



INTEGRATING ASTA BRATA VALUES IN INDONESIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

INTEGRACIJA VRIJEDNOSTI ASTA BRATA U LIDERSTVO DIREKTORA INDONEZIJSKIH OSNOVNIH ŠKOLA: KVALITATIVNA STUDIJA SLUČAJA

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ABSTRACT

The academic inquiry has paid significant attention to leadership style, which profoundly impacts an organization's development and progress. Scholars claim that this is of paramount importance for an organization to succeed. This study examines elementary school principals' approach to practicing *Asta Brata* leadership values as they perceive them. This study was conducted using a qualitative approach with a case study design. The subjects of the study were 22 participants, who were elementary school principals and who were later set for thematic analysis. The data analysis indicates that the Bali elementary school principals operate under the leadership style principles derived from *Asta Brata*, which include inclusiveness, harmony, moral responsibility, and professional integrity. The findings help principals with educational leadership intersect with *Asta Brata* and local wisdom in understanding elementary school administrators' leadership practices and decisions. This study advances notions of responsibility and practicality of leadership by drawing attention to leadership theory and practice and incorporating deep-seated cultural heritage to enable effective and ethical leadership in education.

Key words: Asta Brata leadership, school principal, elementary schools, qualitative case study

SAŽETAK

Akademski istraživanja posvetila su značajnu pažnju stilu liderstva, koji snažno utiče na razvoj i napredak organizacije. Naučnici ističu da je stil liderstva od presudne važnosti za uspjeh organizacije. Ova studija ispituje načine na koje direktori osnovnih škola primjenjuju

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vrijednosti liderstva Asta Brata, onako kako ih sami percipiraju. Istraživanje je provedeno korištenjem kvalitativnog pristupa s dizajnom studije slučaja. Ispitanike je činilo 22 učesnika, direktora osnovnih škola, a prikupljeni podaci analizirani su tematskom analizom. Analiza podataka pokazuje da direktori osnovnih škola na Baliju djeluju u skladu s principima stila liderstva koji proizlaze iz Asta Brata vrijednosti, a koji uključuju inkluzivnost, harmoniju, moralnu odgovornost i profesionalni integritet. Dobijeni nalazi pomažu u razumijevanju obrazovnog liderstva direktora škola kroz povezanost Asta Brata vrijednosti i lokalne mudrosti u tumačenju liderskih praksi i donošenja odluka u osnovnim školama. Ova studija unapređuje shvatanje odgovornosti i praktičnosti liderstva ukazujući na povezanost teorije i prakse liderstva te uključivanjem duboko ukorijenjenog kulturnog naslijeđa u cilju osiguranja efikasnog i etičnog liderstva u obrazovanju.

Ključne riječi: Asta Brata liderstvo, direktor škole, osnovne škole, kvalitativna studija slučaja

INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles have become one of the most discussed topics in academic circles (Kinkead, 2006; Kobalen et al., 2020; Puja & Mahayasa, 2021). Leaders have a significant role in influencing and propelling organizational growth and success, as highlighted by the many leadership style studies in the literature. Many studies discuss that “leadership style” has a significant role in determining whether an organization succeeds or fails (Day & Sammons, 2014; Griffith, 2004; Harsoyo et al., 2019; Mustamin & Yasin, 2012; Sari & Marmoah, 2022; Văcar & Miricescu, 2013). Leaders can use their authority to effectively direct and motivate their teams to achieve organizational goals (Al Ramel, 2019; Fleming et al., 2020; Werang et al., 2023a), which may have been beyond the foresight or consideration of those being led.

The term “leadership” here relates exclusively to school principals. A principal’s leadership is decisive in raising the school’s overall productivity. This decisive role may include, for instance, enhancing teachers’ abilities and commitment to their work and creating a positive working atmosphere (Pont et al., 2008). This statement emphasizes the critical impact a school principal has on determining the success or failure of a school (Gunada et al., 2024; Werang et al., 2024). To carry out this role effectively, a school principal must have a profound understanding and the capacity to identify and grasp features that might not be evident to teachers, staff, or students under their leadership.

As knowledge and technology continue to expand, there is an increasing demand for exceptional school principals who can convey their thoughts clearly and successfully coordinate all areas of the school to achieve its goals (Kinkead, 2006). Distinguished school principals continuously respect teachers, staff, and students, acknowledging their efforts to improve schools’ effectiveness and students’ academic performance. Distinguished principals are guided by a strong sense of morality and integrity (Morrison, 2013), allowing them to make decisions based on ethical considerations rather than opportuneness (Barkman, 2015). The core of a distinguished school principal is characterized by courage, settlement, and steadfast moral values (Day & Samsons, 2014).

