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PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR DISSEMINATING EDUCATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

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ABSTRACT

Educational policy changes require effective principal leadership communication strategies to ensure that policies are understood and implemented optimally by school communities. This study aims to analyze principal leadership communication strategies in disseminating educational policy changes, particularly through participatory communication, transformational leadership, resistance management, and the use of information technology. This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. Data were obtained from relevant scientific journal articles, academic books, educational institution reports, and policy documents. Data collection was conducted through documentation, while data analysis used content analysis involving data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that open, two-way, and participatory communication can foster shared understanding and increase teacher involvement in policy implementation. Transformational leadership plays a role in strengthening the motivation, trust, and commitment of school community members toward change. Meanwhile, resistance management through dialogue and mentoring, combined with the use of information technology, can improve the effectiveness of information dissemination, coordination, and policy evaluation. Therefore, the success of educational policy change dissemination depends on principals' ability to integrate effective communication, collaborative leadership, continuous support, and systematic evaluation.

Keywords: leadership communication; school principals; policy dissemination; transformational leadership; educational change.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational policy changes form part of efforts to improve educational quality in response to developments in science and technology, students' needs, and societal demands. These changes may involve curriculum renewal, teaching and learning systems, assessment, digital technology use, and school governance. Implementation requires more than formally establishing and communicating policies. All school community members must also understand and apply them appropriately (Alindra, 2026). Policy dissemination therefore serves an important role in communicating information, explaining the purpose of change, and developing a shared understanding within schools. Principals play a strategic leadership role in connecting educational policies with schools' actual needs and circumstances. The Global Education Monitoring Report Team (2024) emphasizes that educational leadership extends beyond administrative duties to include setting direction, strengthening learning, developing human resources, and promoting collaboration in educational settings.

As educational leaders, principals have a responsibility to ensure that teachers and education staff understand policy changes before implementing them in school activities. This responsibility requires planned, open, and sustained communication strategies. One-way communication may lead to misunderstandings, conflicting interpretations, or resistance when school community members receive insufficient explanations of a policy's objectives and implications. Two-way communication, by contrast, allows teachers to express their views, ask questions, and identify potential implementation barriers (Diamsyah & Hadijaya, 2026). Yandhani et al. (2024) show that principals can act as mediators in educational reform by connecting policy change requirements with teachers' attitudes and needs. These findings indicate that implementing educational change requires principals to align policy direction with the circumstances of their school communities.

Transformational leadership also supports the successful dissemination of educational policy changes. This approach emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and guide organizational members toward shared goals. In schools, principals need to explain the reasons for change, the intended benefits, and the contributions expected from each school community member (Ali et al., 2025). Teachers can then understand policies as part of efforts to improve teaching and learning quality, rather than solely as administrative obligations. In their study of transformational leadership in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, Suryadi and Nurdin (2024) discuss the importance of principals' leadership approaches during curriculum policy transitions. This supports the relevance of leadership that develops a shared vision and guides change through a planned process.

Developments in information technology provide opportunities for principals to expand the reach and improve the effectiveness of policy communication. Digital coordination groups, electronic policy documents, online meetings, workshops, and discussion forums can support faster and more structured information sharing. However, technology use needs clear information, opportunities for feedback, and assistance for teachers who face difficulties understanding or applying new policies. Rumiyadi et al. (2026), in their study of principals' digital leadership in communicating educational policies in vocational secondary schools, identify digital leadership as an important aspect of managing educational change. Technology should therefore support coordination, collaboration, and policy implementation monitoring alongside information distribution.

Nevertheless, disseminating educational policy changes may involve several barriers, including differences in understanding, limited competence, workload, concerns about changes in work practices, and insufficient teacher involvement in decision-making. These conditions require principals to combine formal instructions with persuasion, consultation, mentoring, and ongoing professional support. Principals need to provide opportunities for teachers to express their concerns and involve them in finding solutions that fit their schools' needs. The Global Education Monitoring Report Team (2024) also highlights that overly hierarchical school leadership may restrict stakeholder involvement, while effective communication helps develop shared understanding and mobilize teams toward organizational goals. Communication strategies should therefore function as an integral part of change leadership, extending beyond announcements and instructions.

These considerations make principals' leadership communication strategies in disseminating educational policy changes an important subject for study. The discussion concerns communication media and channels, leadership approaches, teacher involvement, resistance management, and sustained implementation support. This article aims to analyze the communication strategies principals can use to communicate educational policy changes, explain how participatory communication and transformational leadership develop shared understanding, and identify approaches for overcoming barriers and strengthening school community involvement. The review is

intended to inform principals' development of effective, adaptive, and collaborative leadership communication so that schools can implement educational policy changes with clearer direction and sustained support.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This method was selected to examine principals' leadership communication strategies in disseminating educational policy changes through relevant theories, previous research findings, and scholarly sources. The review involved searching for and examining literature on leadership communication, transformational leadership, educational policy dissemination, organizational communication, and resistance management in school settings (Adlini et al., 2022).

