

Implementation of Principal's Democratic Leadership Style to Improve Teacher Participation in Decision Making at State Elementary School 012 Naumbai

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the democratic leadership style of the principal at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai, identify the causes of the lack of teacher participation in decision-making, and analyze the implications of the implementation of this leadership style on the level of teacher participation. In this study, the approach used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained were then analyzed through three stages: data collection, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the principal at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai has implemented a democratic leadership style well and consistently. The principal actively involves teachers and education personnel in the decision-making process through deliberation and open discussion, providing space for teachers to express their opinions and ideas. Thus, the principal positions teachers as working partners who have an important role in the progress of the school, which creates a more open, participatory, and harmonious working atmosphere. This is more due to internal factors such as previous work habits that tend to be more hierarchical, limited experience in decision-making, and lack of initiative from the teachers themselves, not because of the lack of support or opportunity from the principal. The implications of the implementation of democratic leadership, although not yet fully optimal, show a positive impact on the work climate in schools. Gradually, teacher participation in decision-making increases, which leads to an increased sense of shared responsibility, team cohesion, and more effective implementation of school programs. The school environment also becomes more open and collaborative, supporting the creation of healthy school management that is oriented towards mutual progress.

Keywords: *Leadership; Principal Leadership; Democratic Leadership; Teacher Participation; Decision Making.*

INTRODUCTION

The principal has a very crucial role in managing and aligning all educational resources in the school according to needs. This shows that the principal's leadership is one of the key factors in realizing the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the school through programs that are planned and implemented in stages. The principal is expected to have adequate managerial and leadership skills in order to take initiatives and steps to improve the quality of education in schools. Leadership functions as the core driving force of the organization in achieving goals. In this context, the principal needs to create opportunities to interact effectively with teachers in a supportive atmosphere. The principal's attitude must be able to encourage teacher performance by showing a friendly, close, and caring attitude towards them, both as individuals and

groups. Instrumental behavior includes clear and directed tasks according to the role held. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007 concerning Standards for School/Madrasah Principals. This regulation explains the competencies that must be possessed by the principal including leadership competencies. The principal is expected to have the ability to lead inclusively and democratically by prioritizing deliberation and joint decision-making in matters relating to school policies. The definition of the Principal according to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 28 of 2010 concerning the Assignment of Teachers as Principals of Schools/Madrasahs, Article 1 paragraph 1, namely: The Principal of Schools/Madrasahs is a teacher who is given additional duties to lead kindergartens/raudhotul athfal (TK/RA), special kindergartens (TKLB), elementary schools/madrasahs (SD/MI), special elementary schools (SDLB), junior high schools/tsanawiyah madrasahs (SMP/MTs), special junior high schools (SMPLB), senior high schools/Islamic high schools (SMA/MA), vocational high schools/vocational Islamic high schools (SMK/MAK), special senior high schools (SMALB) that are not international standard schools (SBI) or that are not developed into international standard schools (SBI) (Rahman Tanjung, 2021). According to (Sumarna, 2019) the principal as a leader who is responsible for the development and management of education including the management of human resources, facilities, and curriculum development to improve the quality of education.

The principal must play a role in formulating the school's vision and mission. The principal has a very important role in mobilizing and harmonizing all educational resources available in the school and using them according to needs. This means that the principal's leadership is one of the factors that can realize the school's vision, mission, goals and objectives through programs that are implemented in a planned and gradual manner. The principal is required to have adequate management and leadership skills in order to be able to take the initiative and initiative to improve the quality of education in schools. Being a principal is not an easy task. The responsibility to improve the performance of his subordinates, including teachers, staff, and students, requires innovation and creativity in carrying out this mandate. To achieve good and relevant performance, the principal needs to instill leadership management values in himself.

