

# THE ROLE OF A LEARNING LEADERSHIP IN THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION IN REGIONAL AUTONOMY OR DECENTRALIZATION

Dedy Achmad Kurniady\*

***Abstract:** In a regional autonomy or decentralization, educational financing is not only a responsibility of the central government but a shared responsibility with regional governments and the public. To operate, schools require huge funds for their day-to-day activities. In this case, education institutions should be more independent, creative and innovative in looking for and allocating multiple resources and funds for such activities. However, with the implementation of regional autonomy or education decentralization, schools have not attained fundamental change in regard to financing. For instance, Government schools heavily rely on governmental funds, while private schools largely depend on tuition paid by the students. This makes financing one of the most important aspects in school management. In order to pursue the students' learning needs, there should be huge amount of funds. In Indonesia, obtaining huge funds is one of the roles of the leaders. This implies leaders have to learn new ways of resource mobilization. The learning leadership is not only required to pay attention on students' learning, but also must decide on strategies for resource mobilization.*

***Keywords:** Regional autonomy, educational financing, learning leadership.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Regional autonomy has been an impact of reformation era namely the transformation from centralistic governmental system into decentralistic governmental system. Centralistic refers to the concentration and, as a result, all decisions are in the hands of central government. On the other hand, decentralistic refers to the authority delegation in taking decisions and making policies to the regional government. In the latest governmental system there have not been any centralistic aspects anymore; instead, there has been a regional autonomy that delegates some of the authority to the regional government.

The implementation of regional autonomy policy has been based on the Law Number 32 Year 2004 which mentions that the decision-making or the policy-making is delegated independently to the regional government. The regional autonomy, in other words, refers to regional rights, authority and responsibility to regulate

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\* Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

and to arrange their own regional affair and society interest in accordance with the rules and regulation (Article 1 Verse 5 Law 32/2004). The deliverance of autonomy is expected to turn the region to be independent and be prosperous under the principles of democracy, society participation, distribution and justice by paying attention to the potentials of each region.

Regional autonomy affects the educational implementation and gives birth to the educational autonomy. Therefore, the regional autonomy has been a challenge and an opportunity in the educational implementation. The rapid growth of science and technology as well as the intense competition among the employment market demands the schools to be able to generate well-qualified graduates with competitive edge. In order to achieve the objective, the educational operation demands high fund and the fund has been increasing over time. The educational institutions should be more independent, creative and innovative in looking for and in allocating multiple resources and fund sources for the educational financing.

However, with the implementation of regional and school autonomy there have not been any fundamental change that occurs in the orientation of educational financing. The educational financing in the state schools still relies on the governmental fund while the educational financing in the private schools still relies on the parental fund.

Money, or fund, is like the blood that helps every single aspect in the educational financing to run well both the operational ones and the non-operational ones. In relation to the statement, the existence of school operational aid (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* or also known as BOS) the demand toward fund might be covered; however, the BOS fund has not been able to optimize the income other than the governmental fund. Finance, in this case, has been one of the three most important aspects in the school management in addition to time and facility. The financing management is heavily necessary in order to achieve the efficiency and the effectiveness of governmental as well as parental fund.

The existence of BOS should be reviewed in more in-depth manner because in one hand the BOS fund is intended to ease the school financing by decreasing the school expense but on the other hand the schools are demanded to be able to perform educational programs that should be in accordance with the learning needs of the learning participants (in accordance with the field situation) under numerous practical activities (especially for vocational schools) that demands bigger fund. Relying on the governmental fund only, the schools are afraid that they will not be able to design innovative educational programs.

Departing from the case, definitely there should be learning leaders who will lead the teachers in designing better teaching/learning programs which in turn might improve the students' learning achievements. The principals here should

serve as a leader who focuses on the learning aspect that includes curriculum, teaching-learning process and learning assessment. The principals should also arrange strategies in order to be able to find the fund sources in order to cover the educational financing in the era of regional autonomy.

The problem formulation in the review is focused on “What type of financing pattern that might be implemented by a learning leader in supporting the achievements of learning process that should be in accordance with the learning participants’ needs in the era of regional autonomy?”

The review is to find a general description regarding the financing pattern that might be applied by a learning leader in supporting the learning achievements that should be in accordance with the learning participants’ needs in a regional autonomy.