School leadership concepts not grounded in local culture and wisdom often appear abstract and irrelevant to everyday experiences. This study intends to relate the global model of school leadership to a deep model anchored in the local wisdom of Bali's Hindu Dharma community, recognized as *Asta Brata*. As stated by As'ad et al. (2011) and Kobalen et al. (2020), *Asta Brata* comes from two Sanskrit words: Asta, which means eight, and Brata, which denotes character or behavior that serves as a guiding principle. This phrase originates from the *Manawa Dharmacastra*, an authoritative Hindu document authored by Bhagawan Bhirgu and approved by the well-known Hindu leader Manu (Setiawan, 2021).

Principals can promote leadership rooted in local customs, wisdom, and international best practices by integrating *Asta Brata* into school leadership. The integration will build a framework connecting the local community's cultural and spiritual values. It will foster a feeling of unity and intimacy among students. This framework strengthens the idea that practical and significant leadership methods are adapted to the unique cultural context of the community. It also enhances comprehensive leadership and promotes a more inclusive and balanced learning environment by emphasizing moral and ethical principles alongside academic and administrative accomplishments.

Integrating *Asta Brata* into the leadership model depicts the importance of comprehending and implementing *Asta Brata* in the broader context of education. This idea presents that leadership cannot be a one-size-fits-all strategy, but it must be adaptive to the specific requirements and ideals of the community. By providing the framework for academics and other scholars to integrate local culture and wisdom into their studies, *Asta Brata* fosters culturally relevant leadership styles to enhance the importance and impact of their work. This promotes cultural heritage development and preservation to provide creative and cultural-based teaching methods as it advances the global conversation on educational leadership.

Various studies have explored leadership styles, including the leadership style inspired by *Asta Brata* (Adnyani et al., 2019; Aryawan, 2021; Aryawan et al., 2024; Dharmanegara et al., 2013; Putra et al., 2021; Pynatih et al., 2022; Selvarajah et al., 2017; Sintasih et al., 2021). Thus, we are highly motivated to explore this topic further because of its critical importance for two reasons. First, while most existing studies have focused on the theory and overall impact of *Asta Brata* leadership on organizations, there is a significant gap in understanding how it is deployed in practice. Specifically, no systematic research has been conducted to determine which *Asta Brata* leadership values are practiced by school principals. Knowing which values are practiced is crucial because it shows how *Asta Brata* principles are applied in daily leadership activities and school decisions. Second, most previous research has used quantitative methods, with only a few studies using descriptive qualitative approaches.

This study aims to expand existing leadership theory and practice by delving into Balinese indigenous wisdom, particularly the principles of *Asta Brata*. By examining how these *Asta Brata* values are deployed in leadership activities, the study intends to provide insights into leadership approaches that prioritize community well-being and foster sustainable outcomes. To direct this research toward its goal, we generated the following question: "How do elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia, grasp and implement *Asta Brata* leadership values in their leadership practices?" To answer the research question, a qualitative case study was employed to gather data from 22 elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Design

This study was intrinsically a case study because it sought to provide a thorough overview of a specific issue or case. The theoretical intention was to determine the factors, structures, forms, and patterns of interaction among participants to assess work performance or developmental progress (Starman, 2013). Case study research is frequently regarded as a type of qualitative study (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006). According to Duff (2008), the selection of cases in a qualitative case study is heavily influenced by the investigators' philosophical approach, the case's qualities, and their prior grasp of the issue. From this standpoint, the investigators' initial familiarity with the topic will impact which ongoing case is chosen for research (Sanjani, 2020).

We opted to use a case study research design for two reasons: (a) to investigate a current phenomenon in its natural setting, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context were unclear, and (b) to analyze the phenomenon within its natural environment using multiple data sources (Gunada et al., 2024; Werang & Leba, 2022; Werang et al., 2022; Werang et al., 2023b). The specific case in this study focused on the implemented values of the *Asta Brata* leadership style, using the elementary schools of Bali, Indonesia, as the setting of the study.

Research Setting

This study was carried out in elementary schools in Bali, Indonesia. Besides the stunning views, Bali is famous for its spiritual practices and rich cultural traditions. In this perspective, the schools play an important role in shaping the youth to embrace the ideologies and values of the community. It is for this reason that Bali is unique as it houses schools that amalgamate contemporary methods of teaching with the deep philosophical and cultural aspects of *Asta Brata* leadership.

Studying the integration of *Asta Brata* in the leadership work of Bali elementary school principals provides an insight into the application of these ancient concepts within modern pedagogical systems. The focus of the research was the application of *Asta Brata* principles in Bali elementary schools by their principals. The application of the principles serves to highlight the unique and inspiring blend of cultural heritage and modernization, in this case, education, in Bali, Indonesia.

Research Participants

Participants tend not to represent a general population in qualitative research (Leba et al., 2021; Werang et al., 2024). Unlike quantitative research, which divides the population into strata and emphasizes the use of a representative sample size, this is not the case with qualitative research. In this case, Bali elementary school principals were selected because they had previously demonstrated knowledge that advanced the study that we are interested in (Dörnyei, 2007).

Purposive sampling methods were used to carefully and strategically choose the participants. People who can offer thorough and pertinent information are found using this method (Ames

et al., 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is a traditional qualitative research method that uses scarce resources by choosing participants with substantial expertise or experience relevant to the study question (Patton, 2002). This method entails locating people or organizations with specific expertise in the subject under study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). According to Creswell (2014), four or five people are ideal participants for a case study. Twenty-two elementary school principals—six men and sixteen women—were interviewed for this study. They served as principals for one to fifteen years, and their ages ranged from 26 to 60. To make it easier for them to participate, we scheduled the interviews at a time and place that worked for each participant after getting their permission.

Data Collection and Analysis

Applying *Asta Brata* leadership values in elementary schools in Bali, Indonesia, was investigated using a qualitative case study research design. We used in-person interviews to gather and examine all of the data. These semi-structured interviews were done one-on-one over around two months at the locations selected by the participants.

We developed a set of interview questions that acted as a plan for constant data gathering on Yin's (2018) case study suggestions. Topical questions and an informal but structured questioning technique were integrated into this interview technique (Moustakas, 1994). We invited each participant to discuss how they have exemplified the leadership values of *Asta Brata*. As suggested by Hartley (2004) and Lester et al. (2020), data collection and analysis were tightly related and followed iterative phases. The interview questions focused on how elementary school principals in Bali perceive and practice *Asta Brata*'s leadership values in their daily leadership responsibilities. To improve clarity and simplicity of communication, all interview questions were asked in Indonesian, establishing a contented atmosphere for participants (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

As aforementioned, data collection and analysis were intimately linked. Thus, data analysis began immediately following the first interview. The data for this study were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis, an approach that helped identify patterns and themes in the data (Rawat, 2021). We chose thematic analysis for the following two reasons: (a) it effectively examines and contrasts the perceptions of various research participants, highlighting both their similarities and differences (Braun & Clark, 2006), and (b) it efficiently extracts the essential features of a large data set, making it more manageable and interpretable (King, 2004).

We utilize Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis framework, which consists of three concurrent phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The initial phase involved reducing the data through a coding procedure, which linked the responses directly to the research questions (Atkinson, 2002). We applied Saldaña's (2013) "initial" and "pattern" coding techniques. During the initial coding, we identified statements from participants that referred to the school principal's innovative leadership skills. We then used "pattern coding" to organize these coded statements into meaningful themes and sub-themes corresponding to the research question. This coding was done manually with highlighters on printed interview transcripts. In the second phase, we classified the coded data

and themes relevant to the research focus, paying special attention to data displays. In the third stage, known as “conclusion and verification”, the previously chosen themes were examined and improved. We gave each subject a suitable name and reassessed each one to ensure it was appropriate and clear.

RESULTS

This study analyzes how elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia, apply the *Asta Brata* leadership values. The study question, “How do elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia, understand and implement *Asta Brata* leadership values in their leadership practices?” is the basis for this analysis. The data analysis reveals four key themes: harmony, transformative inclusivity, professional integrity, and moral responsibility. The following sections go into greater detail on these themes.

Moral Responsibility

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis is moral responsibility. Moral responsibility refers to the commitment to behave ethically and take preferences that consider the rights and well-being of others. These values include upholding integrity, following moral principles, and taking responsibility for one’s actions and how they affect others. Several participants expressed the following opinions in the conversation about how elementary school principals exhibit these ideals.