This is important so that the creativity of teachers in educating students can be stimulated, so that they can carry out their duties and functions well. Therefore, the principal must be flexible in terms of autonomy and innovation (as an educator), integrate into the organization (as an administrator), be bound to the school's mission (as a supervisor), respect staff (as a leader), solve problems through collaboration (as an innovator), and focus on the teaching and learning process (as a motivator) (Sanjani., 2018) Leadership is the whole activity in order to influence people to work together to achieve goals that are indeed desired together. Leadership is every action carried out by individuals or groups to coordinate and provide direction to individuals or groups to coordinate and provide direction to individuals or groups that are included in a certain container to achieve previously determined goals. Therefore, the concept of leadership is projected in the form of attitudes, behavior, and attitudes of leader activities that are developed in educational institutions and will affect the work situation, work enthusiasm of staff members. The nature of human relations between each other will affect the quality of work results that may be achieved by the institution concerned.

Leadership can be explained through various individual characteristics, habits, ways of influencing others, interactions, positions in the organization, and perceptions

of legitimate influence and the ability to drive the behavior of others. Leadership can be translated as traits, personal behavior, influence on others, patterns of interaction, cooperative relationships between roles, positions in administrative positions, and perceptions of others regarding the legitimacy of influence. It is necessary to distinguish between leadership types and leadership styles. Every individual who becomes a leader can be categorized into one of the leadership types, and each type can have various leadership styles. A leader who has a certain type can adapt to the situation faced in carrying out his role as a leader. There are three types of leadership that are commonly found in organizations, including in the context of school organizations, namely: (a) Authoritarian Type, (b) Laissez-faire Type, and (c) Democratic Type (Edi Syaputra, 2023). The leadership of the principal is related to various tasks and functions that must be carried out to create an effective, productive, independent, and accountable school. Leadership style reflects the characteristics of an individual in influencing others or organizations, so that others are motivated to move and emulate their attitudes and personal character in achieving goals. In other words, leadership style is a behavioral norm that someone shows when interacting with others to influence them.

Each principal has a different leadership style, to be able to move an agency requires an effective leadership style that is possessed by the principal. Leadership style is the behavior or method chosen and used by leaders in influencing the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavior of members of the organization. In English, a leader is called a leader, who has leadership activities (leadership). Leadership style is the ability of the art of leading or the principal to influence others in the form of behavior both individually and in groups in following his will either directly or indirectly (Jaya, 2022). It can be understood that this leadership appears simultaneously in his role as principal. One of the leadership styles that can be applied by the principal is a democratic leadership style. This style reflects the approach of a leader who involves his members in the decision-making and problem-solving process through deliberation. Leaders with this style are willing to listen to opinions and appreciate every potential possessed by their members to achieve common goals. Democratic leadership style is the ability to influence others to cooperate in achieving predetermined goals by determining various activities to be carried out jointly between leaders and subordinates. Democratic leadership style is leadership that focuses on the basis of humanity and upholds the dignity and dignity of the people it leads (Sri Utari, 2020). Democratic Leadership interprets its leadership as a leader who is in the midst of group members and always tries to stimulate its members to work cooperatively to achieve common goals. In addition, every decision-making will be determined based on deliberation and consensus.

A democratic leader will have the following characteristics:

1. In the process of mobilizing subordinates, always starting from the opinion that humans are the noblest creatures in the world.
2. Trying to synchronize the interests and goals of the organization with the personal interests and goals of the members of his group.
3. Happy to accept suggestions, opinions, and even criticism from members.
4. Prioritize cooperation.
5. Give the widest possible freedom to group members and guide them.
6. Trying to make members more successful than him.
7. Trying to develop his personal capacity as a leader.

Leadership is an interpersonal effect carried out in a situation through a communication process aimed at achieving certain goals or objectives. One of the styles recommended by experts in the world of education is leadership. The principal's leadership is the ability to transform his influence to all school residents effectively through idealized charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration in developing and improving his professionalism. (Azhar & Desrusnahwaty Saputri, 2022)

When teachers are involved in the decision-making process, they feel more valued and have a sense of responsibility for the decisions taken. This can increase a sense of ownership of policies or changes implemented in schools. Teachers who feel valued tend to be more committed to implementing these decisions more optimally. Participation in decision-making creates a more inclusive and collaborative work culture. Teachers feel valued and involved in the process, which can strengthen the relationship between the principal and teaching staff. This contributes to the creation of a more positive and harmonious school environment, where everyone feels valued and heard.

The phenomenon or condition that occurs in schools regarding teacher participation in decision-making is that decision-making is often carried out in an authoritarian manner, where the principal or management makes decisions without significantly involving teachers. This can create dissatisfaction among teachers, because they feel that their voices are not heard in policies that directly impact their work and well-being. Schools do not have a structured forum or mechanism for teachers to provide input regarding policies or decision-making. Without space for discussion, teachers often feel marginalized, which can ultimately reduce their motivation and performance. For example, in many cases, schools do not have regular meetings or discussion groups where teachers can provide opinions or input on changes to be implemented.

Another phenomenon that occurs is that sometimes, policies implemented by the principal or education manager do not pay attention to the conditions or limitations faced by teachers. This can be a policy that requires teachers to do additional work or schedule changes that disrupt their work-life balance. Teachers who are not involved in making decisions like this tend to feel stressed and underappreciated. For example, the implementation of a policy on the use of technology in teaching that is not accompanied by adequate training for teachers, or changes in schedules without consulting teachers that affect their rest time.

Policies that are implemented without involving teachers often fail or lack success in their implementation. This is due to the lack of ownership or unpreparedness of teachers in implementing policies made without consultation. Teachers who feel uninvolved are often less enthusiastic in implementing the policy. For example, the implementation of changes in assessment methods or teaching methods that do not receive support or involvement from teachers often encounters obstacles. Teachers who do not feel empowered in the process tend to be less motivated to adopt existing changes.

According to Research (Nuzulina & Azhar, 2022) By involving teachers in decision-making, principals gain more diverse perspectives and insights into the challenges and needs faced in the field. This results in more realistic and applicable decisions. Teachers, who deal directly with students, have a deeper understanding of learning conditions and can provide invaluable input. A democratic leadership style can increase teacher motivation to work harder and be more creative in teaching.

When teachers feel that they play a role in the decision-making process, they will feel more appreciated, which in turn increases their enthusiasm and performance in the classroom. The quality of good principal leadership, coupled with a harmonious and conducive organizational climate, will certainly color the quality of teacher performance and teacher work discipline, which will ultimately be able to bring the organization towards the desired ideals, as well as quality graduates. (et al., 2022)

By involving teachers in decision-making, the principal gains a variety of perspectives and insights into the challenges and needs faced in the field. This results in more realistic and applicable decisions. Teachers, who are directly dealing with students, have a deeper understanding of learning conditions and can provide invaluable input. A democratic leadership style can increase teachers' motivation to work harder and be more creative in teaching. When teachers feel that they play a role in the decision-making process, they will feel more valued, which in turn increases their morale and performance in the classroom. Democratic leadership encourages cooperation and collaboration between principals and teachers. By listening to teacher input, principals create a supportive work climate and strengthen professional relationships. Teachers who feel that their opinions are valued are more likely to work together as a team and contribute more. One positive impact of democratic leadership is reduced conflict. By providing an open space for teachers to provide input and participate in decision-making, the tension and dissatisfaction that often arises from policies that do not involve teachers can be reduced. Teachers feel that they are part of the decisions being made, which reduces the potential for feelings of marginalization. And democratic leadership gives teachers a sense of respect by recognizing their expertise and contributions to the decision-making process. When principals value teachers' views and input, this increases teachers' sense of self-worth, which in turn increases their job satisfaction and well-being.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method that aims to test the influence of school operational management and the principal's transformational leadership on teachers' PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), a quantitative approach is very suitable for research that relies on numerical data to explain certain phenomena, and the results can be strengthened by inferential statistical analysis. The survey method was chosen because it allows the collection of data that is systematically structured and can be measured with numbers, which can then be analyzed statistically to determine the relationship between variables. This survey is one of the methods in quantitative research that aims to understand the relationship between variables and make generalizations about the population being studied, and is designed to produce an accurate and representative picture of an area (Muchlis, 2023).

