

The Influence of Principal Assertive Behavior in Overcoming the Spread of the Covid-19 Virus in Elementary Schools in West Manggarai, Indonesia

Abdul Majir
{ abdulmajir@gmail.com }

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, Indonesia

Abstract. The principal is the leader of the school. Leaders must be able to display good behaviour to win hearts, minds, and emotions and drive the behaviour of teachers and staff to realise the school's vision/mission. One of the behaviours for the success of a leader is the application of assertive behaviour in his leadership. This study aims to describe the characteristics of the principal's assertive behaviour and the application of assertive behaviour as a school principal during the COVID-19 crisis at ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Merombok West Manggarai. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. They collected data using the method of observation, interviews, and documents. Data analysis and interpretation using the Miles and Huberman model (data reduction, data presentation, decision-making, and verification). The validity of the data using triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study conclude that principals behave assertively, which is characterised by (1) delivering and receiving information, opinions, criticism, praise, needs, and feelings that indicate assertive behaviour skills and (2) broadly speaking, interactions made by principals show positive personalities, including openness, straightforwardness, and respect. The application of the principal's assertive behaviour is manifested in (1) idealism and consistency in deciding and carrying out agreements, (2) caring for others and responsiveness to problems, and (3) not discriminating between seniors and juniors in interacting. So, because of the cohesiveness of the school community, none of the teachers, staff, and students exposed to the COVID-19 virus in Elementary School broke into West Manggarai. The results of this study imply that the principal can change assertive behaviour in his leadership so that he is successful in leading educational institutions in the period before, during, and after covid -19.

Keywords: assertive behaviour, Covid-19, principal

1 Introduction

The behaviour of educational leaders when facing various situations, especially during the Coronavirus (Covid 19), is very diverse, both formal and informal, relatively the same. Things often debated among the public are related to the quality and balance of education management. The spread of the Coronavirus or the Covid-19 pandemic has become a challenge for primary education institutions to universities. The learning process carried out online from home requires commitment and coordination from schools and parents to continue as expected. Regarding the implementation in the [1] and [2] education units, it is necessary to

pay attention to (a) the age and developmental stages of students in students; and (b) achievement of curriculum competence, meaningfulness, and learning benefits of Basic Education and Secondary Education including special education programs and equality education. This idea certainly requires interpersonal communication of the principal in organisational life, which is more about the behaviour of subordinates or teachers and other education personnel.

In interpersonal relations, a person's behaviour towards others can be grouped into assertive, submissive, and aggressive behaviour [2]–[5]. When someone behaves generously, it can become a problem for other people who see it, do not care, lose self-esteem, do not take a stand, ignore the opinions, thoughts, and needs of others, and always defend their own opinions and thoughts. Personal needs are prioritised, then this is what matters. This idea is called submissive behaviour. As for people who only prioritise their rights, interests, and needs and their own will, it is called aggressive behaviour. Where people who have aggressive behaviour in their minds only themselves are right and don't care about other people's thoughts, while assertive behaviour is a wise person in terms of interests, needs, opinions, thoughts, and feelings, always pays attention to people before him, always gives an appreciation of the advantages of another prang. This concept is where the war of leaders encourages teamwork and coordination according to each person's skills, knowledge, and attitude. Combination, coordination, integration, and synchronisation of creative initiatives, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and experience of members (knowledge management) are needed to solve problems faced by schools during the Covid-19 period. All stakeholders demand a sense of belonging (self-belonging), proactive action, transparency, responsibility (responsibility), and accountability (accountability), as well as empathy for mutual understanding, compassion, honing, and nurturing (cohesivity) among members [6]–[10]. Herein lies a school principal's significant role in implementing and exercising his leadership well during a crisis like this. In the literature, three leadership best practices are described for navigating the unexpected adaptive challenges posed by the Coronavirus: adopting servant leadership, distributing leadership responsibilities across a network of teams throughout the organisation, and communicating clearly to all stakeholders [11].

Industry 4.0 technology and its application during the covid-19 pandemic were carried out with the requirements of face masks, gloves, and promptly collecting information for the health care system [12], [13]. The era of industry 4.0 has changed the way people use the term "Ubiquity", which is interpreted everywhere and anytime internet/web technology is available [14], [15]. One way to improve the quality of competitive competencies is to think analytically, critically, and creatively and be able to solve social problems that occur both locally, nationally, and internationally.

To overcome the gap from previous research, the main focus (grand theory) of the research is the influence of principal assertive behavior in overcoming the spread of the Covid-19 virus at Merombok Elementary School, Komodo sub-district, West Manggarai Regency, Indonesia. To obtain a substantive theory, 1) How are the characteristics of the assertive behaviour of the elementary school principal breaking down West Manggarai (a) before covid -19, (b) during covid-19, and (c) after Covid -19, 2) How to apply assertive behaviour principal at Merombok Elementary School, West Manggarai, Indonesia. This research is expected to obtain substantive theories related to the problem. It can explain the concept of assertive behaviour of school principals and education leaders and the effect of differences in the behaviour characteristics of school principals comprehensively before, during, and after Covid-19 at Merombok Elementary School, Komodo sub-district, West

Manggarai district. This research contributes to other schools still providing minimum standard services to all stakeholders even in a crisis/emergency.

2 Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a multi-case design to reveal the principal's assertive behaviour, which is the focus of the problem faced. Multi-case research is used by researchers when dealing with several cases that are in the same background as one another [16]. Data were obtained through interviews, observation, and document studies. They collected data by interviewing school principals, observing the implementation of leadership management, and documenting studies. Data analysis was conducted inductively with an interactive model, while triangulation techniques were used for data validation [17].

This research is expected to obtain substantive theories related to the assertive behaviour of principals so that they can contribute to the literature as an alternative to solving similar problems.

3 Results and Discussion

Assertive behaviour is an expression/statement of interests, needs, opinions, thoughts, and feelings, which is carried out wisely, fairly, and effectively so that our rights can be maintained while still paying attention to respect for equality and the rights of others. Combination, coordination, integration, and synchronisation of creative initiatives, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and experience of members (knowledge management) are needed to solve the problems faced. In Covid-19, schools need assertive leadership that makes a person more confident and feels valuable, has the right self-concept, increases self-control in everyday life, and gains fair relations with others. This assertive behaviour is an antidote to the leadership crisis in the Covid-19 situation. The ability of school principals to develop assertive behaviour can minimise the impact of COVID-19 on students, fellow teachers, and parents of students. As Covid-19 is an emerging disease, more work is needed to improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies for COVID-19.

In overcoming or preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus, there are several efforts by the principal of Merombok Elementary School, West Manggarai to manage educational institutions through several policies that are implemented:

First, before the Covid-19 crisis, school principals always directed teachers and staff to be able to implement school programs effectively, establish humanistic relationships between schools and the wider community, establish appropriate communication to direct school programs, foster local cultural values with teachers and Parents of students, Pioneering spirit (avant-garde) (Results of principal interview December 2 2021). Our principal cooperates with the school committee, seeks additional funds for additional teacher salaries in afternoon lessons, and participates in the construction of an arts and culture studio with the school committee; the principal applies discipline to teachers, staff, and students to increase people's trust parents to send their children to school, initiating the *lonto léok* culture, *padir wai rintuk sai, ca nai neka woleng tombo* (consultation to determine a unanimous decision) This is done so that creative ideas are right on target and ready to be implemented

Second, during the Covid-19 crisis (During crisis), the principal of Meromok Elementary School, West Manggarai gave preventive directions to students, teachers, and staff to jointly prevent the Coronavirus through announcements or the distribution of poster sheets.

