



UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE LENS OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between educational leadership and anthropological theories to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in educational leadership practices. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study aims to bridge the gap between traditional leadership studies and anthropological perspectives on culture, social structure, and meaning in the context of education. The research method involves analysing literature related to educational leadership theories and functionalism theory in anthropology. The results of this research indicate that an anthropological approach can help enrich understanding of educational leadership practices, particularly in terms of managing cultural diversity, analysing conflict in educational systems, and understanding the symbols of power in social interactions within educational environments. This research contributes to the literature on educational leadership by highlighting the importance of considering anthropological dimensions in the development of educational leadership theories and practices. The implications of this research also open up avenues for further research on the relationship between anthropology and educational leadership to enrich our understanding of dynamics within educational systems.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Educational System, Anthropology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key aspect of the development of society and culture. Educational leaders have a very important role in ensuring an effective and inclusive education system. However, to fully understand the role and function of educational leaders, we need to view them through an anthropological lens (Danugroho, 2020). Anthropology is the study of humans in their cultural, social, and historical context. When we apply an anthropological perspective to educational leaders, we can see how these leaders interact with their society, culture, and environment.

This helps us understand how educational leaders shape and are influenced by the social and cultural structures around them. In an anthropological view, educational leaders are not only individuals who manage educational institutions but also agents of cultural and social change (Koentjaraningrat, 1977). They must be able to understand and appreciate the diversity of cultures, values, and practices that exist in their society. By understanding this cultural and social context, educational leaders can create inclusive and empowering learning environments. Therefore, research on educational leaders from an anthropological perspective can provide valuable insight into how these leaders influence and are influenced by the culture and society around them.

Thus, this understanding can help us develop educational leadership practices that are more effective and responsive to the needs of diverse societies and cultures (Ryu & Boggs, 2016). Effective educational leaders in anthropological contexts must also understand concepts such as social justice, equality, and human rights. They must be able to work collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and local communities, to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all. In addition, educational leaders must also understand the role of technology and globalisation in shaping future education.

They must be able to utilise technology to improve the accessibility and quality of education while still paying attention to cultural and local values that are important to their communities. By adopting an anthropological approach, educational leaders can become more effective agents of change in building inclusive, equitable, and empowering education systems. Through research and a deeper understanding of the role and



function of educational leaders in cultural and social contexts, we can strengthen our education system for a better future.

2. METHODS

The type of research method used is qualitative research. This research aims to obtain objective, factual, accurate and systematic data and descriptions of how to view leadership in education that fits with anthropological concepts. In this research, the data sources used are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the source in question (Sugiono, 2015). Then, secondary data was obtained from related institutions and references regarding political identity. Data collection techniques in this research were carried out by collecting the results of interviews, observations and documentation studies. Meanwhile, data analysis in this research uses descriptive analysis through three steps: (1) Data Condensation; (2) Data Presentation; (3) Verification or Drawing Conclusions.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Leadership In Educational Contexts

Leadership in the context of education is a key pillar in directing and improving the quality of education. An educational leader is not only responsible for the administration and management of schools but also plays a role in creating an environment that supports effective learning processes. They must be able to understand the needs of individuals and communities, as well as develop strategies to improve the quality of education. An effective educational leader must also have good interpersonal skills (Peculea & Bocos, 2015). They must be able to communicate with all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community. Additionally, they must also be able to motivate and inspire others to achieve common goals.

In facing the challenges of modern education, an educational leader needs to have innovative and adaptive strategies. They must be able to identify emerging issues and find appropriate solutions. The ability to think creatively and make the right decisions is key in addressing the dynamics of education that continue to evolve. Transformational leadership is also important in creating positive change in the education system. Educational leaders who can influence and inspire others to change and develop will be able to create an innovative and highly competitive learning environment (Wall, 2001). Additionally, leadership in the context of education also involves the ability to build strong relationships with all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community.