In addition, this method involves collecting data through questionnaires and interviews with representatively selected individual samples, so that the data produced is not only able to represent the characteristics of the population as a whole but also provides an in-depth understanding of the identity, views, feelings, and tendencies of respondents' actions which are the basis for explaining the relationship between research variables as a whole (Islamy, 2019). Therefore, the quantitative approach through this survey method is designed to provide in-depth insight into the influence of school operational management and principal transformational leadership on

improving teachers' PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge). By using valid and reliable research instruments, this method allows for structured and systematic data collection, which is then analyzed statistically to test hypotheses and understand the relationships between variables in depth. This approach not only aims to produce accurate generalizations of the population studied but also becomes a strong methodological foundation in supporting relevant research conclusions and recommendations to improve the quality of education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, qualitative research is research that produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or qualitative methods. Qualitative research usually examines the processes that occur, including how various variables form each other, how people interact with each other in the natural setting that is the field of research. (Hardani, 2020). Qualitative research is a study that focuses on understanding problems in social life based on complex and detailed real conditions. This study uses an approach whose purpose is to compile and sequence hypotheses and construct a number of theories with the disclosure of facts (Murdiyanto, 2020). The type of research on the implementation of the principal's democratic leadership style to increase teacher participation in decision making at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai is expected to be able to describe the data comprehensively and accurately. Data sampling was carried out by purposive sampling, samples were taken from the principal, teachers and school operators. This research was conducted at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai, Kampar District, Kab. Kampar Riau.

In this study, documentation and observation techniques were used to obtain supporting data regarding the implementation of the principal's democratic leadership style in increasing teacher participation in decision making at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai. Documentation was carried out by collecting various written data such as the school's vision and mission, organizational structure, meeting minutes, annual work programs, and documentation of school activities. Meanwhile, observations were carried out directly to observe the activities of the principal and teachers in the deliberation process, meeting implementation, and teacher involvement in school program planning. The results of this documentation and observation function as a complement and comparison to interview data, in order to ensure the validity of the data and obtain a real picture of the implementation of democratic leadership in the school environment.

Implementation of Democratic Leadership Style of the Principal at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai

The democratic leadership style applied by the principal of SD Negeri 012 Naumbai is seen strongly in various aspects of school management. Based on the results of the interview, the principal explained that he has applied the principles of democratic leadership since he first took office, namely for the past seven years. According to him, democratic leadership is a leadership approach that places deliberation, participation, and togetherness as the main foundation in every decision-making process in the school environment. He believes that a school is a big family that cannot be run with the authority of only one party, but requires the active participation of all components in it. Therefore, every policy or decision concerning the interests of the school is always formulated together through open discussions and deliberation forums with teachers and education personnel. The principal believes that by involving

all parties, the resulting decisions will be more mature, accepted with an open heart, and their implementation can run smoothly without significant obstacles.

The principal also emphasized that a democratic leadership style is able to create a conducive working atmosphere, mutual respect, and build trust among all school residents. The principles of openness of information, freedom of opinion, and collective decision-making are the main values that are continuously maintained and preserved in the environment of SD Negeri 012 Naumbai. Thus, the principal hopes that this school can continue to develop and become an excellent educational institution, both in terms of academics and non-academically, through cooperation and active participation of all school residents. The implementation of this democratic leadership style is evident in every school management activity, where the principal consistently involves all teachers in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of various school programs. Every time there is a new activity or program agenda planned, the principal will first hold a meeting with the teacher council to listen to various opinions, input, and suggestions from the teachers. Not only does he provide space for teachers to convey ideas, the principal also actively encourages each teacher to feel that they have the same responsibility in advancing the school. In these forums, all teachers are given equal opportunities to convey their views, suggestions, and criticisms of the planned program, without any dominance from the principal himself. The discussion process is carried out openly, democratically, and with a sense of family so that the atmosphere of deliberation runs comfortably and without pressure. Every decision taken is also the result of mutual consensus, which is then stated in the minutes of the meeting as a form of documentation and joint commitment in implementing the agreed program. In addition, the principal does not hesitate to accept input from teachers who have creative ideas in developing the school, even encouraging its implementation if it is considered beneficial for the progress of the school. This condition shows the principal's commitment to building a collaborative work culture in the SD Negeri 012 Naumbai environment.