The study uses secondary data from scholarly journal articles, academic books, reports from educational institutions, and policy documents relevant to its focus. Literature searches used scholarly databases and portals, including Google Scholar and Garuda, as well as publications from credible educational institutions. Sources were selected for their relevance to the research topic, clear provenance, and contribution to explaining principals' communication strategies. Publication year also informed source selection, with priority given to recent literature while retaining foundational theories that remain relevant (Wijaya et al., 2025).

Data collection used document analysis, which involved identifying, reading, recording, and categorizing information from the selected sources. The collected data were then examined through content analysis involving data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Information from the literature was organized into several main themes: participatory and two-way communication, transformational leadership and shared vision, resistance management, the use of communication media and information technology, and role modeling and ongoing professional support. Findings from different sources were then compared to identify similarities, differences, and relationships among concepts (Iba & Wardhana, 2024).

To maintain analytical accuracy, the study compared sources while considering the credibility, relevance, and consistency of the information obtained. The analysis is presented descriptively and analytically to explain how principals' communication strategies can support the understanding, acceptance, and implementation of educational policy changes in schools. Through this method, the study seeks to develop a systematic conceptual understanding and recommendations that principals can consider when developing effective and collaborative leadership communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Principals' Leadership Communication in Educational Policy Dissemination

Leadership communication is an important element in disseminating educational policy changes in schools. Principals communicate government policies and explain their objectives, benefits, and implementation procedures so that teachers and education staff can understand them. Policy changes, such as curriculum renewal, assessment reform, and the adoption of educational technology, require clear communication to prevent misunderstandings during implementation. Principals therefore need planned, open, and sustained communication strategies to ensure that school community members understand policies and implement them in line with their stated objectives (Nasihah & Yuliana, 2018).

In the Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/5: Leadership in Education: Lead for Learning, the Global Education Monitoring Report Team (2024) describes four main dimensions of educational leadership: setting direction and expectations, focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration, and developing human resource capacity. This perspective underscores principals' strategic role in guiding change and creating working environments that support educational quality improvement. Leadership communication consequently forms part of developing shared understanding and mobilizing school community members toward educational goals, in addition to fulfilling administrative functions.

Consistent with this perspective, Ramadhani et al. (2026) examine communication patterns, teacher involvement, working relationships, and barriers to policy implementation in their study of principals' leadership in developing communication and teacher participation at SMP Terpadu Darul Muttaqin Surabaya. Their study helps explain the importance of open communication in school management. When teachers have opportunities to express their views and clarify information, principals can identify the needs and difficulties that emerge during policy implementation. Open

communication also requires follow-up mechanisms so that feedback can inform improvements in implementation.

Comparing these findings suggests that successful policy dissemination should be assessed through teachers' understanding, readiness, and involvement in implementation, as well as the delivery of information. In practice, principals need to explain policies through coordination meetings, discussions, policy briefing sessions, and accessible communication media. The information should cover the reasons for change, intended objectives, implementation procedures, and implications for teachers' duties and learning activities. Principals also need to model consistent policy implementation and remain open to evaluation. Through these practices, leadership communication can develop trust, clarify the direction of change, and strengthen school community members' commitment to implementing educational policies.

Participatory Communication Strategies and Transformational Leadership

Participatory communication involves stakeholders in information sharing, the exchange of ideas, decision-making, and educational policy implementation (Simamora et al., 2025). Within principals' leadership, participatory communication gives teachers and education staff opportunities to understand policies, provide feedback, and participate in implementation. This approach allows principals to establish open, two-way communication so that school community members understand educational policies as a shared responsibility. This aligns with Darmasetiadi and Swaradesy's (2025) view that participatory communication emphasizes dialogue, community involvement, and the exchange of ideas in supporting change.

Schools can apply participatory communication in educational policy dissemination through coordination meetings, group discussions, evaluation forums, policy briefings, and digital communication media. Principals need to create opportunities for teachers and education staff to express opinions, ask questions, and describe the difficulties they face. For example, when a school introduces a new teaching and learning policy, the principal needs to explain its objectives, discuss its implications for instruction, and gather teachers' feedback alongside communicating the rules through meetings or messaging groups. This makes dissemination more interactive and enables schools to identify problems at an early stage (Aufa et al., 2025).

The successful dissemination of educational policies also relates closely to principals' transformational leadership. This leadership approach emphasizes developing a shared vision, providing motivation, encouraging innovation, and developing organizational members' potential. In education, principals communicate policies and guide change by strengthening teachers' trust and commitment to school goals. Iswandi et al. (2025) show that open, dialogic, and participatory internal communication within transformational leadership can support teachers' work motivation, involvement in decision-making, and the development of a collaborative working culture in schools.

