

## **Principal's Communication Style and Learning Process Effectiveness during Pandemic: The Case of SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the principal's communication style in encouraging learning effectiveness during the pandemic in junior high school. Previous studies have not explored the principal's communication style in encouraging the effectiveness of online and limited face-to-face learning during the pandemic. This research used a qualitative case study method. The data collection techniques were interviews with one principal, eleven teachers, three education staff, five students, three parents, observation on the learning process, and document data analysis. This research used the six leadership communication styles approach from Tubbs and Moss. The study found that the principal applied the equalitarian, structuring, dynamic, and relinquishing styles. The learning process was adequate to achieve the score and graduating target. Therefore, the learning effectiveness needed improvement because there needs encouraging student activity, improving the teacher's capacities, and encouraging parent participation in the learning process. The principal's communication styles encouraged overcoming barriers due to the lack of online interaction and limited face-to-face learning but did not directly improve the learning effectiveness problem. The principal's communication styles failed to encourage learning effectiveness because the problem was not only communication. The principal was not arranged a particular assessment to solve the learning effectiveness problem.*

**Keywords:** *Communication Style, Junior High School, Learning Effectiveness, Online Learning, Principal*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Covid-19 outbreak causes online learning to replace face-to-face learning in schools. Previous research found that the effectiveness of online learning in junior high schools was related to student activities. Online

learning in junior high schools was ineffective because students lacked activity (Jumadi, Laksana, & Prananta, 2021; Zaitun et al., 2021). The teacher's creativity reduced the problem of student activity when studying online. The teacher needs to manage significant interaction

with the student in online system learning (Basa & Hudaidah, 2021; Mursabdo & Mursabdo, 2021), using social media as learning media (Sibuea, Sembiring, & Agus, 2020), and creative ways to encourage student activity (Jumadi, Laksana, & Prananta, 2021; Syaputra & Hasanah, 2021). As a positive result, online learning can increase students' creativity in overcoming learning limitations in pandemic situations (Agustina, 2020) and increase teacher creativity (Novita, Kejora, & Akil, 2021).

The other problem of online learning in junior high school students was student competence. Online learning was adequate for the realm of students' knowledge and was less for applying learning outcomes (Abdullah, Achmad, & Fahrudin, 2020). The lack of learning skills was in the skilled realm (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018). Online learning outcomes test scores decreased compared with face-to-face learning scores (Ariyanti & Santoso, 2020). Therefore, online learning was reduced student learning independence (Jaya & Simanungkalit, 2021). Online learning system has shortcomings in encouraging knowledge, skills, and student learning behavior.

Refers to the education policies, competence at the level of knowledge was sufficient for junior high school students (Ministry of Cabinet Secretary, 2022, point 6). In addition, the students must be ready to continue to the higher level of education. However, emphasis on knowledge did not mean skill competence was not significant. On the contrary, the skill element emphasizes the capacity of students to try, process, and serve in the realm of concrete and abstract according to what was learned in school and other sources that have a similar view with the view/theory (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018). However, the policy for implementing special education during the pandemic mentions the achievement of competencies and the

applicable curriculum with adjustments not required to complete all curricula (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020, attachment point C, 3). Furthermore, school management focused on the main problem of the pandemic (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020, attachment point D, 2). Therefore, the learning process effectiveness in junior high school was related to problem-solving by school management through need assessment.

Online learning in junior high schools can be effective as long as it can involve teachers, principals, students, and the parent's participation (Anggraeni & Akbar, 2018; Basa & Hudaidah, 2021; Kirom, 2017; Noviardila, 2020; Telupun, 2020). In addition, the school management and parents need to develop an adequate learning system (Hasby, Noor, & Wahyudin, 2021). In conclusion, the learning process's effectiveness is indicated by fulfilling the need assessment to solve the problem. The previous studies suggest that the problems were student enthusiasm and competence. Therefore, the suggestion to solve the problem was increasing the participation of teachers, students, and parents in developing an adequate learning system.

The principal was an actor who was a leader of school management. The leadership skills of a school principal are skills to build collaboration between every element in the school (Fleming, 2019; Ramel & Ali, 2019), organizational management skills (Decman et al., 2018), and skills to understand the diversity within schools (Henkle, 2017; Hill, 2018; Møller, 2018). Previous studies found that junior high school principal was determining learning success (Alhusna & Permana, 2021), improving student achievement (Allen, 2017; Iskandar, 2020; Maing, 2021), improving teacher performance (Amini, Aritonang, & Prasetya, 2021; Russamsi, Hadian, & Nurlaeli, 2020; Wahidah & Bulkani, 2021), support adequate school management to conduct online learning (Rosadi et al., 2021), building a

comfortable working atmosphere in the school environment (Iskandar, 2020), and developing human resources management to achieve the goal (Sukma & Hasanah, 2021).

The principal's communication skills were essential in carrying out the leadership function (Kellogg, 2017; Norqvist & Ärlestig, 2020). Suggestions from school principals encourage teachers to improve online teaching methods in junior high schools (Tesalonika et al., 2021). In addition, the principal's interpersonal communication increases teachers' motivation (Iskandar, 2020). Meanwhile, the teacher's role is essential in encouraging the effectiveness of online learning in junior high schools (Rejeki, 2021; Sutisna & Widodo, 2020).

There has not been much research on leaders' communication styles in encouraging online learning in junior high school. However, studies on principal leadership were conducted in high school (Sari, 2021) and primary school (Hendrawati & Prasajo, 2015; Lestari, 2016). In addition, a study on the principal leader's communication style was conducted in elementary schools (Nasihah & Yuliana, 2018).

One of the leader communication styles that have been used in secondary school research is the leading communication style of Tubbs and Moss (Tingkas & Ahmad, 2020). Tubbs and Moss's leadership communication styles have been studied outside the education realm (Andhika, Alfiandi, & Zetra, 2018; Intyaswati, Juned, & Abdullah, 2018; Riswandi, 2017). The leader's communication style consists of (1) The controlling style, the leader's communication style that is controlling, seems to limit, regulate and coerce; (2) the equalitarian style, the two-way leader's communication style. The principal as the sender of the message always applies verbal messages; (3) the structuring style, a structured communication style in giving verbal orders in writing or verbally based on the organizational structure; (4) the dynamic style, the leader's

communication style which is aggressive and dynamic to stimulate the performance of everyone in the school; (5) the relinquishing style, a communication style that shows a willingness to accept other people's ideas, suggestions and opinions; (6) The withdrawal style, a communication style that tends to withdraw and does not involve itself in problems at school (adapted from (Tingkas & Ahmad, 2020; Tubbs & Moss, 2008).

The principal's communication skills cannot be separated from the function of the school as an educational institution. The principal's communication skill plays a role in directing and moving educational organizations to achieve learning goals (Biesta, 2017; Machali & Hidayat, 2016). The achievement of learning objectives indicated the effectiveness of learning (Suyahman, 2017). Refers to the study on online learning effectiveness, the learning objectives have been decided by need assessment to solve the problem (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020, attachment point D, 2).

This study examined the principal's communication style in encouraging learning effectiveness during the pandemic in junior high school. The study aim was explored by explaining online learning effectiveness problems, the principal's communication style based on six leadership communication styles from Tubbs and Moss (2008), and the principal's communication style in solving online learning effectiveness problems.

This research contributes to strengthening the study of a leader's communication style, learning effectiveness, and learning achievement. In addition, this research contributes practically in providing input on the principal's communication style to improve learning effectiveness.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative case study method. Qualitative research is research with

open-ended research questions, and the purpose of the research was to examine it from the participant's perspective (Creswell, 2014, pp. 7-8). On the other hand, a case study is a type of research that emphasizes an in-depth understanding of a case or several cases within a system boundary, such as a setting or context (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). The case study approach was appropriate in this research because the research focuses on explaining the relationship between a leader's communication styles and learning effectiveness in some instances.

The research location is SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong, located at Jl. HR Edi Sukma No. 24, Watesjaya Village, Cigombong District, Bogor Regency. The selection of SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong as a case study because research on private schools still needs input for improving the quality of private schools. The research was conducted in April-May 2021.

The data was qualitative and documented data. Qualitative data was the opinion of teachers, students, parents, and principal of the problem of the learning process in pandemic period; the opinion of teachers, students, and parents of the principal communication style; the opinion of the principal of his communication style; and the principal, teachers, student, and parent strategy to solve the problem. Observation data was online class and face-to-face class implementation process. Document data sources were academic scores, meeting notes, and academic targets.

Qualitative data collection techniques were interviews and observations. The number of participants as qualitative source data in SMP PGRI I Cigombong was one principal, 14 teachers, and five education staff. Three teachers and two education staff could not be interviewed due to the pandemic conditions. The number of student and parent participants was determined according to the data saturation of the snowballing technique (Creswell, 2007,

p. 127). Participants' determination starts from determining key participants and then conducting tiered interviews with other participants until the data was considered saturated. Qualitative data collection was by open question guiding. Implementation of the interview refers to the need for data. The interview mostly did person by person, but in asking the principal communication style to the teacher and academic staff, the questions were done separately on the same day so that the tendency of equalizing answers between teachers or education staff can be limited. The name of the teacher, student, parent, and academic staff was hidden to ensure confidentiality of the source person and data.

The research was conducted in three stages. First, examine the process of implementing online learning in schools. This stage was to find the problem of the learning process in the pandemic period. Second, examine the principal's communication style to find the role of the principal's communication style in encouraging the effectiveness of online learning. The principal becomes a leader four years before the pandemic and during the pandemic. Teachers, education staff, and students cannot clearly distinguish changes in the principal's communication style before and after the pandemic. Therefore, the researcher conducted general interviews regarding the participants' opinions on the principal's communication style. Researchers examined communication styles during a pandemic from related information that explicitly describes communication between school principals, teachers, education staff, and students in implementing online or face-to-face learning. Third, perform data analysis and data presentation. Researchers used data reduction, presentation, and conclusion (Creswell, 2007, pp. 120-121). The data were grouped based on the problem, the communication style, and the problem's solution. Presentation of data was in the form of quotations from participant

statements with a minimum of researcher interpretation. Researchers analyzed data by referring to the findings of interviews, observations, secondary data, and referring to theories and previous research.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### ***The Learning Process Effectiveness Problems***

The process of implementing online learning at SMP PGRI I Cigombong depended on the determination of the Regent's regulation regarding Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR) in the Bogor Regency area. LSSR in Bogor Regency began on April 15, 2020, stipulated through Regent Regulation Number 16 of 2020. At that time, SMP PGRI I Cigombong arranged complete online learning for six months. However, when the research was conducted, April-May 2021, limited face-to-face learning was conducted. At this time, the Bogor Regency government was still implementing restrictions on school activities through the 13th phase of LSSR, which was stipulated through Regent Regulation Number 443/215/Kpts/Per-UU/2021. This regulation allowed face-to-face learning trials in specific areas, including SMP PGRI I Cigombong location.

According to teacher participant 7 (personal interview, April 5, 2021), online learning difficulties monitored student participation in the class. Student participation in Google Class Meet class was often only half of the number of students. The observation regarding student activities at Google Class Meet found that students did not open videos, rarely ask questions and provide feedback to the teacher.

Teacher participant 4 said the problem of online learning was difficulty explaining lessons that require practice and immediate response. Teacher participant 4 said it was challenging to deliver the material in online learning. The teacher cannot practice teaching

habits in face-to-face learning and Google Class Meet. The participant tried to overcome the lack of learning process by assignments. However, students and parents have complained that the assignments were too many.

*"I found it difficult to explain mathematical formulas. Usually, the formulas and how to use the formulas were written on the blackboard. Now it was written on PowerPoint. The teacher has tried to make a math video on YouTube. However, it was difficult for teachers to know which students have understood and which were not"* (Participant 4, personal interview, April 5, 2021).

Another challenge teachers faced was teachers' difficulty in providing learning process supervision.

*"Teachers' creativity was tested in online learning test. It was hard to make sure students did not cheat on exams. