AN EXPLORATION OF A SOCIAL CAPITAL CONCEPT IN NOVICE PRINCIPALS OF BOYOLALI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The success of school principals in leading their schools is influenced by various factors, one of which is social capital. Beginner school principals in Boyolali Regency face unique challenges in managing social capital as they are just starting their leadership careers. This study explores the concept of social capital among beginner school principals in Boyolali Regency. The research method used is qualitative, with data collection techniques involving literature review and structured interviews. The data were analyzed in three stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study results indicate that schools with strong social capital support student-oriented learning through collaboration with various parties, such as local SMEs, health centers, and local communities. Social capital is integrated into intra-, co-, and extracurricular activities, enhancing holistic student development. Teachers' involvement in community social activities strengthens the school's relationship with its surrounding environment. In conclusion, beginner school principals' utilization of social capital is crucial in creating a school culture that comprehensively supports student learning.

Keywords: Social Capital; Network; Belief

Introduction

Principal leadership focuses on curriculum and learning development, staff development, learning supervision, learning programs, teacher and student program evaluation, action research, preparation of organizational resources, and continuous improvement of learning outcomes and processes (Anggal, 2020). The principal's leadership aims to improve the quality of student learning processes and outcomes. The quality of the learning process includes the fulfillment of eight national education standards, both inside and outside the classroom. The quality of learning outcomes includes academic and non-academic achievement of students (Timor, 2018). Various factors, including social capital, influence the principal's success in leading the school. Social capital is a set of informal norms or specific values shared and interconnected by a group of people or members of society. This series is based on mutually agreed social values, standards, and beliefs (Nabilah, 2022). Civil social capital is divided into three fundamental dimensions: bonds, bridges, and

interconnectedness. Bonding describes kinship relationships with close family, close friends, and professional colleagues who provide support (Syafar, 2017).

Before becoming an experienced principal, every principal must have gone through the initial stage as a novice principal. A novice principal is an individual who has just started serving as a principal and is still in the early stages of developing school leadership and management skills (Sujuti, 2022). The principal is responsible for school management, curriculum development, staff supervision, and improving the quality of learning and educational outcomes (Astuti, 2017). Budding principals must adapt to new challenges and learn practical ways to lead and inspire the school community, including teachers, students, and parents. Beginner school principals, especially in Boyolali Regency, face unique challenges in managing social capital because they are just starting their leadership careers. The social competencies a beginner principal requires include social sensitivity, the ability to assist others, communication, working together, and participation in social activities. They also need competence in shaping a learning vision, building a learning culture, creating a conducive learning environment, and establishing relationships with the school community (Bafadal, 2017).

Previous research (Raharso, 2016) shows that employees should rely on trust in their cooperative activities to justify their expectations of the benefits of knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is exchanging knowledge (such as information, skills, or expertise) among individuals, friends, family, communities, or organizations. This process is socially facilitated by social capital. The results of the analysis emphasize the importance of the relationship between trust and knowledge sharing and trust and knowledge sharing through social capital as mediators. As a result, trust is highly regarded as a critical driver of knowledge sharing. Another study (Maas, 2015) shows that social capital significantly influences governance in the Medan Coastal Area. Still, governance does not substantially influence the sustainable livelihood of coastal communities. Moreover, social capital significantly affects sustainable livelihoods. Understanding how budding principals utilize social capital can help design more effective professional development strategies for principals starting their careers. This research can also pave the way for further research on how social capital can be developed and utilized more effectively in the context of education at the local and national levels. This research explores the concept of social capital in beginner school principals in Boyolali Regency.

Research Methods

This study uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are scientific approaches used to understand and explain social phenomena or human behavior from a deep and descriptive point of view. Qualitative research focuses on the meaning, perception, and subjective interpretation of the collected information rather than numerical or statistical measurements (Rukin, 2019). The data collection technique in this study is studying literature obtained from Google Scholar and structured interviews with novice school principals in Boyolali Regency. The data that has been collected is then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The first stage is data reduction, where the data that has been collected is sorted, filtered, and simplified to make it

easier to process. The second stage is the presentation of data, where the reduced data is presented systematically and comprehensively. Finally, the conclusion-drawing stage results in a profound interpretation and understanding of the data.

Results and Discussion

Boyolali Regency is located in the Province of Central Java, Indonesia, with the capital city of Boyolali Regency. This regency is located about 25 km west of Surakarta City. Geographically, Boyolali is located between 110°22' - 110°50' East Longitude and 7°07' - 7°36' South Latitude, with an area of about 101,510.10 hectares. The district stretches from west to east for 48 km and from north to south for 54 km. It is bordered by several areas such as Grobogan Regency and Semarang Regency to the north, Karanganyar Regency, Sragen Regency, and Sukoharjo Regency to the east, Klaten Regency and D.I. Yogyakarta Province to the south, and Magelang Regency and Semarang Regency to the west. The Boyolali Regency comprises 22 sub-districts, including 261 villages and six sub-districts. Education in Boyolali Regency is a crucial aspect that can advance the region and help reduce the number of children who drop out of school. The public's view of education is very positive, where education is considered a way to achieve prosperity and improve social status. Students who succeed academically are deemed a more significant investment from their families in finance, human resources, and social capital than other ethnic groups (Wei, 2012). To optimize the effective functioning of schools, leadership roles in schools are essential, especially those performed by principals. The principal has a central role in this, where they act like the captain who steers the ship. The principal's responsibilities include controlling school operations and determining the direction of school development. They also set targets and objectives that must be achieved by the school, ensuring that all educational efforts are carried out according to the vision that has been set (Ma'rifati, 2020).

The principal's primary role is to ensure an environment that supports the teaching and learning process for everyone in the school, including teachers and other staff. Principals are responsible for the professional development of teachers, which has a significant impact on their duties and responsibilities, as well as on teacher growth and the overall school atmosphere (Bredeson, 2000). This means that effective school leadership dramatically influences how the system works in schools for students. Then, according to (Fink, 2006), one way to manage the success of school principals at the district level is to implement planned rotations. This strategy advocates policies to encourage the rotation of senior principals, thus providing opportunities for new principals to take on the role. The goal is to refresh school leadership, introduce new spirits, and inspire innovative ideas. This approach also supports efficiency in the change of principals, seeing it as a way to improve the quality of education in schools. Principal rotation can produce new principals who are beginners. A novice principal is an individual who holds a leadership position in a school for the first time and may need more experience in school management. The principal, who has just taken office for the first time, faces the challenge of directing the school toward effective learning. One of the main goals of schools in the 21st century is to develop students' cognitive, inter and intra-personal abilities. Increasing teachers' capacity and awareness of their learning process is

essential to achieve these goals. Beginner principals must combine individual and organizational development to encourage collaboration to create a "community of practice." In this community, teachers work together and learn through disciplined collaboration. This approach requires social capital, a network of relationships, and trust that facilitates cooperation (Harris, 2013).

Social capital is defined as the ability of people to work together in a group or organization by utilizing elements such as trust, norms, social networks, and reciprocity to achieve common goals through coordinated action (Ersozlu, 2018). Another opinion states that social capital is a sense of belonging in a group and social relationships that give social legitimacy to individuals to take actions aimed at achieving specific goals in a particular field. Social capital includes relationships that refer to or provide access to other economic and cultural resources. The greater the financial, artistic, and symbolic resources of the group that an individual has, and that can be referred to, the greater the social capital they have (Mikiewicz, 2021). Based on this definition, social capital relates to interconnectedness and reciprocal norms that individuals or groups can use to achieve common goals. In the school environment, social capital is formed through interaction between various parties involved in education, such as principals, teachers, staff, parents, students, and the local community. The social capital theory emphasizes the importance of components such as resource donors (those who provide resources), resource recipients (those who benefit from those resources), the social structure in which they both operate and the quality and quantity of resources available (Spillane, 2022). Understanding and optimizing social capital in schools can make it easier to achieve shared education goals, such as improving the quality of learning and student academic outcomes. According to previous research (Beausaert, 2023), the influence of social capital can support addressing the well-being and mental health issues of school principals who are threatened by changes in working conditions, such as a wider variety of roles and duties. The article emphasizes that social capital can serve as a buffer against the decline in mental health. Therefore, social capital has a vital role in helping to carry out tasks and reduce the burden on school principals, especially for those who are still beginners.

Substantial social capital can help novice school principals in Boyolali Regency carry out their duties more effectively. Substantial social capital is vital, including getting support and information. Beginner principals can leverage their social networks to get support and information from colleagues, parents, and other more experienced community members. Good social relationships help build trust among individuals, encouraging the exchange of information and ideas (Kilpatrick S, 2010). Community social relations also serve as a learning resource for beginner school principals. With a solid social network, novice principals can have greater access to information and valuable skills in carrying out their leadership duties. This helps improve their ability to use that information and skills to advance the school.
In addition, social capital can also help novice school principals open opportunities to build strong collaboration with various related parties in the school environment. Through the mutual relationships and trust built among members of the organization, such as teachers, staff, and parents, school principals can rally support and cooperation to improve the quality of education in schools. Family relationships and friendships in small organizations also contribute to internal social capital (Tanner, 2022).

