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Exploring the Personality Profile of Effective School Principals: Teachers' Perspectives from Junior High Schools in South Sulawesi

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Abstract

The quality of education in Indonesia remains a major challenge, with school leadership playing a crucial role in determining educational success. This study explores the personality profiles of effective school principals in junior high schools in South Sulawesi based on teachers' perspectives. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through teacher evaluations to identify key personality dimensions such as extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness. The findings reveal that agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness are the most dominant traits associated with effective principals. Principals who are open to new ideas, emotionally balanced, and empathetic toward teachers are perceived to create positive school climates and enhance teacher motivation. These results suggest that personality characteristics significantly influence leadership effectiveness and school performance. The study recommends that personality assessment be integrated into principal recruitment and professional development to improve leadership quality and educational outcomes in Indonesia.

Keyword: Personality Profile; Effective School Principals; Teacher Perspectives; Junior High Schools; South Sulawesi

INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges in Indonesia's education system today lies in the persistently low quality of education at various levels (Rivai & Murni, 2010). According to Turi (2007), Indonesia continues to face fundamental issues such as unequal access to education, weak educational governance, poor instructional quality, and significant disparities between urban

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and rural regions. The quality of human resources remains a key factor influencing the nation's overall development. Continuous improvement in this area requires a strong education system, both formal and informal, across all educational stages, from primary to higher education (Mulyasa, 2009). However, despite numerous reform efforts, the education sector in Indonesia has yet to produce human resources who meet societal expectations and the demands of national development.

Within the school context, the principal plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and success of educational programs. A school principal is not only responsible for curriculum planning, teacher management, and school administration but also serves as a central figure in fostering accountability and student achievement. Effective principals inspire their teachers, create collaborative learning environments, and model professionalism and integrity (Heyward et al., 2011; Sahenk, 2010). Buckner et al. (2000) further emphasized that principals shape teacher leadership by providing opportunities for professional growth and empowerment. Thus, the personality of a principal, reflected through their attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal skills, has a direct influence on school performance.

Weaknesses in principal leadership, however, remain a significant issue in Indonesian schools. Fullan (2001) highlighted that many principals still adopt bureaucratic leadership models that hinder innovation and collaboration. Similar findings were reported in several junior high schools (Sekolah Menengah Pertama, SMP) in South Sulawesi, where limited communication and lack of teacher involvement have resulted in low school performance (Syarifuddin, 2007; South Sulawesi Education Department, 2012). These findings indicate that leadership effectiveness is not merely about administrative ability but also about personality traits that support positive relationships, openness to feedback, and emotional stability.

Personality plays a vital role in defining an effective principal. Sailis (2009) found that many principals in South Sulawesi were not open to new ideas and innovations from teachers, often preferring rigid and traditional approaches. Such attitudes can inhibit collaboration and creativity in schools. Peter (2009) argued that openness, empathy, and agreeableness are essential personality characteristics that help build trust and a supportive school culture. When principals demonstrate these qualities, teachers are more likely to feel valued and motivated to perform better. Conversely, a lack of openness or emotional stability can lead to dissatisfaction, conflict, and reduced organizational effectiveness.

Previous studies have consistently shown that school leadership and personality are critical determinants of educational success (Hussein, 1997; Lashway, 2003). Principals who exhibit positive personality traits such as responsibility, emotional balance, and openness to

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innovation tend to achieve higher levels of school performance and teacher satisfaction. Harris (2002) and Senge et al. (2005) further noted that the contemporary role of school leaders has evolved from a purely managerial position to one that emphasizes collaboration, shared vision, and human relations. Thus, understanding the personality profile of effective school principals becomes increasingly relevant in today's educational context.

In South Sulawesi, several studies have reported that many school principals struggle to demonstrate effective leadership behaviors, often due to limited self-awareness and weak interpersonal skills (Ibrahim, 2006; Zainuddin, 2008). Teachers have expressed concerns regarding principals who lack empathy, communication skills, and openness, factors that directly affect motivation, creativity, and overall school performance. The 2012 South Sulawesi Education Department report also indicated that leadership-related factors, including the principal's personality, were among the main contributors to low student achievement in the region.

