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## Assertive Behavior of School Principals in Creating Excellent School

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk menyajikan perilaku asertif kepala sekolah dalam menciptakan sekolah unggul. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Adapun situs penelitian ini adalah Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku asertif kepala sekolah dalam menciptakan sekolah unggul di Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Munim Paiton Probolinggo ditunjukkan dengan perilaku memberikan informasi; mencari informasi; memberikan opini; merefleksikan isi pesan; memberikan kritik atau pujian; menerima kritik atau pujian; menyatakan perasaan; dan berbagi perasaan. Dalam segi kemampuan yang dimiliki, kepala Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo dibuktikan dalam bentuk sikap konsistensi serta idealisme dalam memutuskan dan menjalankan kebijakan; dan sosok yang jujur dan terbuka terhadap orang lain sehingga ia menjadi orang yang di segani dan berwibawa. Berdasarkan penelitian, perilaku asertif kepala sekolah mampu menciptakan sekolah unggul dalam kaitannya dengan perilaku asertif kepala sekolah yang idealis, konsisten dan hormat terhadap orang lain.

**Kata Kunci:** perilaku asertif, kepala sekolah, sekolah unggul

### Abstract

*This research was conducted to present the principal's assertive behavior in creating a superior school. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The research site is Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo. The results showed that the principal's proactive behavior in creating an excellent school at Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Munim Paiton Probolinggo was indicated by the behavior of providing information; searching for information; giving an opinion; reflecting the message content; giving criticism or praise; accepting criticism or praise; Express feelings; and share feelings. In terms of capabilities, the head of Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo is proven in the form of an attitude of consistency and idealism in deciding and implementing policies; and a person who is honest and open to others so that he becomes a respected and authoritative person. Based on the research, the principal's assertive behavior can create a superior school through the principal's proactive behavior, which is romantic, consistent, and respectful towards others.*

**Keywords:** assertive behavior, principal, excellent school

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## INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education as a whole is highly dependent on the operation of management at the madrasah level. Education is an important aspect that must be paid special attention to by all parties; given the importance of the function of education in improving the standard of living and intelligence of the nation, the government has provided a legal umbrella for the management of education nationally by enacting Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which should be used as a foothold to improve the quality of education (Moh Rofiki, 2019).

School management determines the quality of education, which lies with the principal and all school components, both community and individual. The principal is the person who holds the responsibility for running and guarding the running of the school organization (Moh Rofiki & Munawaroh, 2021). Principals will undoubtedly face challenges to systematically improve and succeed in education, such as continuous planning, implementation and evaluation to improve school quality. The quality of the principal as the institution's manager greatly influences the management's performance to maximize the school's components to create a professional version and consistently implement it to improve the quality of education.

Becoming an excellent school is certainly not easy because it depends on the principal as the school manager. The principal must work extra so that the unique characteristics of a superior school can be achieved. These characteristics include teachers who are professional, highly dedicated, intelligent students, disciplined, and able to compete in the national arena. However, this dream can be achieved based on the principal's behavior being tolerant, moderate, and accepting constructive criticism and suggestions.

The principal, as a leader, has a vital role in establishing the educational basis for the management and improvement of human resources in an institution. Thus, the Head of Madrasah must have leadership, innovation, intellectual skill and high creativity so that his institution can achieve educational goals and become a superior school. Leadership is an activity to move and guide other parties; in essence, it is a series of interaction and communication processes between humans. The interaction starts with someone brave, has the expertise and can appear as a pioneer in inviting others to do something with a synergistic effort to achieve a common goal.

The phenomenon of leadership proves that leadership has a tremendous impact on political life and the nation (Muali, Rofiki, Baharun, Zamroni, & Sholeh, 2021). In the business world, leadership has a powerful influence on organizational leadership and its survival, even in the world of education; in this case, school leadership is the development and progress of the school. The increasing number of duties and responsibilities of principals demands that the behavior of principals must be able to improve teacher performance by showing respect, care, and guidance to teachers both as individuals and in groups. Positive principal behavior can move and motivate someone to work professionally in groups to realize the school's organizational mission (Wahed, 2016).

The principal in the education process has a critical and strategic task in creating a superior school. Seeing the enormous burden of responsibility, difficulties and wisdom in setting steps and overseeing policies as goals for community needs. There is no available position of a leader; what appears is the style of leadership and the interaction relationship between subordinates. The principal is in the highest place in the institution. The pattern of leadership is very influential in determining the progress of the madrasa. Therefore, in education today, the figure of the head of the school is a responsibility as well as a strategic position in realizing educational goals (Indrawari & Hadi, 2019).

In his daily life, the principal carries out his duties as a driving force for the organization of his institution by relying on his behavior, skills, and creativity. There are many terms in referring to the principal's position related to his primary duties, namely: school leaders, school managers, etc. This explanation is fundamental because the principal must understand his responsibilities and functions while serving as principal (Sudarwan,

2003). The behavior and leadership pattern of a school principal will appear when giving orders, sharing responsibility and authority, how interacting and communicating, how to improve subordinate performance, how to provide guidance and supervision services, how maintaining work discipline for subordinates, how to lead during member meetings, how to make decisions, and so on. What supports behavior is the involvement of a leader in two-way communication, such as listening, providing motivation, facilitating interaction between members, and involving all parties in making a policy (Baharudin, 2017).

Behavior includes influential factors that affect the health of individuals, groups, or communities after environmental factors (Utami, 2010). Behavior is one aspect that affects the performance of the principal's management. Based on 31% of data, the combination of leadership attitudes and behavior is very varied. These variations conclude that the leader's behavior influences his leadership effectiveness more than attitudes (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). To have a good interaction, a leader must try to do it with a good, transparent, and self-confident method. To realize this desire, it is necessary to have assertive behavior (Putri, 2017). Assertive behavior is the behavior of communicating sentiments straightforwardly and sincerely without abusing the rights of individuals and others. In addition, assertiveness is a non-partisan behavior that maintains the qualities of transparency, authenticity, and mutual respect for individual rights and the freedom of others (Hikmah, 2020).

According to Diana Cawood, the technique of giving and receiving assertive behavior is an aspect of self-confidence skills. Expertise in giving and receiving in this proactive behavior can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1**  
**Techniques for Giving and Taking Assertive Behavior (Cawood, 1997)**

<b>Assertive Behavior</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>Give</b>	<b>Accept</b>
1	Giving information	Receive and seek information
2	Argue	Review the content of the information
3	Express hope	Reflect feelings
4	Share problems	Receive criticism or praise
5	Make decisions	Exemplary flexibility
6	Offer solutions and criticism	

The principal, as a manager, has a very strategic role in improving and growing education, namely to enhance human resources and the quality of education. Apart from the principal aspect, success in education is also caused by other elements such as teachers, students, education staff, and others (M Rofiki & Hasanah, 2021). The duties and responsibilities of school principals and other educators are required to strive and play an active role in developing professional quality performance following their profession so that the principal's role as a leader responsible for all school management can be achieved to the fullest.

Based on initial observations, the head of Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo in creating a superior school, found many problems, including a lack of knowledge about improving performance, managing schools and the principal's supervision program is rarely implemented, there is friction between school administrators, especially in placement the duties of education personnel such as placing competing school structures for positions as deputy principals with specific sections, namely student affairs, public relations, infrastructure and others. Therefore, the principal's assertive behavior is needed that can reduce the conflict above with a pattern of interactive relationships between the principal and the school structure and other parts.

Based on these problems, the researchers were interested in researching the assertive behavior of principals in creating excellent schools with a case study at Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo. In addition, the purpose of this study was to describe the assertive behavior of the principal in creating a superior school at Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im Paiton Probolinggo.

## **METHOD**

The approach used in this study is qualitative. The qualitative approach includes research methods whose attention focuses on fundamental general principles by looking at the symptoms that occur in human social life (Moleong, 2000). Qualitative research is a problem-solving method carried out using empirical or field data. This approach is used because this study aims to understand better the assertive behavior of madrasah principals in creating excellent schools. This research uses a case study research type that focuses intensively on an object studied as a case. The location of this research is at Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Munim Paiton Probolinggo.