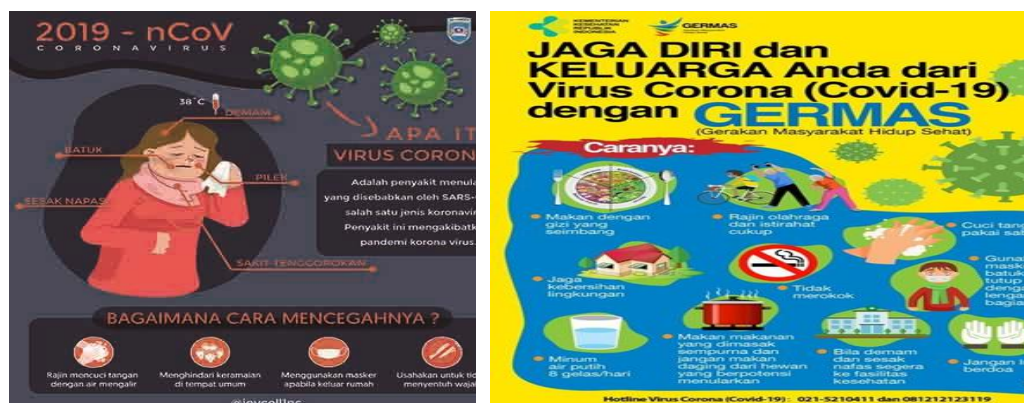


Figure 1: Covid-19 Prevention Poster at Merombok Elementary School

This activity was carried out on November 25, 2021, led directly by the principal of Merombok Elementary School. This activity is an education through posters containing knowledge about COVID-19, how to prevent it, and how to wash hands properly. Participants were divided into groups accompanied by two facilitators: a teacher and a village midwife. This activity was attended by 48 children who were divided into four groups. Each group consists of 8 students and two assistants. Before the training, participants were taught about the dangers of the COVID-19 virus. All groups carry posters containing educational materials, which include: 1) Take care of yourself and your family from the covid-19 virus: eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly and get enough rest, wash your hands with soap, keep your environment clean, do not smoke, and use masks. Alternatively, cover your mouth using the inside of your upper arm if you cough, drink eight glasses of water per day, eat perfectly cooked food if you have a fever and shortness of breath, go to a health facility immediately, and do not forget to pray (Interview result: Merombok Elementary School Teacher, November 30, 2020, in line with one of the Elementary School Committee teachers explained: In elementary school, the principal always reminds all teachers, students, and staff as well as guests/community to always wear masks both at school and in the community (Interview results November 30 2021).

Based on the interview results, it can be interpreted that by providing proper knowledge about Covid-19, the principal has given a good message to the school organisation and anticipated false actions or information (hoaxes). In terms of preventing Covid-19, Merombok Elementary School, through 3 ways, namely using the services of 1) doctors and village midwives (Bides) to educate school residents to be afraid of the Covid-19 virus, 2) study from home policies, 3) zoom. Muhammad During Covid-19, the learning policy issued by the principal gave the freedom to manage teaching and learning activities using both online and offline networks. Offline means teachers who visit students at home in groups to ensure comfort for learning.

Based on the author's observations, each class always has a poster that reads: Take care of yourself and your family from the covid-19 virus, eat with balanced nutrition, be diligent in exercising and get enough rest, wash your hands with soap, keep the environment clean, use a

mask or cover your mouth if you cough. Moreover, do not forget to pray that it is posted on the classroom wall.

Third, after the Covid-19 crisis (crisis), conduct a meeting to evaluate the significant impact of the Covid-19 crisis, congratulate all parties for having managed to get out of the crisis, and scan for issues that might happen again. This idea shows that solid leadership is essential for school success. Successful schools consistently demonstrate substantial aspects of effective school leadership. They start with the leadership of an assertive principal with a collaborative approach to leading the school. High response to environmental changes causes schools to be sensitive to the problems faced by their institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has created several opportunities for positive change. To maintain good habits after Covid-19, the school requires students to maintain cleanliness every morning, clean the classroom and outside the classroom, and have clean water to wash their hands before entering class every night. In addition, every student is always disciplined in cleaning themselves with soap. Based on the author's observations at Elementary School, when breaking into West Manggarai, every disciplined student brings mineral drinking water and snacks from their homes. Before entering class, they always wash their hands.

In general, the policies issued by the principal, both in writing and verbally, are carried out well by teachers, staff, students, and parents around the school. The behavioural characteristics of the elementary school principal breaking down West Manggarai before Covid-19, during Covid-19, and after Covid-19 are following Alberti and Emmons' assertive concept, namely (1) Providing information, (2) Seeking information, (3) Giving Opinions, (4) Reflecting on Message Content, (5) Giving Criticism or Praise, (6) Accepting Criticism or Praise, (7) Expressing Needs, (8) sharing feelings, (9) Reflecting Feelings, (10) being able to give clear decision. Based on these characteristics can be explained, namely:

- (a) Providing information the principal provides information using oral and text delivery. Depending on the situation and conditions, and needs. Submission of Information used by the principal is assessed systematically. This concept makes it easier for recipients of information to capture the information and minimise the occurrence of misunderstandings. This information is only once conveyed to some teachers. The principal provides information according to his responsibilities and duties to avoid focusing on information in carrying out his obligations. The principal's statement based on the discussion gives a firm impression, keeps the discussion open, allows new information, and makes decisions that are more likely to be carried out. Information is conveyed without loud tones so that the desired message can be adequately conveyed. In communication theory, the clarity of information and the method of delivering information messages must be appropriate to be received correctly.
- (b) Seeking information, the principal is a figure not only providing information but also seeking information. The principal dug up the information to get a report on the progress of the program or the responsibility of the teachers. On the other hand, principals also receive information from teachers through consultation or coordination. The principal has reflected the attitude of respect as someone seeking information related to the school. As a leader, a caring attitude towards the welfare of subordinates and the organisation is a form of assertive leadership,
- (c) giving an opinion; giving an opinion from the principal is conveyed through individual communication and in forums. Submission of opinions discusses matters still in the corridor of the Covid-19 problem at school. This opinion can provide solutions and views for teachers in schools. According to Diana Cawood, the hallmark of assertive behaviour is to express opinions firmly without offending other people's feelings,