Given these challenges, exploring the personality traits that characterize effective school principals is essential for improving educational quality. Identifying which personality dimensions such as extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness are most associated with effective school performance can provide valuable insights for leadership development and principal selection in Indonesia. By understanding these traits from teachers' perspectives, this study aims to contribute to the development of a more evidence-based framework for identifying, training, and appointing future school leaders.

Therefore, this research seeks to explore the personality profiles of effective school principals in junior high schools across South Sulawesi based on teachers' evaluations and perceptions. The findings are expected to inform education policymakers and leadership training institutions on the importance of personality as a foundation for effective educational leadership.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design aimed at exploring the personality profile of effective school principals from teachers' perspectives in junior high schools across South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The study focused on identifying the dominant personality traits of principals as perceived by teachers. The population consisted of teachers from state junior high schools (SMP Negeri) in six selected districts, namely Makassar, Pangkep, Barru, Wajo, Tana Toraja, and East Luwu. From a total of 540 distributed questionnaires, 477 valid responses were

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collected and analyzed. The respondents were selected using proportional random sampling to ensure representation from both the northern and southern regions of South Sulawesi.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on the Big Five personality dimensions, including extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Descriptive statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to analyze the data. The findings were interpreted to determine the most dominant personality traits that characterize effective school principals according to teachers’ evaluations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Synthesizing the Appropriate Personality to Be Appointed as a Principal in Junior High Schools (SMP) in South Sulawesi Based on Teacher Evaluations

This section will discuss the findings of the first research question, which focuses on identifying the suitable personality traits for appointment as a principal based on teacher evaluations in junior high schools (SMP) in South Sulawesi. The following explanation presents the results of the descriptive analysis of the Principal's Personality variable construct through mean scores, frequency, and percentage. The data analysis procedure and interpretation are adjusted according to the variable.

1. Agility

The research findings on the principal's personality in terms of agility received positive feedback from respondents with a mean score of 4.25. This indicates that the principal's agility personality is at a high level. This means that agility is considered one of the strong traits that supports a principal’s appointment according to the teachers’ evaluation. The detailed analysis results are presented in Table 1 below.

	Frequency, Percent							
Item	1	2	3	4	5	Min	Stand	Level
1	11 (2.3%)	12 (2.5%)	31 (6.5%)	210 (44.0%)	213 (44.7%)	4.26	.87	High
2	0 (0.0%)	10 (2.1%)	26 (5.5%)	248 (52.0%)	193 (40.5%)	4.31	.67	High
3	4 (0.8%)	8 (1.7%)	34 (7.1%)	224 (47.0%)	207 (43.4%)	4.30	.75	High
4	0	7	65	231	174	4.20.	.72	High

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	(0.0%)	(1.5%)	(13.6%)	(48.4%)	(36.5%)			
5	0 (0.0%)	14 (2.9%)	62 (13.0%)	221 (46.3%)	180 (37.7%)	4.19	.77	High
Agility						4.25	.55	

Table 1 above shows the values of frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and mean of the study on the agility of principals. This indicates that, overall, the five items are at a high level. Respondents' statements on item one show that 210 respondents (44.0%) agreed, 213 respondents (44.7%) strongly agreed, while 31 respondents (6.5%) somewhat disagreed, 12 respondents (2.5%) disagreed, and 11 respondents (2.3%) strongly disagreed. For item two, 248 respondents (52.0%) agreed, 193 respondents (40.5%) strongly agreed, 0 respondents (0.0%) strongly disagreed, 10 respondents (2.1%) disagreed, and 26 respondents (5.5%) somewhat disagreed. Next, for item three, 207 respondents (43.4%) strongly agreed, 224 respondents (47.0%) agreed, 34 respondents (7.1%) somewhat disagreed, 8 respondents (1.7%) disagreed, and 4 respondents (0.8%) strongly disagreed. For item four, 174 respondents (36.5%) strongly agreed, 231 respondents (48.4%) agreed, 65 respondents (13.6%) somewhat disagreed, 7 respondents (1.5%) disagreed, and 0 respondents (0.0%) strongly disagreed.