This research was conducted to examine the assertive behavior of principals in creating excellent schools. The instrument of this research is the researcher himself, whose function is to determine the focus of the study and make conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015). Data collection techniques in this study through observation, interview, and documentation. The data analysis technique of this research was carried out by data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Then check the validity of the data using triangulation techniques. This triangulation as a process of interpreting data obtained by researchers is described in written form or verbal language to make it easier to write to report research results (Sugiyono, 2007).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Nurul Mun'im (from now on, abbreviated as MINM) is an institution under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in Paiton Probolinggo. The institution is very dependent on the Islamic boarding school foundation, including all policies and school needs that must go through the approval procedure from the foundation. Therefore, a school leader who behaves assertively is needed so that all school policies and conditions are transparent.

Problems faced by school principals are of various kinds, such as frequent crashes or conflicts between teachers and employees who find fault with each other and then ambition to seek the highest position in schools; this fact almost occurs in all institutions, so we need a madrasa principal who is honest, open and can accommodate aspirations as well as criticism and suggestions from various parties in creating a superior school.

The results of the study indicate that the assertive behavior of the MINM principal can create a superior school, which can be demonstrated in terms of giving and receiving, namely; providing information; searching for information; giving an opinion; reflecting the message content; give criticism or praise; accept criticism or praise; Express feelings; and share feelings. For more details, see the following image:



**Figure 1. Assertive Behavior of the MINM Principal**

*First*, the information provided by the principal is delivered orally and in writing and is used as needed. Systematic evaluation of the information presented is helpful to school leaders. This makes it easier for audiences, namely recipients of information, to respond to information and reduce the occurrence of misinformation. However, all information does not have to be communicated to all parties. The principal will only provide information to those in need with their responsibilities and divisions so that the information does not interfere with fulfilling their obligations. As with any information, it can lead to misinformation if not communicated properly and correctly. The current era (industrial era 4.0) requires people to use digital applications in all their activities and school principals to provide information using tools and applications such as Whatsapp, telegram, or other social media (Dacholfany, Noor, Diana, Nurzen. S, & Prayoga, 2021, Zamroni et al, 2021).

*Second*, the principal is a person whose job is only to produce and provide information but also to seek it out. This information is obtained to see the success and progress of the madrasa's performance and planning. On the other hand, principals can receive information from educators and other parties using coordination and consultation. The need for such information can improve the performance of subordinates because, without information, the principal will have difficulty analyzing the problems encountered and finding solutions to these problems. This information leads to negative things, and positive information is also needed by the head of the madrasa so that the policies that have been planned, implemented, and evaluated can continue to be maintained to achieve the goals.

*Third*, the principal's opinion can be conveyed through individual interactions or in forums. Conveying ideas must discuss matters relating to the scope of madrasa problems. These opinions will help provide motivation and insight for teachers. Giving ideas conveyed by the principal must not contain elements of oppression of people who accept opinions. Opinions will be readily accepted when the method of conveying them uses language and words that are easily understood and digested by the recipient of the opinion. No matter how good the idea is, if the way it is conveyed is wrong, it will impact the acceptance of the idea. The principal's opinion will be needed when all parties do not find the middle point of a problem. So as a leader must be wise in responding to all opinions because all opinions must be accommodated to choose which opinion is relevant and able to solve the problems at hand.

*Fourth*, the principal has a personal nature that can accommodate the opinions of others. Aspirations conveyed by subordinates are often accepted and taken into consideration. Although there are many problems with the idea that some teachers can make the headmaster express his complaint against the opinions of the entire school community, both the education staff and one of the teachers, in essence, these opinions need to be reviewed so that they find solutions by communicating and coordinating well so that the principal. The school does not find it difficult to position itself from its environment. According to Acolella & Calhoun in Mardani et al., it is argued that someone who finds it challenging to position himself in his environment, is closed and dishonest can harm himself, is not confident, feels worried and not enthusiastic. It can be ascertained that his assertive behavior is shallow. The lack of assertive behavior can hinder the mission and vision in carrying out his duties precisely, and in general, it will be challenging to meet the needs of a social human being (Mardani, Hardjono, & Karyanta, 2002).