- (d) Reflecting the content of the message, the principal has a personality that listens to the aspirations of others. The opinions of their subordinates are often accommodated and considered), indicating that the principal has an attitude of listening and respecting the rights and opinions of others. In the book A to Z Dictionary of Psychology, he defines assertiveness also has actions that protect and respect the rights of others,
- (e) Giving Criticism or Praise the delivery of criticism and praise by the head of the madrasa is a form of respect for a leader towards his subordinates. In addition to being assertive, assertiveness has the principle of respect or respect for others. Submission of criticism and praise of the madrasa principal has the impression of a non-judgmental interaction. The head of the madrasa said directly,
- (f) Accepting Criticism or Praise, the principal is an open figure for criticism. This attitude is considered a performance appraisal in itself. The school principal responds to criticism based on whether it is true. On the one hand, the principal wisely apologises if he feels wrong and, on the other hand, will straighten criticism when there are inappropriate comments. The attitude of openness to criticism or input is the key to maintaining interaction and avoiding being aggressive toward others.
- (g) Expressing the need personally, the principal has not stated the need to others. The needs conveyed are often school related. This idea is supported by a teamwork culture at school so that the tasks and obligations are manageable. Professionally, the principal places himself in conveying needs. That is, these needs are things that are only related to work,
- (h) Sharing feelings, the principle of sharing his feelings is applied to personal and public interactions. Emotionally, the principal interacts in a relaxed and unemotional manner. This idea often results in informal chats. The expression of feelings conveyed by the principal is a feeling of pleasure or displeasure with the work of himself and his subordinates. To be assertive, share the feelings experienced, including the expressive part that gives the impression of honesty in oneself,
- (i) Reflecting Feelings, the principal is open to teachers who convey their feelings. This openness is a reflection of being able to understand or be aware of the situation of others through conveying their feelings.

The author's findings, conceptually about giving and receiving skills in assertive behaviour, several concepts have been applied by school principals. In general, the interaction has an attitude of openness, conveys what it is, and shows an attitude of respect, as the definition of assertive behaviour conveyed by Sam R Lloyd. In terms of feedback, the impact is shown from the interaction above. The author found the advantages of assertive behaviour: openness between principals and teachers and teacher satisfaction with their leadership. Generally, the relationship between school principals and teachers is good before, during, and after Covid-19. This is because the principal actively responds to problems around him and communicatively interacts to avoid miscommunication. Table 1 shows the details of the principal's assertive behaviour during the covid-19 pandemic.

Table 1. The details of the principal's assertive behaviour during the covid-19 pandemic

Assertive Behavior	Principal's Behavior		
	Before Covid-19	During Covid-19	After Covid-19
Self-disclosure	Carry out the role of the school principal	Self-improvement/improvement	Self-improvement by harming others
Respect for others	Too expressive	Tendency to hold back	Expressive
Honest and direct	Can achieve the desired goals	Can achieve the desired goals	Can achieve the desired goals
It does not differentiate but benefits all parties	Vote for others	Choice for yourself	Choices from others
Have verbal communication skills that can be learned	Firm, wise and humanist	Not assertive, anxious, be careful	Firm, wise and humanist
flexible of thoughts and feelings, and without any anxiety	Understanding/aware of other people's situations/states	Understanding/aware of other people's situations/states	Understanding/aware of other people's situations/states
able to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others	The flexibility of thoughts and feelings, and without any anxiety	Appreciate the perpetrator	flexible of thoughts and feelings, and without any anxiety
Able to give and receive information	Can achieve his wishes	Not achieving the desired goals	Can achieve his wishes
Able to make clear decisions.	Able to give and receive information	Unable to give and receive clear information	Able to give and receive information
	Execute as expected	Implementing decisions that do not meet expectations	Execute as expected

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of research data on the Assertive behaviour of principals at Merombok Elementary School, it can be concluded that principals at Merombok Elementary School tend to be characterised by (a) submission and recipients of several components in the form of information, opinions, criticism, praise, needs and feelings that have the potential to have indications of assertive behaviour skills and (b) in general, the interactions that have been described by the principal show positive personalities including openness, conveying what is and showing respect during the Covid-19 crisis so that no school community is exposed Covid-19 virus. Second, the assertive behaviour of the leader at Merombok Elementary School is manifested in (a) the idealistic attitude and consistency of the principal in deciding and carrying out agreements, (b) A figure who respects or cares for others so that he becomes a person who is quick to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, (c) As a leader, the principal does not discriminate between seniors and juniors in interacting so that students, teachers, and staff can overcome the spread of the Covid-19 virus both in schools and in the surrounding school environment. By clarifying the principal's assertive behaviour, this study suggests that school principals sharpen their leadership capacity and can apply assertive behaviour characteristics to stakeholders to become leaders with positive behaviour,

one of which is assertive behaviour. This study contributes to the need for adequate training for school principals as mitigation in dealing with similar cases in the future.