An effective educational leader must be able to listen to and respond to the needs and expectations of these various parties. By building good relationships, educational leaders can create a harmonious and supportive environment for the entire educational community. The importance of leadership in education is also evident in curriculum development. An educational leader must be able to lead the development of relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the times (Ruffing et al., 2015). They must be able to identify the competencies that students should possess and develop effective learning strategies to achieve them. In facing complex and diverse educational challenges, an educational leader must also have the ability to think systematically.

They must be able to see the relationship between various components in the education system and take appropriate steps to improve the overall performance of the system. Distributive leadership refers to an approach where leadership responsibilities and decision-making are shared among various stakeholders, not just centralized in one individual or position (Rohman, 2009). Distributive leadership in education can encourage collaboration and active involvement from all members of the educational community, including teachers, school staff, students, and parents. By encouraging active participation from all parties, distributive leadership can create an inclusive and democratic learning environment, where everyone has a role and contribution that is valued.

Additionally, distributive leadership can also improve school performance and the overall quality of education. By sharing leadership responsibilities, leaders can focus more on long-term strategies and vision, while operational tasks can be carried out by team members with the relevant expertise and experience. However, to effectively implement distributive leadership, an organizational culture that supports collaboration and active



involvement from all parties is required. Leaders must be able to create an environment where people feel valued and supported to contribute maximally. Thus, distributive leadership is a potential approach to improving school performance and the overall quality of education. By sharing leadership responsibilities and activating participation from all parties, distributive leadership can create an inclusive, collaborative, and results-oriented learning environment.

Anthropological Concepts and Theories of Educational Leadership

Anthropology of leadership in education combines anthropological principles with leadership theories to understand how educational leaders interact with their social, cultural, and historical environments. This concept emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural contexts in building effective and inclusive leadership practices. One of the key theories in the anthropology of educational leadership is engagement theory. This theory highlights the importance of educational leaders' engagement with their communities. Educational leaders who are actively engaged with their local communities tend to be more successful in understanding and addressing the issues faced by their students and families (Säälük et al., 2015). Additionally, the anthropology of educational leadership also includes concepts such as cultural diversity, social justice, and equality.

Educational leaders must be able to appreciate and integrate diverse cultural values into their leadership practices, ensuring that all students have equal access to quality education. Educational leaders must also be able to understand and respond to social and cultural changes occurring in their communities. They must be flexible in designing and implementing education policies relevant to the needs and aspirations of their communities. Building on the concepts and theories of anthropology in educational leadership, it is also important to consider concepts such as lifelong learning and understanding the needs of individuals in their cultural contexts. Educational leaders should promote lifelong learning for all members of the educational community, including teachers, students, and parents, so that they can continue to develop and contribute positively to society (Danugroho, 2022).

Additionally, educational leaders must be able to understand the complexity of relationships between individuals, communities, and their environments. They must be able to bring about positive changes in their learning environment while respecting the cultural and social values important to their communities. The importance of anthropological concepts and theories in educational leadership also highlights the importance of a collaborative approach to decision-making. Educational leaders must be able to work with various stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the local community, to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment. Related to the concepts and theories of anthropology in educational leadership, it is also important to consider how educational leaders influence identity and the formation of individual identities (Bernard, 1994).

Educational leaders play a significant role in shaping students' self-perception and identity through the education they provide. In this context, educational leaders must be able to understand and appreciate the diversity of individual identities in their communities. They must create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, without discrimination based on cultural, ethnic, or social backgrounds. Additionally, the concepts and theories of anthropology in educational leadership also highlight the importance of educational leaders as agents of cultural change. Educational leaders must be able to lead by example, promote positive values, and build a school culture that supports individual learning and growth. Thus, by applying the concepts and theories of anthropology in educational leadership, educational leaders can bring about positive change in their education systems. They can create inclusive, empowering learning environments that are focused on the needs of individuals and their communities, thereby creating a better future for education for all.