Transformational leadership can be applied through four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Principals demonstrate idealized influence by modeling compliance with and consistent implementation of policies. They provide inspirational motivation by communicating the policy vision and objectives clearly and convincingly. Intellectual stimulation involves encouraging teachers to think critically, develop ideas, and find solutions to implementation barriers (Fatmawati et al., 2026). Individualized consideration involves mentoring that responds to each teacher's needs and abilities. These four dimensions help principals develop understanding and improve teachers' readiness for educational change. Nurfahila and Yuliana (2024) also identify regular meetings, teacher professional development, and teacher involvement in decision-making as relevant strategies for applying transformational leadership in schools.

Participatory communication and transformational leadership therefore need to operate together in educational policy dissemination. Participatory communication creates opportunities for dialogue and involvement, while transformational leadership strengthens school community members' motivation, trust, and commitment to implementation. Principals need to ensure clear information, follow up on feedback, and accompany each policy with an appropriate allocation of responsibilities and mentoring. Digital media can also support information sharing and coordination, while direct communication remains necessary to prevent misunderstandings.

The effectiveness of educational policy dissemination thus depends on how far school community members understand, accept, and consistently implement policies, as well as how quickly they receive information. Combining participatory communication and transformational leadership may strengthen collaboration, increase teacher involvement, and develop a school culture that adapts

to change. Their application nevertheless needs to reflect organizational conditions, human resource readiness, and the characteristics of the policy being communicated.

Resistance Management and the Use of Information Technology

Managing resistance to change is an important aspect of educational policy dissemination. Resistance may arise when principals introduce policies that alter work practices, administrative systems, teaching methods, or information technology use in schools. Such resistance may reflect limited policy understanding, concerns about unfamiliar practices, insufficient skills, or perceptions of increased workload, rather than simply an unwillingness to change. Hifza et al. (2020) explain that barriers to change management in educational institutions may result from insufficient policy communication, weak support for human resources, and the limited use of information systems. Resistance should therefore be understood as an organizational issue that requires communication, mentoring, and sustained support.

When managing resistance, principals need open, persuasive communication strategies focused on problem solving. An initial step involves clearly explaining the reasons, objectives, benefits, and consequences of a policy to teachers and education staff. Principals then need to provide opportunities for dialogue so that school community members can express objections, ask questions, and describe their difficulties. This feedback requires follow-up through mentoring, training, adjustments to implementation stages, or the provision of necessary facilities. Khofi's (2025) study of change management in addressing teachers' resistance to educational digitalization emphasizes awareness, willingness, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement as conditions for effective change. This approach indicates that policy acceptance requires the readiness and capability of those responsible for implementation, alongside clear instructions.

Information technology provides another important strategy for supporting educational policy dissemination. It enables principals to share information more quickly, reach wider audiences, and maintain records through email, WhatsApp groups, learning platforms, school websites, and educational management information systems. Digital media can facilitate policy document distribution, announcements, activity coordination, and program implementation monitoring. In his discussion of change management and educational technology, Waghid (2023) emphasizes that technology adoption requires planned change strategies and leadership that develops organizational readiness. Access to digital devices therefore needs effective communication and support for their use.

In practice, principals can integrate information technology into each stage of policy dissemination. During information delivery, schools can share policies through official digital platforms that teachers and education staff can easily access. To support understanding, principals can organize online policy briefings, provide digital guides, or produce short explanatory videos. During implementation, technology can support schedule distribution, task coordination, and activity reporting. At the evaluation stage, digital forms and data management systems can help collect feedback and identify implementation barriers. Using technology in this way allows schools to conduct dissemination more systematically and transparently, while making the process easier to evaluate.

Nevertheless, information technology use also presents challenges, including differences in digital competence, limited devices and internet access, the risk of misunderstanding written messages, and school data security concerns. Principals therefore need to select media according to school community members' needs and readiness, provide training for users who need it, and establish official communication channels. Important information also requires confirmation through direct meetings when it may generate differing interpretations. Purnomo et al. (2024), in their study of the transformation of digital school culture, identify the importance of digital skills development, vision alignment, resource preparation, periodic evaluation, and efforts to increase technology acceptance during school change.

Resistance management and information technology use thus provide complementary strategies for educational policy dissemination. Resistance management addresses school community members' readiness, understanding, and acceptance, while information technology supports effective information delivery, coordination, and policy evaluation. Both depend on principals' ability to establish open communication, provide appropriate support, and conduct ongoing evaluation. These practices help ensure that school community members receive and understand educational policies and implement them more consistently in line with their intended objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings and discussion indicate that principals' leadership communication strategies play an important role in the successful dissemination of educational policy changes in schools. Clear, open, and sustained communication helps teachers and education staff understand policy objectives and implementation procedures. Participatory communication and transformational leadership can also strengthen school community members' involvement, motivation, trust, and commitment when responding to change. Resistance management through dialogue, mentoring, and competence development, together with information technology use, can support effective policy communication and implementation. Principals therefore need adaptive and participatory communication strategies that respond to school community needs and include periodic evaluation. Policy dissemination should address understanding, acceptance, and consistent implementation alongside information delivery to support sustained improvement in educational quality.

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