“As a school principal, I embrace the *Asta Brata* leadership value of responsibility. I am committed to the well-being of everyone in the school, addressing their material needs and psychological and social well-being.”

“As a school principal, I should act as a protector, ensuring that everybody feels secure and no fear.”

“As the school principal, I should be attentive to the welfare of the school community and find ways to attend to their needs.”

“I focus on managing the School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds sensibly and efficiently, aiming to promote the welfare of all school members.”

Many of the respondents that were interviewed in relation to the primary schools revealed the depth of the moral obligation in the exercise of their leadership roles. The concept of moral responsibility encompasses ethical conduct, which includes consideration for the rights and welfare of others and taking responsibility for one’s actions. The principals underscored their commitment to the social, psychological, and material needs of the community within the school. As guardians, they made certain that the students and the members of the faculty and the non-teaching staff were safe, comfortable, and appreciated. They sought to improve the well-being of the school, its members, and stakeholders by ensuring prudent usage of resources, including School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds.

In the *Asta Brata* leadership style, the values of moral responsibility are illustrated through the symbols of “earth” and “ocean/sea”. “Earth” corresponds to the values of a setting and pillar of all, which is stability and promise, while an ocean/sea is also a provider and promissor to life. “Earth” depicts a leader’s resource and support because it symbolizes the basis for all life, while “ocean/sea”, which symbolizes food and water, is life’s simplest basic necessity.

Thus, these symbols serve as the leader's obligation to the community, which nurtures and meets every member's needs to foster an environment that enhances development and wellbeing.

Professional Integrity

The second aspect that came out of the data analysis is professional integrity. This subject is divided into two categories: authoritative integrity and guiding purpose. Many participants offer the following observations as we examined how Bali elementary school principals exemplify the importance of "guiding purpose".

"As a school principal, I must have a clear vision and lead by example. To reach the goals, I must remain fully committed."

"As a school principal, I try to exemplify the value of being a guiding light in times of darkness, leading the way toward success."

"In my day-to-day work, I should set

To lead the school members to achieve the goal, I should be the model of discipline and enthusiasm in my daily work."

Additionally, several participants offered the following opinions when we examined how Bali elementary school principals used authoritative integrity in their leadership.

"To achieve school effectiveness and success, I should inspire and motivate school members by acting honestly and fairly."

"As a school principal, I do not work alone to achieve school success. I work with all school members, so I am obliged to treat them equally, without exception."

"As the school leader, I must always apply effective practices that positively impact both teachers and students."

"As the school leader, I should maintain my principles tightly while adjusting my actions as needed. Moreover, I must uphold transparency regarding the school's finances."

The participants' comments highlight the importance of school principals having a clear and consistent vision for the schools they serve. This vision encompasses all activities toward a common goal. Building a respectful and equitable atmosphere requires acting reasonably and honestly in all interactions with staff, students, and teachers. Participants emphasized the necessity of treating all school community members fairly to establish a culture of mutual respect and trust. Their successful implementation of school jobs shows the school principal's integrity, strong adherence to the holding principles, and flexibility. These values are represented by the "sun", which shines impartially; the "stars", which offer direction and guidance; the "sky", which stands for inspiration and knowledge; and the "wind", which symbolizes dynamic and flexible leadership.

Transformative Inclusiveness

Transformative inclusiveness was the third theme that emerged from the data analysis. This theme covers two categories. The first category is awareness of inclusiveness. Some participants provided the following ideas during conversations about how elementary school principals incorporate inclusiveness into their leadership practices.

“As the school leader, I must be receptive to feedback and suggestions from all school members to accelerate continuous improvement.”

“As the school leader, I welcome suggestions and constructive criticism from everyone in the school community.”

“The *Asta Brata* leadership value I exemplify is openness. This openness entails accepting critiques and remaining transparent about the school’s financial matters.”

“I am open to all feedback forms, including sarcastic comments, provided they contribute to school progress and success.”

“As a school leader, I should be open to constructive criticism and boldly implement necessary changes. These are the core of my leadership style.”

This theme’s second category is transformational. Several principals in Bali, Indonesia, provided the following suggestions when we examined how they incorporated *Asta Brata*’s transformative values into their leadership practices.

“As a school leader, I should welcome constructive criticism from all school members to accelerate continuous improvement for success.”