## **2. METHOD**

The review was composed by using the descriptive analytic method because the reviewer would like to find the description regarding the educational financing in a specific manner by means of qualitative approach. The method was selected because the review was to attain the general description about the financing pattern that might be selected by a learning leader in supporting the achievement of learning results that should be in accordance with the learning participants’ needs within the era of regional autonomy. Then, the data gathering techniques that the reviewer selected were as follows: 1) document study; 2) observation; and 3) in-depth interview.

## **3. DISCUSSIONS**

Regional autonomy has been the region’s right, authority and responsibility to regulate and to arrange its own governance and local society interest in accordance with the rules and regulations (Article 1 Verse 5 Law Number 32/2004). If the decentralization tended to pay attention more on the process, the autonomy then would pay attention more on the product (right, authority and responsibility).

According to the experts, independency in the context of regional autonomy had 5 components namely: (1) free, the independency appeared from one’s will instead of other people’s will; (2) progressive and persistent, as having been apparent in the efforts of pursuing achievements, displaying diligence and planning and manifesting the expectations; (3) initiative, namely being able to think and to act originally and creatively with full of initiatives; (4) internal self-control, namely being able to control the internal self and to influence the environment by means of own initiatives; and (5) self-established ness, indicated by the self-esteem and the self-confidence. So, an independent region would mean a region that had significant autonomy

(authority and responsibility) in regulating and arranging its own domestic affairs in the educational implementation.

Educational decentralization and autonomy were expected to improve the educational service, the educational quality and the educational just; however, in the practice there had been many inter-regional discrepancies that had been caused by: (1) structural poverty, namely regulation, policy, planning and budgeting that inhibited the educational progress; (2) cultural poverty, namely the unproductive habit and behavior; and (3) natural poverty, namely impotential natural resources and disadvantageous geographical location (remote, isolated and dispersed).

Educational decentralization in the region demanded sufficient capacity in the policy and regulation, the institutionality and the natural resources. Therefore, there should be directed, planned, systematic and pro-changing efforts in order to develop the capacity of creation, innovation, initiation and experimentation and to find new possibilities in the regional educational implementation.

Educational decentralization had also been a new learning process that had not been conducted previously and, therefore, the learning process were prone to mistakes. The important aspect was that the mistakes in the past should not be repeated and should be turned into valuable lessons for the sake of future improvement. Educational organization and management in the era of decentralization displayed the symptoms of loose-coupling/missing link and the problem should be fixed. Otherwise, the technical link from the Ministry of National Education to the schools would not be well-established.

The existence of authority change on the educational management immediately altered the pattern of educational financing. Before the implementation of regional autonomy, practically the educational financing of the elementary schools belonged to the regional government while the educational financing of the high schools (and also universities) belonged to the central government as having been regulated in the Law Number 20 Year 2003 Article 46: (1) The educational financing becomes the shared responsibility among the Central Government, the Regional Government and the society; (2) The Central Government and the Regional Government are responsible to provide the educational budget as having been regulated in the Article 31 Verse (4) of 1945 Indonesian Constitution; and (3) The provisions regarding the educational financing as having been mentioned in the Verse (1) and the Verse (2) would be regulated further under the government regulation.

The financing of junior high schools and senior/vocational high schools was conducted by means of the Regional Office of National Education (in the province level) and in the Department of National Education Office (in the county/capitol level). After the implementation of regional autonomy, all of the school management from the elementary schools until the senior/vocational high schools became the

responsibility of the Regional Government. The consequence was that there would not be any Regional Office or Department of National Education Office; instead, there would only be the Regional Office of National Education in the county/capitol level that should be under the authority of Regional Government and the Provincial Office of National Education in the province level that should be under the authority of Provincial Government. There would not be any hierarchical link between the Regional Office of National Education and the Provincial Office of National Education, while the Provincial Government still held the mandate of the Central Government representative. With such institutional configuration, it had been clear that the Central Government did not have “hands” anymore in the region for implementing their programs. The implication was that each program in the school level should be implemented under the coordination with the Regional Government or, specifically, the Regional Office of National Education.

