role of supervisor is the main focus to be able to improve learning which can encourage teacher motivation to show the best performance which in turn it can maintain its commitment to academic service quality.

Principals cannot implement careless leadership styles in order to maintain teacher commitment especially when applying a transactional leadership style. Transformational leadership have significant positive influences and transactional leadership has no significant influences on organizational trust and commitment. Principals must focus on transformational leadership styles and increase teacher confidence so they can develop qualified organizational

commitment (Mirza, 2012).

Teacher commitment plays a role in maintaining consistency of work professionalism, being loyal to the school so that any entrusted task can be fulfilled with a sense of responsibility. Importance of this teacher commitment encourages school principals to maintain and even improve it. School principals are aware that their main school mission is effective learning which its leading sector is on the teacher commitment to give their best service (Cotton, 2003; Marzano et al, 2005). Today's school principals must be role models for learning and always look for any devices and ideas which can encourage school progress. Applied principal roles in order to obtain quality academic services are to become authentic leaders, professional managers, constructive supervisors and inspiring motivators. Being authentic leaders, principals have to work hard and show high self-discipline supported by awareness and kindness to serve. (Komariah, 2018).

Conclusion

To achieve the academic service quality as expected by education customers, especially teachers, students and parents, it is necessary for principals to play their role intensively and sincerely in carrying out leadership, administrating and managing as professional managers, providing supervision that guides and develops, and being an inspiring motivator. Teachers serve as the second key force for the success of quality academic services. Its commitment must be maintained and enhanced by giving attention to its duties and responsibilities, both in terms of sustainable professional development, providing awards to their empowerment and their existence acknowledgment.

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