“The school should aspire for success. To do this, we must make changes to stay up with the rapid progress, whether we like it or not. As the school leader, it is my responsibility to lead by example and drive these changes toward success.”

“To be a school leader means being open to receiving all suggestions and criticisms from all school members and converting them for school progress and success.”

The above ideas expose how elementary school principals in the Bali Province of Indonesia exemplify *Asta Brata*’s leadership values of transformative inclusiveness. These principals accentuate the importance of being responsive and attentive to feedback and suggestions from all school members, emphasizing the necessity of transparency and openness. Since they believe that continued progress requires this kind of openness, they regard themselves as leaders who must create an inclusive atmosphere where everyone’s feedback and suggestions are respected. Furthermore, the interviewed school principals acknowledge the importance of adjusting to change to sustain their schools moving forward in a rapidly evolving world. They see themselves as role models, utilizing constructive criticism to direct progress and success. Embodying these values, they aim to lead their schools to thrive amidst constant change. Within the framework of *Asta Brata* leadership, these values are represented by the following: (a) the “ocean”, which embraces all river flows, regardless of their cleanliness, and can sterilize unclean water, symbolizing inclusiveness and openness; (b) the “fire”, which alters everything it encounters, representing the ability to drive change and transformation; and (c)

the “wind”, which embodies dynamic and flexible leadership, capable of adapting to different situations and needs.

Harmony

The fourth theme to emerge from the data analysis was harmony. Harmony arises when everybody feels inner peace and creates positive connections with those around them. This balanced situation demonstrates advanced self-management skills in fostering personal and relational dynamics. Several interviewed school principals provided the following insights.

“To maintain harmony among school members, I should make an effort to promote effective communication with all school members and even parents or guardians.”

“As a school leader, I must remain patient and composed in facing and resolving challenges.”

“When dealing with various perspectives and attitudes among school members, I consistently exhibit tolerance and composure. I set an example for others by acting and speaking with respect.”

“As a school leader, I set the direction of the school. To lead the school to success, all school members must collaborate, and for me, this collaboration represents a sense of harmony in the school community. This sense of collaboration is essential for the development of true harmony.”

The prior perspectives reflect that efficient interaction among school members is important for maintaining the peace and harmony of the school. The principals pointed out the significance of remaining calm and patient when confronted with problems and strongly encouraged them to demonstrate good manners in their conversations and interactions. This promotes togetherness, strengthens the bonds of the schools under their supervision, and enhances the relational dynamics in the schools as people work towards common goals. They underlined the importance of combining all efforts to pursue the school’s educational objectives, stressing that cooperation and shared goals could lead to artificial unity. The term “moon”, which casts its peaceful light at night, represents the importance of harmony in *Asta Brata*’s leadership pyramid. This symbol shows how this value facilitates a peaceful but energetic educational atmosphere. This is important to relieve the burdens and difficulties students have to deal with. Just as the moon’s gentle light brings comfort and clarity in the dark, embodying these values fosters a nurturing environment that alleviates challenges and improves overall well-being within the school community.

DISCUSSION

The school principal’s leadership is tightly related to all school members, including teachers, administrative staff, and students. As school site leaders, school principals are responsible for creating a supportive school climate that promotes school effectiveness and the teaching and learning process. School principals serve as role models for their teachers, support personnel, and students, mainly through their actions relating to the teaching-learning process (Werang & Leba, 2022; Werang et al., 2022, 2023b). In high-need schools, the school principals’ support,

encouragement, and recognition strongly impact teachers, administrative staff, and students (Even & BenDavid-Hadar, 2021; Scallon et al., 2021).

Aside from the well-known leadership styles, this study focuses on *Asta Brata*, an exceptional leadership style deep-rooted in Balinese culture and philosophical traditions practiced over generations. As previously stated, this study describes the values implemented by elementary school principals in *Asta Brata* in Bali, Indonesia. The results revealed four main themes of *Asta Brata*'s values exemplified by the interviewed elementary school principals: moral responsibility, professional integrity, transformative inclusiveness, and harmony.

Moral responsibility refers to ethically due praise, blame, reward, or punishment for an act that falls within one's moral obligation (Eshleman, 2014). Recognizing different concepts or interpretations of moral responsibility has prompted new questions about whether the requirements for moral responsibility are mutually incompatible (Double, 1996; Honderich, 1988; Nagel, 1986; Strawson, 1986). In the context of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style, the practiced values of moral responsibility are portrayed by the "earth" that stands firm, providing a stable ground and acting as a 'broad shoulder' for all living things. Like the "earth", school principals should be the first line of support for their communities. A great school principal embodies courage, determination, and strong moral beliefs (Day & Samsons, 2014).