As for item five, 180 respondents (37.7%) strongly agreed, 221 respondents (46.3%) agreed, 62 respondents (13.0%) somewhat disagreed, 14 respondents (2.9%) disagreed, and 0 respondents (0.0%) strongly disagreed.

B. The quantitative findings in the table above support the qualitative data gathered through interviews with eight junior high school teachers in South Sulawesi Province.

Based on the qualitative data analysis conducted by the researcher, several themes emerged relating to the principal's personality, specifically agility. Below are the results of the interviews conducted:

According to respondent R1/G/L/1, the principal's personality particularly friendliness is viewed positively, with the principal being quite approachable. Respondent R1/G/L/1 added that teachers need a pleasant atmosphere when teaching so they feel comfortable carrying out their activities at school. R1/G/L/1 stated:

> "The principal is always friendly to all teachers, staff, and students, and therefore, we feel motivated to participate in school activities." —R1/G/L/1

Based on the feedback from both respondents, it is evident that the principal must be friendly to teachers, students, and staff. The principal greets, and even visits, teachers and students in their classrooms. Friendliness is shown through establishing harmonious

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relationships with the school community.

Respondent R4/G/L/4 stated that the principal easily connects with everyone at the school. Meanwhile, R6/G/L/6 argued that the principal is still young and enjoys being involved in organizations. Additionally, if there are important matters to discuss, the principal is accessible anywhere. Supporting this, respondent R6/G/L/6 explained that the principal, as a school leader, is not only seen as a colleague by teachers, staff, and students but also as a family member. R6/G/L/6 stated:

"Yes, he easily gets along with everyone in the school because he enjoys being part of organizations." —R4/G/L/4

"Although he is our superior, he is also considered a friend and even like a sibling—both junior and senior peers." —R6/G/L/6

Respondent R3/G/L/3 mentioned that the principal has a humorous personality. When there is free time, the principal occasionally visits the teachers' lounge to make jokes, helping teachers feel more relaxed. This view aligns with respondent R6/G/L/6, who noted that the principal sometimes adds humor to reduce tension in the school environment. They stated:

"He has a sense of humor, and sometimes visits the teachers' room. We teachers don't feel tense because he likes to joke around." —R6/G/L/6

"When we teachers and staff are busy working, sometimes he brings humor that makes us feel more relaxed and less stressed." —R3/G/L/3'

From the statements of both respondents, it is clear that having a humorous principal is very important. Teachers tend to feel tense when a principal is overly serious or stern. Many teachers and staff appreciate that work can be carried out without pressure from the principal. Ultimately, the principal should be agile in leadership and friendly to all teachers, staff, and students.

A principal must also be sociable, have a sense of humor, easily build rapport, and provide equal opportunities to subordinates. Moreover, the principal should serve as a good role model to all teachers, staff, and students. However, every teacher and staff member at school has different traits and personalities. Therefore, the principal as a leader must be able to embrace everyone as a whole and understand the needs of subordinates.

2. Agreeableness

The principal's personality study decision received positive feedback from respondents with a mean value of 4.18. This indicates that the principal's personality regarding approval is at a high level, as the majority of respondents strongly agreed. The analysis results are detailed in

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Table 2:

Table 2. Distribution of Mean, Frequency Percentage, Standard Deviation of Approval

	Frequency, Pecent						Stand	Level
Item	1	2	3	4	5	Min	Piawai	
6	4 (0.8%)	5 (1.0%)	56 (11.7%)	240 (50.3%)	172 (36.1%)	4.20	.75	High
7	7 (1.5%)	10 (2.1%)	35 (7.3%)	258 (54.1%)	167 (35.0%)	4.19	.78	High
8	5 (1.0%)	18 (3.8%)	33 (6.9%)	275 (57.7%)	146 (30.6%)	4.13	.78	High
9	3 (0.6%)	6 (1.3%)	43 (9.0%)	245 (51.4%)	180 (37.7%)	4.24	.72	High
10	4 (0.8%)	3 (0.6%)	78 (16.4%)	216 (45.3%)	176 (36.9%)	4.17	.78	High
Agrreableness						4.18	.59	

Table 2 above presents the frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and mean values for the principal's approval study. Overall, all five items are at a high level. Item 6 indicates that 240 (50.3%) respondents agreed, 172 (36.1%) strongly agreed, 56 (11.7%) somewhat disagreed, 5 (1.0%) disagreed, and 4 (0.8%) strongly disagreed. Item 7 shows that 258 (54.1%) agreed, 167 (35.0%) strongly agreed, 35 (7.3%) somewhat disagreed, 10 (2.1%) disagreed, and 7 (1.5%) strongly disagreed. Item 8 indicates that 275 (57.7%) agreed, 146 (30.6%) strongly agreed, 33 (6.9%) somewhat disagreed, 18 (3.8%) disagreed, and 5 (1.0%) strongly disagreed. Item 9 shows that 245 (51.4%) agreed, 180 (37.7%) strongly agreed, 43 (9.0%) somewhat disagreed, 6 (1.3%) disagreed, and 3 (0.6%) strongly disagreed. Item 10 indicates that 216 (45.3%) agreed, 176 (36.9%) strongly agreed, 78 (16.4%) somewhat disagreed, 3 (0.6%) disagreed, and 4 (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

The quantitative study results in the table above support the qualitative interview findings from eight junior high school teachers in South Sulawesi Province. The interview analysis revealed themes related to the principal's approval personality. Some respondents mentioned that the principal at their school also provided assistance to teachers, staff, and students. The assistance offered by the principal included providing solutions to teachers facing problems, as expressed by respondent R1/G/L/1, and this view was supported by respondent R3/G/L/3.

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Teachers, staff, and students were very satisfied and happy with the principal's helpful assistance. A similar statement was made by R5/G/L/5, who said that besides being a leader at the school, the principal was also considered a relative because they could help with all matters at the school. They also argued that the principal assisted in financial welfare matters. The respondents' statements are as follows:

"The principal always provides moral support to the teachers and staff. We feel happy even though it may not be much, but the attention and help are very meaningful and also motivate us in our work." – R3/G/L/3

"The principal provides solutions wholeheartedly." – R1/G/L/1

"He plays a dual role – as a leader and like a sibling. He is willing to help as a superior, meaning as a leader in resolving issues at school." – R5/G/L/5

Meanwhile, according to respondents R1/G/L/1 and R8/G/P/8, the principal leads with compassion, appreciation, empathy, and forgiveness toward those who make mistakes. The respondents also stated that when someone makes a mistake, the principal does not get angry but rather provides guidance so that colleagues do not repeat the same mistake in the future. Respondents R1/G/L/1 and R8/G/P/8 said:

"The principal never scolds teachers who make mistakes but instead provides encouragement and direction so that the staff or students do not repeat the same mistake. He is considerate toward everyone at the school." – R1/G/L/1

"When a teacher or student makes a mistake, he always resolves the issue wisely and then gives advice or guidance." – R8/G/P/8

Respondent R5/G/L/5 believes that the principal often treats all teachers and staff fairly and equally, without favoring one teacher over another. He sees everyone at school as equal. Respondent R2/G/L/2 essentially agrees with R5/G/L/5's statement. He affirmed that the principal at his school is objective, fair, and considers the feelings of subordinates before making decisions. Respondent R2/G/L/2 stated:

"Throughout my time teaching at this school, he has always treated teachers and staff equally and never favored one teacher over another." – R5/G/L/5

"Being objective means that if a mistake is made by a teacher or staff member, he provides an explanation without taking sides." – R2/G/L/2

Respondent R1/G/L/1 stated that the principal does not make decisions on his own but discusses them with teachers and staff to ensure no one feels left out. Meanwhile, respondent R8/G/L/8 (a female teacher) and R3/G/P/3 also stated that their principal involves teachers and staff in improving student performance and does not work alone. Respondents R1/G/L/1, R8/G/L/8, and

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R3/G/P/3 said:

"The principal doesn't want to make decisions alone but consults with the teachers to avoid disadvantaging anyone." – R1/G/L/1

"Usually, he asks for help from staff or teachers. He doesn't work alone but always collaborates to improve student achievement and the school's progress." – R8/G/P/8

"Yes, our principal delegates tasks. He doesn't do all the work himself but is assisted by several vice principals." – R3/G/P/3

Furthermore, according to respondents R3/G/P/3 and R7/G/L/7, one of the principal's admirable traits is honesty. Honesty is a key factor, and one respondent mentioned that the principal works together with colleagues to design school programs. This respondent stated that the principal is quite honest in executing those programs. Respondents R3/G/P/3 and R7/G/L/7 said:

"All activities are carried out by the principal together with teachers in planning and setting the budget honestly." – R3/G/P/3

"My principal is good and honest, because whatever he does is always discussed with us. Especially regarding finances, he provides clear information to all the teachers." – R7/G/L/7

Finally, based on the interview analysis, it was found that several commendable qualities are present in the principals of junior high schools in South Sulawesi. Most respondents noted that the principals demonstrate honesty in fulfilling their duties and are well-liked. Teachers feel happy because the principal is helpful when they face problems. Moreover, one of the key traits of the principal is the willingness to collaborate with all teachers at school, which makes teachers feel enthusiastic and responsible in carrying out their activities. In addition, most principals lead with empathy and emotional intelligence. However, a few teachers do not favor their principal's leadership due to perceived dishonesty. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that every principal has their own weaknesses.

3. Emotional Stability

The item with the lowest mean score within the personality dimensions is the principal's emotional stability dimension. This indicates that some respondents gave less favorable responses overall, with a mean score of 3.41. The results of the analysis are shown in the following table:

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Table 3: Distribution of Mean, Frequency, Percentage, Standard Deviation of Emotional Stability

	Frequency, Percent						Stand	Level
Item	1	2	3	4	5	Min	Dev.	
11	15 (3.1%)	54 (11.3%)	117 (24.5%)	205 (43.0%)	86 (18.0%)	3.61	1.0	High
12	8 (1.7%)	28 (5.9%)	100 (21.0%)	239 (50.1%)	102 (21.4%)	3.84	.89	High
13	34 (7.1%)	127 (26.6%)	133 (27.9%)	122 (25.6%)	61 (12.8%)	3.10	1.1	High
14	44 (9.2%)	106 (22.2%)	147 (30.8%)	113 (23.7%)	67 (14.0%)	3.11	1.2	High
Emotion stability						3.41	.78	

Table 4.10 above shows the frequency, percentage, and mean scores related to the principal's emotional stability. Overall, the four items are at a moderately high level. For Item 11, a total of 205 respondents (43.0%) agreed, 86 (18.0%) strongly agreed, 117 (24.5%) somewhat disagreed, 54 (11.3%) disagreed, and 15 (3.1%) strongly disagreed. For Item 12, 239 respondents (50.1%) agreed, 102 (21.4%) strongly agreed, while 100 (21.0%) somewhat disagreed, 28 (5.9%) disagreed, and 8 (1.7%) strongly disagreed. For Item 13, 61 (12.8%) strongly agreed, 122 (25.6%) agreed, 133 (27.9%) somewhat disagreed, 127 (26.6%) disagreed, and 34 (7.1%) strongly disagreed. For Item 14, 67 (14.0%) strongly agreed, 113 (23.7%) agreed, 147 (30.8%) somewhat disagreed, 106 (22.2%) disagreed, and 44 (9.2%) strongly disagreed.

The quantitative findings above are supported by qualitative results through interviews with 8 teachers from junior high schools (SMP) in South Sulawesi Province. In this study, emotional stability refers to a principal's behavior. Interview analysis revealed several themes related to emotional stability among principals in South Sulawesi's SMPs. Respondents R1/G/L/1 and R2/G/L/2 stated that the principal was humble at school. They felt that the principal saw himself as part of the team, a friend, and did not consider himself superior to others. Their statements were:

"The principal is part of the teaching staff and never considers himself above the teachers." – R1/G/L/1

"He holds three principles: I am a friend, a brother, and a leader." – R2/G/L/2

Another point was raised by respondent R3/G/P/3, who shared that the principal worked

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sincerely and considered himself part of the school community. This motivated teachers to teach effectively. R5/G/L/5 added that a principal should help others without expecting rewards. They said:

“The principal always works sincerely. He works for the sake of God, not just because it’s a duty.” – R3/G/P/3

“He helps students, teachers, and staff sincerely—not just materially, but morally too. He also cares about the school environment. For him, working is an act of worship.” – R5/G/L/5

However, a different view was shared by respondent R2/G/L/2, who stated that the principal at her school sometimes made teachers feel uncomfortable due to being overly sensitive to issues. The principal was easily angered when asked about school finances. Respondents R2/G/L/2 and R3/G/P/3 further added that their principal did not care about staff or students and was often preoccupied with external meetings, neglecting his responsibilities at school:

“The principal is extremely sensitive when asked about financial matters. He often gets angry and emotional.” – R2/G/L/2

“The principal doesn’t care about the teachers, staff, or students. He should be a role model and show concern, but he doesn’t, which makes us lose motivation to teach—and students also lose the will to learn.” – R3/G/P/3

In conclusion, several issues related to the emotional stability of principals in South Sulawesi’s SMPs were identified—namely, humility, care, and sincerity. Since the principalship is considered an additional role, principals should remain humble to be accepted by fellow teachers. They should show genuine concern and sincerity without expecting any reward. However, some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their principals, describing them as overly sensitive about financial issues and lacking concern for teachers and students. As a result, staff morale and motivation to work and learn were negatively affected.

4. Openness

The findings of the personality study showed that the openness dimension received positive responses from the respondents, with a mean score of 4.00. This indicates that the principal’s personality trait of openness is at a moderately high level, as the majority of respondents selected "strongly agree" in this section. The analytical breakdown is shown in Table 4.

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Table 4: Distribution of Mean, Frequency, Standard Deviation, and Percentage for the Personality Trait of Openness

	Frequency, Percent						Stand	Level
Item	1	2	3	4	5	Min	Dev.	
15	1 (0.2%)	8 (1.7%)	63 (13.2%)	240 (50.3%)	165 (34.6%)	4.17	.73	High
16	4 (0.8%)	4 (0.8%)	37 (7.8%)	247 (51.8%)	185 (38.8%)	4.27	.71	High
17	4 (0.8%)	24 (5.0%)	78 (16.4%)	232 (48.6%)	139 (29.1%)	4.00	.86	High
18	23 (4.8%)	62 (13.0%)	160 (33.5%)	133 (27.9%)	99 (20.8%)	3.47	1.1	High
19	1 (0.2%)	14 (2.9%)	65 (13.6%)	245 (51.4%)	152 (31.9%)	4.12	.77	High
Openness						4.00	.58	

Table 4 shows the values of frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and mean for the study on principal openness. This indicates that, overall, the five items are at a moderately high level. For Item 15, a total of 240 respondents (50.3%) agreed, 165 (34.6%) strongly agreed, 63 (13.2%) somewhat disagreed, 8 (1.7%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (0.2%) strongly disagreed. For Item 16, 247 respondents (51.8%) agreed, 185 (38.8%) strongly agreed, while 37 (7.8%) somewhat disagreed, 4 (0.8%) disagreed, and 4 (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

For Item 17, 139 respondents (29.1%) strongly agreed, 232 (48.6%) agreed, 78 (16.4%) somewhat disagreed, 24 (5.0%) disagreed, and 4 (0.8%) strongly disagreed. Regarding Item 18, 99 respondents (20.8%) strongly agreed, 160 (33.5%) agreed, 133 (27.9%) somewhat agreed, 62 (13.0%) somewhat disagreed, and 23 (4.8%) strongly disagreed. As for Item 19, 152 respondents (31.9%) strongly agreed, 245 (51.4%) agreed, 65 (13.6%) somewhat disagreed, 14 (2.9%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (0.2%) strongly disagreed.

