

# HEADMASTERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN MAKING DECISIONS THROUGH AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE APPROACH

Sowiyah

**Abstract:** Headmasters as leaders are responsible for the advancement of the organization of their schools. To commit their duties, they deal with more human than technical aspects. They have to use an emotional approach to making rapport with their subordinates in order to cooperate with them productively and emotionally. Effective competencies the headmasters should possess are building ties, collaboration and cooperation, and team ability. The team members should also make a cooperation through a healthy interaction, the interaction which enables them to make an in-depth, open debate, tested against others' critical opinions. The keywords in such a successful interaction is an emotional intelligence such as self-intelligence, empathy, and communication.

**Keywords:** leaders' effectiveness, headmasters, decision making, emotional intelligence, Elementary Schools.

A headmaster as an educational leader is responsible for the school organization she/he leads. Therefore, a headmaster is expected to be able to manage the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization such as values and integrity, commitments, self-discipline, sincerities and responsibilities (Coper & Sawaf, 1999; Krause, 2000).

The nature of leadership is a process to influence others in order to reach purposes. So, a headmaster should be able to make rapport, and lead teachers and school staffs. A success of a headmaster will be heavily dependent upon the quality of his/her leadership in influencing and cooperating with his/her other people or subordinates. According to Burhanuddin (1994), to formulize objectives or efforts at achieving objectives of a school organization, a headmaster should involve the teachers. Each organization member has equal rights and duties in formulizing each policy that will be made and implemented. Therefore in a process of decision making, each organization member should cooperate with one another in order to reach intended objectives.

The role played by a headmaster in making decisions is very vital. This role needs a social skill or skill at making rapport with other persons. This

skill basically is an art in handling others' emotions (Goleman, 1999). The social skill naturally is a basis for some skills: (1) *influence*, applying tactics of persuading effectively, (2) *communication*, sending messages in a clear and convincing way, (3) *conflict management*, negotiating and settling differences in opinions, (4) *leadership*, guiding and giving sources of inspirations, and (5) *catalysts of changes*, initiating, encouraging or managing changes.

Some studies on headmasters of elementary schools at Kota metro, indicate that the roles of headmasters are too dominant in the process of making decisions. The headmasters as the top management mostly made decisions at schools, while teachers are seen to be in low management, where they simply handle technical problems. According to Hoy and Miskel (1987), a good cooperation between the headmaster and the teachers will determine the success of the school as a whole.

Based on the descriptions above, the problems presented here are as follows: (1) how is the role of the headmaster in the process of decision making?; (2) what method and strategy are the most effective in the process of decision making?; and (3) how can an effective cooperation be created between the

headmaster and the teachers in the process of decision making?

### **THE ROLES OF HEADMASTERS IN DECISION MAKING**

One of the efforts made by the headmaster to build rapport with their subordinates productively and effectively is to manage rapport using an emotional approach (Goleman, 1999). According to Bass (1987 in Yulk, 1991), the nature of leadership is the cooperation between one member with another to reach the objectives of the organization, so, the headmaster should have capability in making rapport with his subordinates.

According to Gardner (1999) a headmaster should have a high personal intelligence consisting of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligences are abilities in understanding other persons dealing with what motivates them, how they work, and how to work together with them. while intrapersonal intelligences are correlative abilities, leading to the one's self. The abilities are the ones to create a detailed self-model and to refer to one's ability in using the model as a means to commit this life effectively.

Salovey (in Goleman, 1995) widens the concept of Gardner's personal intelligence into five main areas namely (1) recognition of self-emotion, (2) managing emotions, (3) motivating ones' self, (4) recognition of others' emotions and (5) making rapport. Failures in applying the personal intelligence may make a headmaster difficult in creating an effective leadership in his/her school. This fact may be found out at most headmasters of elementary schools when they treated subordinates who made mistakes when doing the assigned duties. Such a treatment at last may influence the subordinates' further performances.