Drawing a connection to the earth's kindness and generosity in providing needed ingredients for plant growth, school principals should create an environment where all school members can grow and thrive. Like the "earth", school principals are encouraged to provide sustenance for school members. This sustenance goes beyond academics and includes the emotional and social well-being of the teachers, supporting staff, and students. Supplying critical resources can be viewed as addressing the basic needs and giving opportunities for personal and collective development. This includes being a source of support during trying times, providing direction, and creating a sense of security within the school community.

Furthermore, in the context of *Asta Brata*'s leadership styles, moral responsibility is also metaphorically symbolized by the "sea" or "ocean", which supports all kinds of life with its abundance of protein-rich fish. This metaphor emphasizes the role of the school leader as a vital source of support and sustenance for their school community. The symbolism underlines that effective leadership entails a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being and development of others, demonstrating the leader's dedication to the greater good and the positive impact of their moral and ethical actions.

The second value of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style practiced by the elementary school principals in Bali Province, Indonesia, is "professional integrity". Integrity is often recognized as a key virtue of professionals (Erikson, 2015). Integrity is defined as having noble personal traits and work ethics, such as exceptional judgment, incorruptibility, impartiality, honesty, accountability, and loyalty (Doble, 2016). School principals with high professional integrity are committed to doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. In line with this notion, professional integrity means that professionals do their job appropriately, deliberately, and responsibly, considering all relevant interests (Huberts, 2018). Schools are expected to run better when there is a culture of professional integrity and strong ethical standards for all school members, including the school principals.

In the context of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style, the value of professional integrity is metaphorically symbolized by the "sun" that shines impartially without distinguishing between diverse entities (Sadiartha, 2017; Setiawan, 2021). Like the "sun", school principals are expected to maintain equity in their interactions and judgments, treating all school members equally without any discrimination based on disparities in background, abilities, or difficulties. The 'sun' consistently beams faithfully despite gloomy clouds and other hindrances. Similarly, the principal is encouraged to continue to be dedicated to the development and welfare of every student, particularly during challenging times.

Furthermore, the "star" that directs sailors according to its location in the sky serves as a metaphorical representation of professional integrity in the framework of *Asta Brata* leadership (Sadiartha, 2017; Setiawan, 2021). Like the "star", school leaders must give clear guidance, a forward-looking vision, and tactics to accomplish shared objectives. This entails making calculated decisions, exhibiting resilience, keeping a cheerful disposition, and promoting cooperation among all school personnel. These results lend credence to inclusive leadership that considers strategic planning, effective communication, and the many requirements of the school community.

In addition, the "sky", which means to reflect on the light of inspiration and wisdom, is used, so to speak, to portray professional integrity (Andoko et al., 2022; Setiyowati, 2016). The phrase 'be the sky of knowledge and skills' illustrates the significance of school principals concerning the intellectual development of his or her subordinates. The findings imply that school principals should promote a culture of lifelong learning by offering a comprehensive perspective on education. Like the "sky", school principals are encouraged to perceive knowledge as a gift that extends endlessly. A distinguished school principal has a strong conscience and moral compass (Morrison, 2013), which allows them to make decisions based on what is right rather than what is convenient (Barkman, 2015).

The third value of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style practiced by the elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia, is "transformative inclusiveness". The "transformational-inclusiveness" value of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style refers to the practiced value that merges elements of inclusiveness with a strong focus on transformation (change). In the context of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style, the "transformative inclusiveness" value is metaphorically symbolized by the "ocean" that is open to receiving all river flows, regardless of cleanliness, and transforming the polluted river water into pure water (Paramartha et al., 2023). Strengthened by Transformative Leadership Theory (Carrington et al., 2023; Shields, 2020), this practiced value of *Asta Brata*'s leadership style informed a more profound knowledge and understanding of how the elementary school principals in Bali Province, Indonesia, are open to receiving suggestions and sarcastic criticism and transforming it into improvement for their schools.