With the same institutional configuration, the pattern of education financing had quite fundamental changes. Article 48 Law Number 20 Year 2003 explained that: (1) the management of educational fund should be based on the principles of justice, transparency and public accountability; (2) the provisions regarding the management of educational fund as having been stated in the Verse (1) would be regulated further under the government regulation. Thereby, the region had a very big responsibility in financing the regional education by using the Regional Budget. The support from the Central Government (and the Provincial Government) was still enabled but it should be granted under the mechanism of Regional Budget or at least should be noted in the County/Capitol Budget.

The first challenge that the educational managers should encounter was the financing problem. As an illustration, the low quality of school building, especially in the elementary education degree, had been one of the impacts exposed by the limited government capability in mobilizing the fund for the education sector. On the other hand, Law Number 20 Year 2003 regarding the National Education System provided a very heavy burden for the government. Article 49 stated that: (1) The allocation of educational fund other than the educators’ payment and the official educational fund should be at least 20% from the State Income and Expense Budget in the education sector and 20% from the Regional Income and Expense Budget; (2) The payment of the teachers and the lecturers who had been appointed by the Government should be from the allocation of State Income and Expense Budget; (3) The educational fund from the Central Government and the Regional Government for the educational units would be granted in the form of aid in accordance with the governing rules and regulations; (4) The educational fund from the Central Government to the Regional Government would be granted in the form of aid in accordance with the governing rules and regulations; and (5) The provisions regarding the allocation of educational fund as having been stated in the Verse (1), (2), (3) and (4) would be regulated further under the government regulation.

The scope or the components of financial management included the following aspects: (1) budget procedures; (2) financial accounting procedures; (3) expenditure, warehousing and distribution procedures; (4) reporting; and (5) inspection procedures. In the practice, the financial management adopted the principles of job separation among the functions of authorizer, ordinator and treasury officer. Authorizer was an officer who had been authorized to take actions that might affect the budget income and expense. Then, the ordinator was an officer who had been authorized to test and to order payment on any actions that had been taken based on the authorization that had been determined. Next, the treasury officer was an officer who had been authorized to accept, to keep and to expense money or other valuable letters that might be valued by money and to make calculation and financial report.

In the educational implementation, fund and cost became very decisive components and has been an inseparable part of the educational management. The fund and cost of a school had been two productional components that decided the implementability of teaching-learning activities in the school altogether with the other components. In other words, each activity that the school performed demanded cost both consciously and unconsciously. The fund and cost should be managed well in order that the available fund might be benefitted optimally in order to support the achievement of educational objectives. This was very important especially in performing the school-based management that provided authority to the school in searching for and benefitting the source of fund in accordance with the needs of each school. The reason was that in general the educational domain always encountered the problems of limited fund especially in the critical situation nowadays. The source of fund and cost in a school generally might be categorized into three types namely: (1) government, either the Central Government, the Regional Government or even both of them; (2) parents or learning participants; and (3) society, both the binding one and the non-binding one. In relation to the fund given by the parents and the society, it had been asserted in the 1989 Law of National Education System that due to the government's limited capacity in covering the educational fund the responsibility of covering the educational fund therefore had become a shared responsibility among the government, the parents and the society. Then, the dimension of expense included the routine cost and the development cost.

Educational cost was the total cost that has been spent by the learning participants, the families who sent their children to the schools, the individual members of society, the societal groups or even the government themselves (Dadang, Riduwan & Enas, 2012:22). On the other hand in the teaching materials of Fakri Gaffar, he said that educational financing had been a managerial instrument designed for supporting the efficient, effective and productive educational implementation. The educational financing would be effective the financing is managed professionally. According to Dadang, Riduwan and Enas (2012:23), the types of educational cost were as follows:



- Direct cost has been the cost of educational implementation that had been spent by the schools, the students and or the families. The direct cost was manifested in the form of cash expenditure which had been used directly to finance the implementation of teaching-learning process, the research, the community research and dedication, the payment of teachers and other staffs, the purchase of books, the purchase of equipment and the maintenance service. Most of the direct cost that had been spent came from the school's system and the cost had also been spent for keeping the learning fluency and quality as well as for dealing with the school's administrative needs and office stationery.
- Indirect cost has been the cost that takes the form of living expenses issued by the families or the students for the school's needs. This type of has not been issued directly by the schools; instead, this type of fund has been issued directly by the families, the students or the persons who look after the students in attending the education. The indirect cost also refers to the living expense that support the educational fluency, for example: transportation fare, boarding house charge, dining bills, health service charge and additional charge such as the daily allowance that might be lost when the students are studying or when the students are depressed due to their teachers' reprimanding.
- Private cost has been the overall cost that the families have issued or the overall cost that should be borne by the families in order to support the success of their children. For example, the families should pay the private teachers for certain lessons such as Math and English. In addition, they might also need to provide incurrence for their children's private computer session.
- Social cost has been cost that the society spends both individually and organizationally in order to fund all of the schools' needs. The cost has been spent by the society as a form of their participation in the educational implementation since education is not only the responsibility of government and parents but also the society. The cost that has been provided by the society used to be issued by the Department of Counseling and Guidance and the school committees; however, nowadays, due to the prohibition of demanding any additional cost from the society, especially for the elementary schools and the junior high schools, the 20% allocation from the budget has been provided by the government via development tax and the 20% allocation has also been intended to build the schools.
- Monetary cost has been the cost that the form of service, effort and time. Such cost might be cashed or might be valued according to the money value.

Looking at the type of cost, people would find out that education a costs did not only become the responsibility of the government and the families but also the society in all aspects. In order to mobilize all of the parties who had been involved

in the educational financing, there should be a leader who had orientations toward the learning quality and the students' learning results.

Yukl (2010:3) stated that most of the definitions on leadership reflected an assumption that "leadership has been related to the intentional process conducted by an individual in order to emphasize his or her strong influence toward the other people so that he or she might guide, create structures and facilitate the activities and the relationships within a group or an organization." Leadership had multiple meanings, depending on the individual point of view or perspective and on the contexts or the aspects of the interesting phenomena. However, it might be concluded that leadership has been an individual's power or capability in mobilizing multiple resources, in influencing and in directing other people to cooperate with each other so that they might achieve certain objectives.

Communication in an organization had definitely become a necessary and even a compulsory aspect that should be done especially by a leader to his or her members. Through communication, a leader might communicate or socialize an organization's vision, mission and objectives. This aspect had been the leader's basis of power in an organization. Fakry Gafar (1982:5) stated that communication within an organization was not more than a power that maintained the organization's existence; without communication, the organization would not work. Therefore, it might be concluded also that the success of a leader in performing his leadership had mostly been determined by the communication/interaction that he or she performed to his or her members.

According to Daresh & Playco (1995) learning leadership had been the efforts of leading the teachers to teach better which in turn would improve the students' learning achievements. This definition was less comprehensive. Other experts defined an effective learning leadership as follows:

- The principal socialized and embedded the content and the meaning of the school's vision well. He might also be able to establish the habits of sharing opinions or having discussions in formulating the school's vision and mission and he should also maintain the vision and mission that had been agreed by the school members to last long in the educational implementation.
- The principal involved the stakeholders in the school management (participatory management). The principal might involve the stakeholders in the decision-taking and the operational activities in accordance with the stakeholders' capability and the governing jurisdictions.
- The principal provided supports toward the learning process. For example, the principal supported that the teaching process that focused on the students' learning needs should be the top priority.



- The principal monitored the teaching-learning process so that he or she would understand deeply and would realize what had been happening in the school.
- The principal served as a facilitator so that in anyway he or she would find the learning difficulties and would assist the teachers in overcoming the learning difficulties.

Learning leadership or instructional leadership has been a leadership that focuses/emphasizes on the learning process which components covers curriculum, teaching-learning process, assessment, teacher evaluation and development, primary service in learning process and learning-community building in the school.

The characteristics of a learning leader have been focusing on the design of learning objectives and learning standards; performing socialization of learning objectives and learning standards; facilitating the establishment of teachers' working groups, applying high expectation; performing evaluation toward the teachers' performance and the follow-up on the performance development; establishing school cultures that would be conducive for the learning process; establishing learning person and learning school; providing most of his or her time to the learning process as well as to the teachers and the students; providing primary service to the teachers, the students and the parents; performing coordination toward the teachers, the students and the parents; and performing monitoring and evaluation toward the learning success due to the implementation of learning leadership. In order to achieve these characteristics, there should be huge amount of fund and it has been the role of learning leadership to manage and arrange the educational financing. Learning leadership has not only demanded to pay attention on the students' learning results but also to decide strategies in order that the necessary learning fund would be covered.