This provides an additional dimension of familiarity and trust among the organization's members, which can strengthen collaboration and cooperation in achieving common goals. There is the use of social capital for novice school principals in building practical cooperation with various related parties, thereby improving the quality of education and expected school achievement. Another benefit of social capital is its ability to help budding principals overcome challenges. Social capital contributes to a company's resilience by serving as an information conduit, providing access to resources, improving the efficiency of information dissemination, and minimizing redundancy. As such, social capital provides access to a broader range of resources with timely information and practical business advice that can increase a company's capacity to handle unexpected disruptions (Jia, 2020). In addition, social capital also helps facilitate collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders within the school, which can help overcome challenges such as resistance to change and disciplinary issues. This means that by leveraging their social connections, budding principals can get support from various parties to deal with emerging challenges more effectively. These findings confirm that the active involvement of novice principals in building and utilizing social capital is a critical factor in creating a conducive and holistic learning environment for students. Schools that can express social solid capital will encourage student-centered learning, where students' individual needs, interests, and potentials are more maintained. The active involvement of novice principals in utilizing social capital can shape a school culture that supports and enriches the student learning experience.

Based on in-depth interviews with novice school principals in the Boyolali district, it was stated that social capital has been realized in schools in the Boyolali district, which is implemented in several ways, such as:

1. Cooperation with other organizations

    Bridging social capital tends to be built in more heterogeneous groups and has broader relationships with outsiders, such as government agencies, civil society, and the private sector. This naturally creates more opportunities for group members because they have more comprehensive access to outside resources (Kerr, 2018). Schools in Boyolali Regency have collaborated with various institutions and individuals with particular expertise, including villages, local MSMEs, health centers, and hospitals, to enrich the student learning experience. This collaboration with various parties brings additional benefits by providing more holistic and diverse educational services, positively impacting the student learning experience in Boyolali Regency schools.

2. Programs include parenting, the P5 program, and cooperation with local communities like Bruwun Alas.

    Programs such as parenting, the P5 program, and collaboration with local communities such as Bruwun Alas have been integrated into schools in Boyolali Regency. The integration of these programs expands the scope of learning beyond the classroom environment, providing students with a learning experience that is diverse and relevant to students' daily lives. Parenting programs involve parents in the process of educating their children. Through this program, parents are given an

understanding of the importance of children's education and given skills to support children's development at home. Meanwhile, the P5 program has been adopted by schools in Boyolali Regency to teach students the value of caring for the environment. Through practical activities and environment-based projects, students understand environmental sustainability and learn to be responsible citizens and care for the surrounding environment. In addition, schools in Boyolali Regency collaborate with local communities, such as Bruwun Alas, to enrich the student learning experience. Through this collaboration, students engage in activities centered on preserving nature and local culture, such as tree planting, visits to nature sites, or traditional art activities.

3. Integration of social capital in various aspects of KBM, including intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular.

Integrating social capital in various aspects of KBM, including intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular, is a strong foundation for student development. Schools in Boyolali Regency have integrated this to create a holistic learning environment and prepare students to become more socially, emotionally, and academically developed individuals. Integrating social capital in all aspects of KBM, schools in Boyolali Regency aim to create a supportive, inclusive, and empowering learning environment for all students. This includes helping students achieve academic success and forming caring, responsible individuals who can contribute positively to society.

4. Teachers' active involvement in social activities in the community strengthens the bond between the school and the surrounding environment.

Schools that have implemented social capital in their approach have brought the active role of teachers in social activities with the community. Teachers who are actively involved in community social activities also strengthen the bond between the school and the surrounding community. Teachers active in community social activities also often collaborate with external parties, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or local companies. Through these collaborations, teachers can expand the school's network, open doors to collaboration opportunities, and gain additional resources to support student learning.

So, by building positive relationships and getting support from various parties, such as students' parents, local communities, and government agencies, schools can provide students with a more enjoyable, meaningful, and relevant learning experience. These strong relationships with stakeholders can provide schools access to a wide range of resources, experiences, and opportunities that can be applied to classroom learning. Thus, managing resources from the surrounding environment through adequate social capital and networks is one of the essential strategies to improve the quality of education in schools and create a dynamic and quality learning environment for students.

Conclusion

Schools manifest solid social capital by supporting student-centered learning. Collaboration with various institutions and individuals with particular expertise, including

villages, local MSMEs, health centers, and hospitals, enriches the student learning experience. Programs such as childcare, the P5 program, and partnerships with local communities, such as Bruwun Alas, expand the scope of learning beyond the classroom setting. Integrating social capital in various aspects of KBM, including intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular, is a strong foundation for student development. Teachers' active involvement in community social activities strengthens the bond between the school and the surrounding environment. By building good relationships and getting support from various parties, schools can create a more meaningful and relevant learning experience for students. The primary resources in school development also come from the surrounding environment, which is well utilized through various partnerships and networks to support learning. The norms and values that apply in the surrounding community also affect the learning process, so teachers need to adjust their approach to suit the needs of students. Collaboration between various parties, including teachers, BOS treasurers, and school principals, in planning and evaluating learning programs is the key to the success of student-centered learning.

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