Acknowledgements. Thank you to the research and community service institutions of the Indonesian Catholic University of Santu Paulus Ruteng, who contributed to this research.

References

- [1] J. R. O. Cabardo, "Levels of Participation of the School Stakeholders to the Different School-Initiated Activities and the Implementation of School-Based Management," *J. Inq. Action Educ.*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 2016, 2016.
- [2] C. Sunaengsih, M. Anggarani, M. Amalia, S. Nurfatmala, and S. D. Naelin, "Principal Leadership in the Implementation of Effective School Management," *Mimb. Sekol. Dasar*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 79, 2019, doi: 10.17509/mimbar-Elementary School.v6i1.15200.
- [3] W. N. Saputra, A. Supriyanto, P. S. Rohmadheny, B. Astuti, Y. Ayriza, and S. Adiputra, "European Journal of Educational Research," *Eur. J. Educ. Res.*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 485–496, 2016, doi: 10.12973/eu-jer.10.1.
- [4] G. Anli, "The Mediator Role of Authenticity in the Relation between Submissive Behaviors and Internet Addiction," *Malaysian Online J. Educ. Technol.*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 11–21, 2019, doi: /10.17220/mojet.2019.03.002.
- [5] A. Mert, "Parent attitudes and submissive behaviors in adolescents as social anxiety predictors," *Educ. Res. Rev. Full*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 46–52, 2022, doi: 10.5897/ERR2021.4196.
- [6] A. Bandur, "Stakeholders' responses to school-based management in Indonesia," *Int. J. Educ. Manag.*, vol. 32, no. 6, pp. 1082–1098, 2018, doi: 10.1108/IJEM-08-2017-0191.
- [7] S. Sujasan and U. B. Wibowo, "The survival of school financing management in COVID-19 pandemic," *J. Educ. Learn.*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 563–570, 2021, doi: 10.11591/edulearn.v15i4.20297.
- [8] A. W. Khurniawan, I. Sailah, P. Muljono, B. Indriyanto, and M. S. Maarif, "Strategy for improving the effectiveness of management vocational school-based enterprise in Indonesia," *Int. J. Educ. Pract.*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 37–48, 2021, doi: 10.18488/journal.61.2021.91.37.48.
- [9] A. Bandur, M. Hamsal, and A. Furinto, "21st Century experiences in the development of school-based management policy and practices in Indonesia," *Educ. Res. Policy Pract.*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 85–107, 2022, doi: 10.1007/s10671-021-09293-x.
- [10] M. Brunning, J. Fischetti, and M. Smith, "Renewing the Promise and Potential of School-Based Management," *NASSP Bull.*, vol. 104, no. 3, pp. 177–201, 2020, doi: 10.1177/0192636520956717.
- [11] A. A. Fernandez and G. P. Shaw, "Academic Leadership In A Time Of Crisis: The Corona Virus and covid-19," *J. Leadersh. Stud.*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 39–45, 2020, doi: 10.1002/jls.21684.
- [12] M. Javaid, A. Haleem, R. Vaishya, S. Bahl, and R. Suman, "Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews Industry 4 . 0 technologies and their applications in fi ghting COVID-19 pandemic," *Diabetes Metab. Syndr. Clin. Res. Rev.*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 419–422, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.dsx.2020.04.032.
- [13] S. Kumar, R. D. Raut, V. S. Narwane, and B. E. Narkhede, "Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome : Clinical Research & Reviews Applications of industry 4 . 0 to overcome the COVID-19 operational challenges," *Diabetes Metab. Syndr. Clin. Res. Rev.*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 1283–1289, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.dsx.2020.07.010.

- [14] A. Majir, K. Anwar, S. Habibi, and M. A. M. Prasetyo, "Framing the Image of Madrasah amid Covid-19 Pandemic: The Principal's Roles," *AL-ISHLAH J. Pendidik.*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 409–418, 2022, doi: 10.35445/alishlah.v14i1.1169.
- [15] A. Majir, *Paradigma Baru Manajemen Pendidikan Abad 21*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2020.
- [16] R. Brink, "A multiple case design for the investigation of information management processes for work-integrated learning," *Int. J. Work. Learn.*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 223–235, 2007.
- [17] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. California: Sage Publications.