The implementation of democratic leadership style in SD Negeri 012 Naumbai is not only seen in the planning of routine activities, but also in incidental or sudden situations that require quick action. One example is when a sad event occurs in the school environment, where a resident dies. At that time, the teachers spontaneously took the initiative to coordinate condolence activities, collect voluntary donations, and arrange the attendance schedule of teacher representatives without any direct orders from the principal. The principal said that this kind of initiative reflects a form of solidarity, togetherness, and a strong sense of belonging among the school community, which has grown as a result of the implementation of a democratic leadership style so far. In addition, the principal also said that the teacher's initiative is proof that the deliberations and discussions that have been customary in various forums have formed a collective awareness among teachers to take part in any situation.

The principal believes that this family atmosphere, social sensitivity, and concern among school residents can only be realized if the principal does not act authoritarian, but rather provides space for teachers to act based on mutual agreement. Therefore, the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation are an important part of the school culture that is continuously maintained. The principal's statement was reinforced by the responses of the teachers who were interviewed in this study. The teachers who have served for more than ten years at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai expressed that they felt sufficiently involved in various decision-making processes at school. They stated that the principal is always open to various inputs, opinions, and criticisms conveyed by

teachers. Not only in formal meetings, but also in casual discussions in between school activities. The teachers assessed that the principal succeeded in building good, effective, and warm communication with all members of the school community. In addition, the teachers also stated that they were always given space to actively participate in school discussion forums, both routine and incidental.

The decision-making process at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai was assessed as taking place in a structured, systematic, and inclusive manner, where all parties had the same opportunity to express their views. This made the teachers feel appreciated, recognized, and highly motivated to contribute to advancing the school. The active involvement of teachers in every decision-making also has a positive impact on a conducive and togetherness work atmosphere, thus strengthening the quality of educational services in schools. Similar things were also conveyed by other education personnel, especially school operators, who have an important role in the smooth running of school administration. The school operator said that the principal gives balanced attention, not only to teachers, but also to all education personnel at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai. Every time there is a change or new policy related to the school administration system, the principal always involves operators in discussions, both in official forums and informally.

School operators are given the opportunity to express opinions, obstacles, and suggestions related to their duties. The principal also actively invites operators to discuss to ensure the smooth implementation of administrative tasks, while ensuring that all parties in the school feel appreciated and involved in the decision-making process. In addition, the principal is also open to various innovations or updates to the administrative system proposed by the operator, and if the proposal is considered useful, it will be implemented immediately. This attitude makes operators feel comfortable working and have the enthusiasm to continue to improve the quality of administrative services at the school. According to the school operator, the democratic leadership style implemented by the principal has created a harmonious, communicative, and togetherness-filled work environment among all school residents. This condition is one of the important factors that supports the creation of a productive, professional work atmosphere, and is able to provide optimal educational services to students and the surrounding community.

Causes of Lack of Teacher Participation in Decision Making

Although the principal has implemented a democratic leadership style comprehensively in various aspects of school management, it is undeniable that teacher participation in the decision-making process has not been fully evenly distributed. The principal admits that one of the biggest challenges in implementing this leadership style is when different opinions arise among teachers. Situations like this often make the decision-making process longer because it takes time to discuss various views and reach a mutually acceptable meeting point. Differences of opinion that arise are normal in a democratic atmosphere, but in practice they can slow down the process of deliberation and decision-making, especially if there are differences in principles or interests among teachers. On several occasions, the principal must be patient and wise in managing the dynamics of these differences, so that the atmosphere of deliberation remains conducive without causing tension between teachers. Although the process takes longer than with an authoritarian leadership style, the principal remains committed to maintaining the principle of deliberation in order to achieve decisions that are fairer, mutually acceptable, and can be implemented with full responsibility.