In the process of making decisions, the roles the headmasters play are very vital. These roles need social skills or skills at making rapport with other persons. Efforts made by headmasters in making rapport with others, as proposed by Gardner (1993) include five activities. First, organizing groups is a skill essential for a leader to initiate and coordinate anything to mobilize other people. Second, negotiating solutions is one of the talents of the leaders as a mediator in preventing or solving emerging conflicts. Third, personal relation is a talent that should be possessed by a leader concerning empathy and making rapport. He or she may see others' emotions from their facial expressions so he or she can appropriately respond to others' feelings. Fourth,

social analysis is a leader's ability in detecting and fifth possessing understanding about others' feelings, motives and concerns.

It is in line with Goleman's statement (1999) that a headmaster as a leader should be able to apply the social skills to his/her subordinates using five competencies. First, influence is a competency in using a persuasion tool effectively. Second, communication is a competency in listening openly and sending messages in a convincing way. Third, conflict management is a competency in negotiating and settling disagreement in an organization. Fourth, leadership is a competency in inspiring and guiding an individual or a group. Fifth, catalyst of changes is a competency in initiating, encouraging or managing changes in an organization.

### **METHODS AND STRATEGIES IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING**

Decision making is a process of consideration through certain steps to reach an end namely the implementation of the results of the decisions in the organization. According to some experts, there are some steps conducted in the process of decision making.

According to Robbins (1984), some steps exist in the process of decision making namely (1) understanding the needs for decision, (2) preparing criteria, (3) allocating criteria, (4) developing alternative solutions, (5) evaluating alternative solutions, and (6) selecting the best alternative. Yulk (1991) states that the steps in making decisions are as follows (1) preparing agenda/schedule, (2) preparing problems, and (3) diagnosing and making solutions. Moreover, Hoy and Miskel (1987) states that decision making is to (1) organize and determine problems, (2) analyse troubles in the existing situation, (3) apply criteria, (4) develop plans and strategies of action, and (5) start implementing the action plan.

If the processes of the decision making above are integrated, they will result in the process involving the formulation of problems, identification of alternative problems, determination of criteria, testing alternative solutions, choosing the best alternative solution and implementation of the results of decisions. In practice, sometimes the process the administrator takes is done without an adequate process of decision making. The process is made simply from the inputs or problems faced and outputs or solutions are directly produced. This results in a random process of decision making.

Moreover, in the process of decision making, there are four types of strategies (Blau & Scott,

1962): (1) computational strategy, a decision making if there is an agreement in objectives and the ways of reaching them, (2) judgment strategy, a decision making if there is an agreement in objectives but no adequate knowledge exists in reaching them, (3) compromise strategy, a decision making if there is an agreement in reaching various objectives except objectives having the main priorities, and (4) inspirational strategy, a decision making if there is no agreement either in the objectives or the ways in achieving them. So, according to Mann (1974), in strategies in making decisions, two things should be taken into account, namely, whether there is agreement about the objective and about the ways to reach the objectives. If in an agreement the two do not exist, there will be a conflict.

To control conflicts at schools is heavily determined by the headmaster's ability as a manager. Using his/her influence and authority, a headmaster may empower all human resources existing at school to improve the effectiveness of the organization. Goleman (1999) states that to handle conflicts emerging in an organization, one should possess competencies at such as (1) engaging a diplomacy and using tactics in handling persons in a tense condition, (2) identifying anything resulting conflicts, settling different opinions openly and helping cool down the situation, (3) suggesting debates and discussion openly and (4) guiding to solutions that can be accepted by all or win-win solutions.

In controlling and managing emerging conflicts, a leader should also be able to identify methods of effective decision making. Johnson and Johnson (1991) state that there are seven methods of decision making usually applied in an organization, namely, (1) decisions through authority without group discussions, (2) decisions by experts, (3) decisions through equalization of individuals' opinions, (4) decisions through authority after group discussions, (5) decisions by minorities, (6) decisions by majorities, and (7) decisions through consensus. Of the seven methods, consensus is the best method to produce an innovative, creative and qualified decision since (1) all members will implement the decisions, (2) they sue all resources from all group members existing in the organization, and (3) they increase effectiveness of future decision making.

The decisions made through consensus sometimes seem as a synergic ones, because each group member cooperates together in reaching a more qualified decision than the one obtained when each individual works separately. To reach such a consensus in decisions, the group members should understand different opinions as one way to collect

additional information, clarify issues, and have groups look for better alternatives.