The quantitative findings above support the qualitative results gathered through interviews. According to respondent R6/G/L/6, one of the ways the principal demonstrates openness is by accepting suggestions or ideas. The principal values every recommendation given by teachers and staff, believing that it is likely to be the best solution from the teachers' perspective. Similarly, respondent R8/G/P/8 stated that the principal indeed welcomes ideas related to the implementation of school programs. In addition to the principal's opinions, the

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views of teachers and staff should also be appreciated for their contributions.

Respondents R6/G/L/6 and R8/G/P/8 shared:

"The principal often seeks opinions from other teachers in meetings and gives them the opportunity to provide feedback and constructive criticism regarding the principal's work." – R6/G/L/6

"He regularly shares ideas or opinions with the teachers." – R8/G/P/8

Furthermore, an essential element in the school learning process is that the principal should exhibit transparency. For instance, respondent R5/G/L/5 stated that the principal at their school is very transparent and includes teachers and staff in school activities. Similarly, R7/G/L/7 mentioned that the principal is very transparent in terms of cost and implementation of activities as a leader. Respondents said:

"Overall, he is transparent in his work as he always involves teachers in school activities." – R5/G/L/5

"I have observed that the principal has been transparent in all matters related to school activities, especially financial matters. He is very honest in his work." – R7/G/L/7

Another aspect of the principal's personality is openness about personal shortcomings. Respondent R2/G/L/2 stated that the principal is open and often shares opinions with colleagues. However, respondent R6/G/L/6 remarked that the principal tends to be secretive, especially regarding costs and school finances, including the use of teaching aids and school funding. Respondents said:

"The principal is not transparent and keeps financial matters secret. Sometimes, teachers must purchase teaching materials themselves even though there are available free funds and operational aid." – R2/G/L/2

"He admits that he has many shortcomings, which are usually covered by colleagues at school because we have a working group, and we always share ideas." – R6/G/L/6

Additionally, respondent R2/G/L/2 gave their view about the principal's openness to criticism. They stated that if the principal fails to lead responsibly, he is open to receiving constructive criticism from teachers and staff. This view is supported by R8/G/L/8, who said that the principal is patient in receiving feedback and suggestions from all teachers to improve leadership. Their comments include:

"He is someone who accepts constructive, positive criticism so that leadership can proceed effectively." – R2/G/L/2

"My principal is open and willing to accept all criticism from teachers, as he believes such feedback benefits everyone at school." – R8/G/L/8

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From the above insights, it can be concluded that a principal should be growth-oriented and open to criticism, which is a key strategy for school development. The principal delegates plans to all school teams and assumes responsibility for their roles.

Finally, based on interview analysis, several traits are identified as essential for principals of Junior High Schools (SMP) in South Sulawesi: agility, agreement, emotional stability, and openness. Principals should lead with patience, warmth, creativity, sociability, sincerity, and friendliness to foster a joyful environment for staff and students. Other notable traits include helpfulness, cooperation, and honesty, which allow principals to be role models. They should be humorous, humble, receptive to new ideas, open to criticism, transparent, and caring toward teachers, staff, and students so that everyone works responsibly. Moreover, principals must be considerate and forgiving toward everyone in the school community. However, as ordinary humans, principals may have flaws, especially given the diverse personalities of teachers and staff. Some respondents acknowledged that their principal's personality traits were disliked by others, particularly when the principal failed to show concern for the school environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight that effective school principals in junior high schools across South Sulawesi possess strong and positive personality traits that significantly influence school success. Teachers perceived that principals who demonstrate high levels of agreeableness, emotional stability, openness, and extraversion are more capable of creating supportive learning environments, fostering collaboration, and motivating teachers to perform effectively. These personality characteristics contribute to better communication, improved school climate, and enhanced overall performance.

In conclusion, the study confirms that the personality of school principals plays a vital role in determining leadership effectiveness and school achievement. Educational authorities should therefore consider personality traits as an essential criterion in the recruitment, selection, and professional development of school leaders. By fostering principals with the right personality profile, schools in South Sulawesi and beyond can achieve more effective leadership and sustainable educational improvement

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