*Fifth*, giving a warning is often done by the principal when there is an error. However, the reprimand or criticism conveyed by the principal through deliberation in public conveying without mentioning a person's individual to avoid ethics when reprimanding someone. Another method used in reprimanding someone is to convey individually through continuous communication to find the point of the problem and solve the problem of the problem. Not only criticism, but the principal also gave praise to the school community for the very satisfying performance results achieved by the teacher. Of course, the reprimand delivered by the principal must be constructive and not intended to oppress, let alone corner the person. In addition, the principal must also be able to provide solutions to his reprimanded so that the reprimanded person can evaluate himself so that he does not repeat it.

*Sixth*, the person who can accept criticism openly is the principal. This attitude is used as an evaluation of his performance. The reprimand was responded to by the school, judging whether it was true or not. On the other hand, the principal must be wise in apologizing if he feels there is a mistake and, on the one hand, trying to correct comments for inappropriate criticism. However, some teachers and others feel that they have never reprimanded the principal. This assessment proves that things will go well in his tenure as a leader. Even if the leadership is going well, it does not mean that it is free from criticism; there must be one of his subordinates who will criticize the principal. Because there must be shortcomings or mistakes that occur during his tenure, the principal must be able to accept these criticisms and suggestions. Regarding praise, the way the principal gets it is with the performance of the school community by carrying out the system and its duties professionally. Criticism of the principal can improve his leadership pattern to be more careful in carrying out his duties and responsibilities and behavior towards others.

*Seventh*, individually, stating the principal's needs to others has not been conveyed. Leaders often convey their needs and complaints about problems that exist in schools. In submitting his complaint, the principal must look at the condition of others so that it does not interfere. In addition, what can support team performance in schools to carry out their duties and responsibilities is a work ethic that does not hinder their work. Professionally, the principal can put his personality to convey all his complaints related to his profession. The attitude that the principal must shun is not to make his leadership position in accordance with his wishes for personal gain. In addition, a school principal must also possess courage and firmness to convey all complaints related to his school. And one of the characteristics of assertiveness is the courage to express oneself as a plan to meet the needs of school leaders. Therefore, assertive behavior can meet the criteria of the principal in dealing with various problems and conditions encountered. It is evident in understanding this assertive behavior that the meaning of assertiveness is an ability to express everything you want, think and feel to other parties but must still respect and protect the rights and feelings of others. He is afraid to interact with others and is closed to expressing his wishes. They will also only do the work they like and only wait for orders from others without realizing and thinking about their desires and goals. In social situations, minimally assertive people will always feel anxious and have weak and low self-esteem (Imani Khan, 2012).

*Eighth*, the principle of conveying his feelings is implemented using communication, both individually and in forums. From an emotional point of view, the principal's way of interacting must use an ordinary intonation or tone that does not get carried away by emotion. The resulting interaction is informal to establish good relations with all school members. All statements or feelings, whether they are happy with the work of their subordinates or vice versa, must be conveyed by the head to create transparency of performance. To be assertive behavior, the principal can share all feelings related to the school so that it seems to show and at the same time give an example of honesty, especially to yourself. This includes expressiveness which is classified as assertive behavior, namely expressing oneself to others in the hope of motivating oneself to be better. When the delivery of self-feeling can be done in spare time so that what is discussed does not use formal language that can limit the conversation (Hakim, Diana, & Sholihah, 2021).

The findings above provide a concrete picture of the assertive behavior of the MINM principal in leading and fostering the institution. Efforts made by school principals start from small things, namely the behavior of the leader himself. A leader is *uswah* and an example for his followers, so the most fundamental thing in leadership is behavior. The principal's behavior is closely related to interacting with other people to improve the quality of education in general and, in particular, to improve performance to be more professional in creating excellent schools. For the principal, assertive behavior is needed to establish good interaction relationships with all components of the school so that there is no aggressive behavior by the principal that affects others so that they feel threatened, hurt, depressed, physically ill, and mentally debilitated (P, 2012). The differences in aggressive and assertive behavior characteristics are striking from several traits that are used as indicators of difference, and more details can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2**  
**Differences in Characteristics of Aggressive and Assertive Behavior (P, 2012)**