The principal also realized that these differences of opinion are actually a strength in building the school, because from the open discussion often new ideas emerge that can enrich school policies and programs. Therefore, the principal believes that differences of opinion must be managed well and become part of the learning process for all teachers in implementing a democratic culture in the work environment. Furthermore, the principal also said that there are still some teachers who have not shown activeness in providing opinions or suggestions during the deliberation process. Some teachers, especially those who are new or have a shy character, tend to be passive and wait for direction without daring to express their views voluntarily. In various discussion forums, the principal often has to motivate and ask for the opinions of these teachers directly so that they feel appreciated and dare to express their views. The principal understands that this condition is not caused by closed leadership, but rather by the mental readiness, self-confidence, and habits of some teachers who are not yet accustomed to democratic leadership patterns. To overcome this, the principal takes a persuasive and motivational approach, such as giving praise for the ideas conveyed, inviting personal discussions outside of official forums, and creating a relaxed and non-stressful discussion atmosphere. The principal also routinely provides direction on the importance of active participation in every decision-making process, and emphasizes that every opinion has value and an important contribution to the progress of the school. This effort is carried out continuously so that teachers who were previously passive can start to be more actively involved and get used to conveying ideas, concepts, and criticisms openly. The principal hopes that in this way, the democratic culture in the environment of SD Negeri 012 Naumbai can be truly implemented comprehensively and evenly.

From the teachers' perspective, they stated that although they felt they had been involved in the decision-making process at school, the initiative to participate had not fully come from themselves. Many of these teachers only expressed their opinions when asked directly by the principal or after being encouraged through questions raised in discussion forums. Several teachers argued that this was due to a lack of self-confidence, short work experience, or because they were used to previous work environments that were less participatory. Teachers who had just joined SD Negeri 012 Naumbai, for example, still needed time to adjust to the democratic culture implemented in this school. In addition, some teachers who had served for a long time sometimes felt hesitant to express their opinions openly because they were worried that their opinions would be different or not in accordance with the majority. Therefore, according to the teachers, there needed to be ongoing efforts from the school to build a more participatory school culture and encourage the courage to express ideas without fear or awkwardness. They hoped that the principal could continue to provide support, create a comfortable discussion atmosphere, and provide a fair opportunity for each teacher to contribute to decision-making for the sake of mutual progress.

The impact of the implementation of the principal's democratic leadership style on the level of teacher participation in decision-making

The implementation of a democratic leadership style by the principal of SD Negeri 012 Naumbai has a significant impact on increasing teacher participation in decision-making at school. The principal said that now more and more teachers are actively expressing ideas and opinions, even without being asked first. This shows a positive change in the attitude and awareness of teachers towards the importance of their involvement in the school's managerial process. Teachers increasingly understand

that they are not only program implementers, but also part of the planning and evaluation process of policies taken. Over time, this proactive attitude has developed among teachers, who were previously more passive in expressing their ideas. For example, in the meetings held, discussions have become more lively with many ideas emerging from various teachers, both experienced and new.

This condition reflects the growing sense of ownership of the school, where teachers feel valued and included in every step of decision-making taken. The principal assessed that this increase in participation is an indication of the success of the implementation of a democratic leadership style, which not only influences the decision-making process, but also increases the sense of togetherness among the school community. In addition to increased participation, teacher morale also increased significantly. They felt more appreciated because their ideas were not only listened to, but also used as a basis for decision-making. This created a deeper sense of involvement in every policy taken at school. This sense of appreciation fostered greater responsibility for the implementation of school programs. Teachers felt that they were not only carrying out the tasks given, but also felt that they had a role in designing and implementing policies that applied at school. In an atmosphere like this, teachers became more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, because they felt that their contributions were valuable and had a direct impact on the development of the school. The principal also noted that this increased morale had an impact on improving overall performance at school, both in academic and non-academic fields. Teachers were not only focused on completing tasks, but also took the initiative to contribute more in designing programs that were beneficial to students and the school. This greater responsibility made them feel more empowered, and in turn had an impact on the successful implementation of various policies and programs at school.