The Role of Educational Leaders as Cultural Mediators

Culture is a powerful social factor that has influenced and continues to influence education throughout the world (Soto, S, 2015). According to Dewantara (1938), teaching or learning is required to provide general knowledge that is useful for students or learners to prepare for life in a state and society based on the principle of kinship. Education is not only about knowledge, skills and attitudes, through education it can represent and initiate students in traditions and ways of living and acting, such as cultural, political and religious traditions (Biesta, 2015). The types of educational curriculum related to this include: explicit curriculum, implicit



curriculum, and zero curriculum as well as the characteristics of the three types of curriculums, as well as the influence of socio-cultural and ethnic, political and educational forces and parties who have a stake. or influence in curriculum development (stakeholders), especially from the macro, miso and micro levels of education (Soto. S, 2015).

Having good and relevant cultural education can change the younger generation's perspective on the wider world around their social life or environment, and can have an impact on their future lives (Cultural Education A summary of Programs and Opportunities, 2013). Because culture also functions as a controlling mechanism in fostering social interaction in the process of actively adapting to the environment, in changing and creating a new environment that is more in line with physical needs and new cultural needs that emerge later (The Government's Role Cultural Development, 1996). Based on this, it can be said that the development of the curriculum and education taught and implemented in a country depends on the changes and progress of certain generations and the philosophical currents that dominate the population of that country at a certain time.

In particular, socio-political and cultural forces influence the development and development of the curriculum in a country. So national culture must be seen as something that is dynamic, continues to develop and can function as a guide towards development as a civilization. Efforts to advance diverse (multicultural) Indonesian culture will increase national unity and unity, and not the opposite, namely building narrow regional behavior. The Indonesian nation must be open, but also selective and able to adapt new materials that come from other cultures (The Government's Role Cultural Development, 1996). This can be implemented in the national education system as explained in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System as explained in Chapter III Article 4 concerning the Principles of Implementing Education which states that "Education is carried out democratically and fairly and non-discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism, as well as a process of acculturating and empowering students that lasts throughout life."

So multicultural education is needed in the education system and school curriculum, because multicultural education is focused on creating schools and their environments as places for students from various ethnic or ethnic backgrounds and different languages to get the same good education. In this case, every student, regardless of differences in race, culture, religion, gender and social class, is given the same opportunity to develop their potential (Raihani.R, 2017). Education plays an important role in shaping an individual's life in society. Educational institutions need to provide quality education to prepare students for future generations. Each organization or educational institution has different characteristics based on goals and responsibilities.

Likewise, every school has a unique culture, so culture is observed as a key aspect of the school that can improve and give meaning to various school activities (Ismail. M, Khatibi. A.A & Azam. S.M.F, 2022). Regarding cultural education in the Independent Learning Curriculum, it can be seen in the aspect of the scope of the material which is formulated based on scientific concepts and implemented in accordance with developments in science, technological advances, arts and culture. Apart from this, there is multicultural education which is applied to the principles of differentiated learning (various rates of child development, child backgrounds, including children with special needs), so teachers as facilitators are required to be able to facilitate students during learning in order to develop students' self-competence.

Multicultural learning in the principles of differentiated learning is considered important for curriculum development and education implementation in Indonesia as a multicultural country. Because the presence of a cultural perspective in the curriculum approach can lead to the view that the curriculum has an absolute focus on a determined culture or it can be said that cultural characteristics can be internalized in a certain way in curriculum development (Soto. S, 2015). With this, to be able to understand the different ethnic and cultural backgrounds of each student in differentiated learning, culturally relevant activities are needed to help students examine the similarities and differences between each other in the learning process (Carbaugh, B., Marzano R., & Toth. M, 2017).

In the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum learning, there is one of the principles of learning through a cultural approach which states that relevant learning, namely learning that is designed according to the context, environment and culture of students, and involving parents and the community as



partners (Anggraena. Y, et al, 2022). This learning principle emphasizes the teacher or educator as a student facilitator in the classroom, apart from this, teachers as professional educators are required to show awareness and sensitivity to social, cultural aspects and the needs of students as well as diverse or differentiated family backgrounds (Carbaugh, B., Marzano R., & Toth. M, 2017).

So, in other words, schools can be seen as institutions that can help social communities to face critical problems in contemporary life effectively (Tyler. R.W, 2013). Culture as a social factor that influences education also depends on the policies of leaders or political policy makers regarding the development of the Education Curriculum and National Education System. Political ideology plays an influential role in curriculum development in a country. The existence of policies related to educational issues is directly influenced by the politics and ideology of politicians, so that as a consequence, elimination or changes to educational programs and models can occur if political leaders and ideologies experience a shift in power or authority (Soto. S, 2015). So, the education and political systems are very closely linked and are always connected so that in this situation it can be seen that state politics plays a very important role in determining the direction of educational development in a country (Purwanto, N.A, 2008).

Political institutions and political processes in a country have a big impact on the characteristics of education in that country, so that there is a close and dynamic relationship between education and politics in every country (Sunarso, 2021). Based on this, the implementation and development of the national education curriculum in Indonesia is also influenced by political ideology and the role of policy makers in government because political ideology has a role that influences the development of the national education curriculum, which is explained in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the Education System. National Article 10 states that The government and regional governments have the right to direct, guide, assist and supervise the implementation of education in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. So that political institutions, especially political parties in power in a government, have influence regarding policies, especially in the education system and curriculum.

The existence of policies regarding the renewal of the education system resulting from the transfer of government power resulted in the elimination or change of educational programs and models that were deemed incompatible with the political ideology in power, especially state leaders. The role and influence of political ideology and political stakeholders who have influence on national education are studied through a historical perspective related to policies in the development of the national education curriculum, one of which is the local content curriculum development policy. With the LCC or local content curriculum policy, control over the curriculum is handed over to provinces, districts and schools, resulting in changes in the roles of individuals at all levels of the education system. However, the parties directly affected are the teachers. As emphasized by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the success of LCC depends on the efforts of class teachers.

Teachers or teachers, who were previously expected to function as policy agents, are required to act as "independent agents of change" (Bjork. C, 2003: 184). In the implementation and development of the Independent Learning Curriculum, there are policies related to learning principles that are correlated with cultural aspects, national identity, national ideology and national insight, namely in the Pancasila Student Profile. The Pancasila Student Profile is an elaboration of national education goals. Therefore, the position of the Pancasila Student Profile in national education policy is as a reference for designing National Education Standards (SNP). Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) refer to the Pancasila Student Profile, and then other standards refer to SKL (Anggraena. Y, et.al, 2020).

The Pancasila Student Profile was formulated through literature studies and discussions involving experts in the fields of Pancasila, inter-religious relations, educational policy, educational psychology and development, as well as educational stakeholders, so that the Pancasila Student Profile is a determinant of the direction of change and a guide for all stakeholders in making efforts improving the quality of education. Regarding efforts to improve the quality of national education, namely by making or forming Indonesian students or learners who are lifelong learners who are competent, have character and behave in accordance with Pancasila values and aim to achieve national education goals (Anggraena et al., 2020).



4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, we can conclude that, through an anthropological approach, educational leaders can gain a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities in forming an inclusive and empowering education system. By paying attention to the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which they operate, educational leaders can become more effective agents of change in advancing equitable, just, and empowering education. The importance of considering anthropological perspectives in understanding educational leaders also highlights the need for a holistic approach in developing educational leadership policy and practice. Educational leaders must be able to integrate cultural, social, and global values into their leadership practices so as to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment for all. Thus, a deeper understanding of educational leaders through an anthropological lens can help us improve our educational systems to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of diverse societies. In this way, we can ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity to access quality education and fulfill their full potential.

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