The differentiator between the learning leadership and the other type of leadership was the fact that most of the already possessed fund would be totally spent for financing the learning process that referred to the quality improvement.

In the context of regional economy and its relation to the efforts of developing regional educational financing system, the foundations and the principles of educational financing should be established first. The principles that might be referred to regarding the implementation of regional autonomy would be as follows:

- Equality and equity to attain educational opportunity should not be available a only in the inter-autonomous region in one province but also in other provinces and in inter-autonomous regions throughout Indonesia.
- Equalizing power should be available in the County and Capitol level for all of the autonomous regions under the Provincial Government and for all of the autonomous regions in Indonesia under the Central Government.

- The finance balancing both in the provincial government and in the central government should function as the component that would unite and unify the nation and as the infrastructures of implementing the equalizing power in the system of educational financing throughout the Republic of Indonesia.
- In the provincial level, the educational financing system should be based on the principles of partnership between the source of fund from the provincial government and that of the regional (counties and capitols) government.
- The region's capability and the society's buying power should be made as a basis of determining the fund distribution pattern in order to fund the education in related regions.

The above principles contained the elements of foundation programs and equalization programs that, then, would be used as the basis of fund distribution in order to finance multiple educational types and degrees in accordance with the educational needs or the needs education and society.

In relation to those matters, M. Fakry (2000:32) explained that there had been two main models of educational financing with regional autonomy as the mindset namely: (1) Flat Grants; and (2) Equalization Grants. Both of the programs took the following forms:

- The allocation for each region was equal without considering the variations in terms of educational type and degree possessed by each region;
- The allocation for each region was not equal due to the variations of educational needs according to certain educational type and degree. The variation might be caused by the region's capability and the society's buying power and might also be caused by educational types, needs or degrees exposed by the students.
- The unit cost for the first grade students of elementary school was not equal to that for the fourth or the fifth grade students of elementary school, for example. The unit cost for senior high school was not equal to that for the junior high school. Thereby, weighting might be implemented in order to show the variations. Based on the weighting that showed the variations, the unit cost per student/year might be used as a reference in order to allocate the fund that should be in accordance with the number of enrollment for each county or capital.

In the Flat Grants, the region's capability or the society's buying power were not turned into the factor of variations. The factors that would determine the size of variations were the students' enrollment and the weighting that would be combined into the calculation of unit cost per student/year.

In the Equalization Grants, the region's capability or the local efforts had been one of the factors for the financing variations. The statement implied that the

regions that had weak capability would be given more fund than those that had strong capability. In other words, the regional contribution toward the education should be bigger in order to keep in balance with the amount of fund that had been allocated by the regions that had the equalizing power such as the provinces. The equalization power enabled the weak regions to keep having sufficient amount of fund due to the aid in the educational equality and justice.

Both of the models seemed to be in accordance with the Law of Regional Autonomy and the Law of Financial Balancing between the Central Government and the Regional Government in the efforts of managing the educational fund as efficient and effective as possible (M. Fakry, 2000:33).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In the era of regional autonomy, the educational financing has not been the responsibility of the central government but also the responsibility of the regional government altogether with the society. The rapid development of science and technology and the intense competition among the employment domains demand the schools to be able to generate well-qualified graduates with competitive edge. In order to achieve the objective, in the operation the schools demand a high financing. Educational institutions should be more independent, creative and innovative in searching for and allocating multiple resources and fund sources for the educational financing.

Unfortunately, the implementation of regional and school autonomy has not presented a fundamental change and orientation on the educational financing. The educational financing within the state schools relies on the government, while the educational financing within the private schools relies on the parents. Financing has been one of the three most important aspects in the management in addition to the facility and the time.

The focus of learning leaders and in general, and of school principal in specific, should be the students' learning process. The reason is that the school's main mission focuses on the teaching and learning activities and the school effectiveness most of the times is measured by means of academic achievements. In order to achieve the main mission, there should be huge amount of educational financing and this is the time when the learning leadership should play its role in managing and arranging the educational financing. The learning leadership does not only mean to pay attention to the students' learning results but also means to create strategies in order that the demanded learning fund might be met.

The differentiator between the learning leadership and the other type of leadership is the fact that most of the possessed fund will be totally spent for the educational process financing that refers to the quality improvement.

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