Another positive impact that was seen was the increased cohesiveness and solidarity among teachers. The democratic leadership style implemented by the principal has succeeded in building closer and more coordinated teamwork. Teachers have become more open to each other, and collaboration in implementing school programs has become stronger. In various activities, both routine and incidental, teachers now work together more often, share tasks, and support each other. This certainly has a positive impact on improving the quality of learning and education services in schools. The principal assessed that the implementation of school programs has become more effective because it is supported by a solid team and has a sense of ownership of the school's vision and mission. With increasing cohesiveness, teachers feel more motivated to collaborate, develop innovation, and run education programs more optimally. The success of this collaboration further strengthens their confidence in solving the challenges faced at school. In addition, teachers who feel supported and appreciated are also more open to receiving criticism and input from colleagues, which ultimately leads to an increase in the quality of their cooperation and professionalism in carrying out their duties at school. Not only teachers, school operators also feel the positive impact of implementing this democratic leadership style. He assessed that the principal has created an inclusive and open working atmosphere. Not only teachers, but also educational staff such as operators are actively involved in every decision-making process related to administrative tasks. The principal provides space for operators to convey input or complaints, and ensures that every policy that impacts the operator's duties is formulated through joint discussion.

This shows that the principal appreciates the important role of operators in the smooth running of school administration, and does not see them as mere support staff

who must follow orders. By involving operators in decision-making, they feel more appreciated and more motivated to carry out their administrative tasks better and more efficiently. The involvement of operators also has an impact on the smooth running of the administration system, where every decision taken can be implemented more systematically and on time. School operators feel that their contribution is not only seen as a routine task, but as an integral part of the success of all programs in the school. Overall, the implementation of democratic leadership at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai has brought significant positive changes to the school's organizational culture. The decision-making process has become more open and participatory, where every member of the school feels they have a role in determining the direction of policies and programs to be implemented. Communication between school members has improved, and a sense of mutual respect and shared responsibility for the progress of the school has emerged.

This leadership style has proven effective in building a collaborative and dynamic work environment, where all components of the school feel involved, appreciated, and have an important contribution to the success of the school. With the formation of a more inclusive and democratic culture, the school is increasingly becoming a pleasant place to work, learn, and grow. The principal believes that an open environment, where every voice is heard and valued, will further drive the school's progress in achieving its vision and mission. Thus, the application of a democratic leadership style not only improves managerial quality, but also creates a positive atmosphere that supports long-term success at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted at SD Negeri 012 Naumbai, it can be concluded that the implementation of democratic leadership style by the principal has been carried out well and consistently. The principal actively involves teachers and education personnel in various decision-making processes through deliberation and open discussion. This leadership style positions teachers as working partners who have an important role in the progress of the school, so that a more open, participatory, and harmonious working atmosphere is created. Although a democratic leadership style has been implemented, teacher participation in decision-making is not evenly distributed. Some teachers still show a passive attitude and lack of confidence in expressing their opinions, even though they are given space and opportunity. This lack of participation is more due to internal factors of teachers such as previous work habits, limited experience, or lack of initiative, not because of the lack of support from the principal. The impact of the implementation of democratic leadership has a positive impact on the work climate and teacher involvement in schools. Slowly, teacher participation in decision-making increases, which has an impact on a sense of shared responsibility, team cohesion, and more effective implementation of school programs. The school environment becomes more open and collaborative, which supports the creation of healthy school management that is oriented towards mutual progress.

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