No	Characteristic	Aggressive Behavior	Assertive Behavior
1	Respect for others	Low	High
2	Self-respect	Usually high	High
3	Main action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attacking others</li> <li>• I'm the first</li> <li>• Weaknesses are hidden</li> <li>• Power is exaggerated</li> <li>• Not submissive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for others</li> <li>• You and I are equal</li> <li>• Be open about weaknesses and strengths</li> <li>• Fair exchange</li> </ul>
4	Perceived benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get what you want</li> <li>• Undisturbed</li> <li>• Will be appreciated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many get what they want</li> <li>• Will be appreciated</li> <li>• Fair relationship</li> </ul>
5	Possible losses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad relationship</li> <li>• There is a hidden revenge</li> <li>• Lost contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not always getting what you want</li> <li>• Confuse/make jealousy of others</li> </ul>

In addition, the principal's assertive behavior can reduce obstacles to achieving institutional goals, such as conflicts between school structures. Therefore, the role of the principal is needed to reduce conflict and other problems such as suboptimal performance due to poor interaction between superiors and subordinates so that tasks that are already their responsibilities are neglected.

The principal's behavior is very influential on the stability of the running of an organization. Principals are required not only to provide policies and guidance but also to accept constructive criticism and suggestions. Submission of information submitted must use good interaction to accept it readily. All the principal's needs related to the institution are conveyed to build an excellent emotional relationship to create an honest, open, and

peaceful work environment. Of the eight, the principal's assertive behavior reflects the attitude that the principal should have as one of the efforts to create excellent schools and increase school competitiveness (Moh Rofiki, Sholeh, & Akbar, 2021).

In addition, the abilities possessed by the MINM principal, such as wisdom and consistency, can be accepted by the school community. This is evidenced by seeing and assessing the consistency of the principal in implementing and establishing mutually agreed policies. Ideally, the principal has a firm attitude in determining policies. In terms of activities, the principal will experience a lot of busyness. Wise principals will make policies in several ways: deliberation to reach consensus, paying attention to and considering the policies made, and evaluating the policies that have been determined to see the effectiveness these policies. The attitude that can be assessed is the principal's firmness in his wise attitude and consistency in establishing and overseeing the policy. Furthermore the principal is a leader who respects and cares about the opinions of others, so he can run the organization and determine policies wisely in a problem both in terms of education marketing and in creating excellent schools (Moh Rofiki et al., 2021). The principal's assertive behavior still maintains a charismatic leader even though the emotional relationship between other people is very close.

Several assertive attitudes have been applied by the principal as a form of effort toward a superior school by starting with small things such as an assertive attitude of giving and receiving, which has been described above, as well as good interaction relationships so that all components in the school run according to the vision and mission set forth. Viewed from the reciprocal side, some implications are proven in verbal interaction. The researcher's observations found several results from assertive behavior, such as the nature of transparency between the principal and all school members and the appreciation of subordinates for their leadership. Indeed, the relevance of the principal to the entire school community must be well established, considering that teachers are the spearhead for the success of the core activities in schools, namely education (Diana, 2021). By improving education in schools, for example, by improving the ability of teachers, the dream of making the school superior will be easier.

## CONCLUSION

Assertive behavior applied by school principals can solve problems that occur, especially between leaders and subordinates, to create a pleasant work climate so that it is easy for madrasa principals to manage their institutions and achieve educational goals such as creating excellent schools. The assertive behavior of the MINM principal in creating a superior school is indicated by the following behaviors: providing information; searching for information; giving an opinion; reflecting on the message content; giving criticism or praise; accepting criticism or praise; and expressing feelings, and share feelings.

Then in terms of the abilities possessed by the MINM principal, it is manifested in a wise attitude and consistency in determining and guarding agreements and a person who respects and cares for others so that he becomes a leader who is sensitive to problems. Thus, the head of MINM to make excellent schools will be achieved because the organizational cycle will run smoothly and especially the learning process effectively and efficiently can produce superior students and improve the quality and image of the MINM school.

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