Openness is the foundation of a principal's ability to move the school toward its goals. Like the "ocean", school principals should accommodate all incoming opinions, whether pleasant or not, even scathing criticism. This characteristic is applied to school principals, who are encouraged to broaden their minds by accommodating the diverse opinions of all school members and processing them in the depth of their thoughts to gain new knowledge and understanding. To achieve this, school principals must develop active listening skills to foster

a space where all community members feel heard, appreciated, and cared for (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Peterson, 2022; Werang et al., 2023b).

Besides, in the context of *Asta Brata's* leadership style, the value of “transformative inclusiveness” is also metaphorically symbolized by the “fire” that may transform whatever it touches (As’ad et al., 2011; Paramartha et al., 2023; Setiyowati, 2016). The fire burns through barriers without hesitation. Like the “fire”, the school principals must be brave and decisive when facing adversity. To make this a reality, it is necessary to eliminate the underlying causes of issues, irrespective of interpersonal connections or associations. The findings of this study indicate the need for leadership that prioritizes the greater good over personal considerations. School principals, like the firefighters, are encouraged to address challenges without considering relationships or friendship.

Furthermore, the school principals may also transform the school environment in general and sarcastic criticism in particular by displaying the characteristics of the “wind” traits of dynamic and adaptive leadership (Paramartha et al., 2023; Setiyowati, 2016). Everyone feels the breeze of the “wind” without being physically present. Like the “wind”, school principals should be visible and influential, especially in virtual or remote situations. In other words, the school principals’ leadership should extend beyond their physical presence and be felt through their actions, decisions, and overall impact on the school community by cultivating a pleasant and constructive atmosphere that appeals to all members.

Nowadays, being a “transformative inclusiveness” leader is no longer an option but a necessity for the future viability of schools. The “transformative inclusiveness” school principals, through their openness to all opinions, encourage all school members to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Werang, 2015). By processing and analyzing diverse opinions, school principals broaden their perspectives and contribute to the overall growth and improvement of the educational institution. These findings indicate that the “transformative inclusiveness” of the school principal is a powerful promoter for all school members to work hard for the school’s effectiveness and student success.

Harmony is the fourth value of *Asta Brata's* leadership style, practiced by the elementary school principals in Bali. Harmony is the belief that people must care about one another and the environment (Bell & Mo, 2014; Sheikh, 2023). Harmony entails embracing peace, ensuring environmental sustainability, and promoting social fairness (Wong, 2020). In the context of *Asta Brata's* leadership style, this value is metaphorically portrayed by the “moon”, which provides light in the darkness of night. Like the “moon” that offers calm and peaceful light in the night for those facing life’s burdens, the school principal should be aware of the problems facing the schools and actively contribute to their resolution, whether academic or personal.

The moon’s light never harms humans. Instead, its shooting warmth brings consolation and peace of mind to those wounded and distressed. Like the “moon”, school principals are responsible for creating a supportive school environment, providing mental health resources, and cultivating a culture of understanding and empathy. These findings imply that open communication, dispute resolution, and a sense of togetherness contribute to peace and a productive school atmosphere. To build harmony in schools, school principals must model

positive attitudes in communicating with all school members by treating them with respect and empathy, even in stressful situations (Werang, 2018). Great principals consistently show appreciation for the educators, staff, and students who work hard to make the school successful.

CONCLUSION

The conducted thematic analysis has extracted four emerging themes: moral responsibility, professional ethics, transforming inclusivity, and balance. They summarize the underlying attitudes and behaviors of the studied leadership styles, fully capturing what effective leadership entails in education. Professional integrity is more interested in protecting ethical and professional boundaries, while moral responsibility is focused more on ethical and accountable actions. Balanced transformative inclusivity takes a broad approach that results in positive change, while harmony recognizes the need to foster a cordial and balanced environment. When taken together, these themes depict the multifaceted nature of effective leadership and reveal notions which advanced leadership effectiveness is based.

The findings add to the corpus of information on educational leadership by incorporating concepts such as professional integrity, moral responsibility, transformative inclusion, and harmony. In these principles lies a more profound understanding of effective educational leadership. This study provides practical guidance for educational officials and principals, highlighting the importance of incorporating professional integrity, moral responsibility, transformative inclusion, and harmony into their actions. Principals may find this method valuable in developing more motivating and effective leadership strategies.

Although these findings are valuable for understanding leadership values, the limitations listed below should be regarded seriously. Because this study only looked at elementary school principals in Bali, Indonesia, the findings may not be relevant to other educational environments. As a result, future studies with a more significant number of participants and more different educational environments may yield more thorough findings.

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