Moreover, Johnson and Johnson (1991) suggest a basic guide intended for someone that will make decisions using consensus.

1. Avoid blind debates on your opinion. Place your position as clear and logic as possible, but, listen to reactions given by other members and consider their reactions carefully before conveying your intentions.
2. Avoid changes in opinions simply to reach agreements and avoid conflicts. Support your solutions that may be agreed upon. Produce solutions in an objective and logical position.
3. Avoid conflict of procedure reduction such as majority voice for balances and bargains.
4. Look for differences in opinions, because it may be natural and expected. Try to involve every person in the process of decision making. Disagreement may result in betterment of group decisions since they give various types of wide information and opinions. Therefore, a better opportunity for groups to find better solutions may exist.
5. Don't think that some people should win and some others would lose when a discussion gets stuck. However, find other alternatives that may be accepted by most group members.
6. Discuss main assumptions, listen to others' opinions carefully and encourage participation of all members.

#### **EFFORTS AT CREATING COOPERATION BETWEEN HEADMASTERS AND TEACHERS IN MAKING DECISIONS THROUGH AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Goleman (1995) states that bases of social intelligences include group works, open communication lines, cooperation, sharing sincere opinions. Moreover, Goleman (1999) states that there are some competencies that should be possessed by an effective headmaster to make a social coordination, namely (1) building rapport, a skill in growing an instrumental rapport, (2) collaboration and cooperation, a skill in making a cooperation with other persons in order to reach common objectives, and (3) team ability, an ability in creating a synergy in cooperation to reach group purposes.

Making decisions in a cooperative way may cause paradoxes. On the one hand, there is a wise rule stating that the freer and heater a debate, the better the final result will be. On the other hand, an open conflict may erode the team ability in cooperation.

Researches on decisions making in management teams show that the persons with a good quality in cognitive ability, insights and experiences may produce high qualified decisions. But Goleman (1999) states that intellectual intelligences and experiences are not enough. The team members should also work together through healthy interactions, interactions that may result in debates that are in-depth, open, and tested by everyone's critical opinions. Actually, the key lies in the emotional intelligences such as self-awareness, empathy, and communication.

### **Self-Awareness**

Self-awareness is one's ability in understanding one's condition, preferences, resources and intuition (Goleman, 1999). Self-awareness is a basic skill vital for some emotional skills. First, awareness of emotion, namely one's ability in understanding how the influence of emotion is on one's performance and in using self-value to guide decision makings. Second, accurate self-evaluation is a sincere feeling on ones' strengths and limitations, a clear vision on something that needs to be improved and ability in learning something from experiences. Third, self-confidence is a bravery coming from certainties of ones' ability, values and objectives.

A headmaster may be said to have a high awareness of emotion if he/she (1) understands which emotion he/she feels and why this happens, (2) realizes an interrelation between his/her feelings and what he/she thinks about, acts, says, (3) understands how his feelings influence his/her performance, (4) possesses an awareness serving as a guide for his/her own values and objectives. However, a headmaster possessing an accurate self-evaluation will (1) realize his/her strengths and weaknesses, (2) allocate time to reflect and learn from past experiences, (3) be open to sincere feedback, be willing to accept new insights, to learn and develop himself/herself, (4) be capable of showing senses of humors and see himself with wide perspectives. The last is that a headmaster is said to have a self confidence if he is (1) brave to appear in front of the audience with a full self-confidence, (2) brave to convey unpopular opinions and willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of truth, and (3) firm and capable of making good decisions although uncertainty and tension exist. In fact, in the field it is still difficult to find a profile of a headmaster with such a high self-awareness. This is due to the fact that a headmaster of an elementary school should always obey the prevailing rules. To solve this problem, it is the responsibility of the local Department of Education

for giving an understanding about management of self-competency through trainings or workshops of headmasters.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is one of realization of social intelligences serving as a social radar (Goleman, 1999). According to Goleman, the essence of the empathy is an ability in sensing someone's feelings before he or she says them. A headmaster with a high social radar is sensitive to his/her subordinates' feelings, so that he/she can adjust his/her behaviors to their needs. If such an adjustment of behavior lasts harmoniously between the headmaster and teachers, it is expected that the teachers' responses to the headmaster will be positive.

There are four skills that should be possessed by a headmaster in order to be able to give an empathy (Goleman, 1999). First, an ability to understand others. Understanding others is to sense others' feelings and perspectives and actively show concerns to their interests. In order to be able to understand others, it is necessary to have skills in (1) paying attention to emotional cues and listening to them well, (2) showing sensitivity and understanding to others' perspective, and (3) giving a help based on an understanding about others' needs and feelings. Second, service orientation. Empathy can be shown by the headmaster's behavior as a supervisor. The skills that should be possessed by a supervisor are ability in (1) understanding teachers' needs, (2) looking for various alternatives to increase teachers' work satisfaction, and (3) giving appropriate helps. Third, ability in developing others. The empathy is shown through a willingness to help develop teachers' potential by sensing and growing their abilities. Some skills that should be possessed are (1) admitting and appreciating strengths, development and success by giving rewards, (2) giving various opportunities to the teachers to grow and develop throughs for example, trainings and seminars. Fourth, managing diversity. In a school community, the headmaster faces subordinates with various backgrounds, such as ethnics, sexes, religions, intelligences, values and the like. The headmaster should be able to show an empathy to the whole school community through (1) skills in making rapports by respecting every person, (2) ability in seeing a diversity as an opportunity to create a conducive environment, (3) ability in accepting differences in opinions and sensitive to the differences among groups, and (4) ability in controlling a discriminative attitudes.

## Communication

Communication plays an important role in an organization as a part of efforts at organizing all resources to reach objectives of the organization. Dealing with the job, an important role of communication is shown by a large amount of time used for communication. Goleman (1999) states that to be a good communicator, one should be able to control one-self, namely an emotional intelligence of self, and stay cool, namely an ability in controlling one-self, in staying calm, being controlled and being patient in communication.

To communicate effectively between the headmaster and the teachers or other subordinates, it is necessary to build a harmony in emotion or feelings. Therefore, according to Goleman (1999) a skillful person in communication possesses characteristics such as (1) being effective in taking and giving and including emotional cues in their messages, (2) facing difficult problems without delay, (3) listening to others well, trying to understand and be willing to share information, and (4) promoting an open communication and being willing to hear either bad or good news.

The ability in communication may be developed through (1) training on effective communica-

tions, by using linguistic intelligence and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, (2) self-introspection whether the communication is good or bad, (3) promoting guidance to less ability-communication teachers in the classrooms, for example by supervision, and (4) application of an emotional intelligences related to a communication aspects, such as an art to influence others and a social art.

## CONCLUSION

The roles played by a leader in decision makings are very vital. These roles need social skills which are basically an art in handling others' emotions. The social skills serve as a basis for some competencies namely, influence, communication, conflict management, leadership and catalyst of change, namely initiating, encouraging or managing changes. Other competencies that should be possessed by a leader are building rapports, collaboration and cooperation, and team ability.

Headmasters should possess personal intelligences consisting of inter- and intra-personal intelligences. In order to create cooperation between the headmaster and the teachers in decision making, an emotional intelligence, consisting of self-awareness, empathy and communication, should be possessed.

## REFERENCE

- Blau, P.M. & Scott, W.R. 1962. *Formal Organization*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company.
- Buford, J.A. & Bedeian, A.G. 1988. *Management in Extension*. Alabama: Alabama cooperative Extension Service.
- Burhanuddin. 1994. *Analisis Administrasi, Manajemen dan Kepemimpinan Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Coper, K.R. & Sawaf, A. 1999. *Executive EQ*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Gardner, H. 1993. *Frame of mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. 1999. *Intelligence reframe for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goleman, D. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. 1999. *Working with Emotional Intelligences*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Hoy, W.K. & Miskel, C.G. 1987. *Educational Organization: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Random House.
- Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. 1991. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Krause, D.G. 2000. *The Way of the Leader*. Jakarta: PT Elex Media Komputindo.
- Stogdill, R.M. 1984. *Handbook of Leadership*. New York: Free Press.
- Yulk, G.A. 1991. *Leadership in Organization* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.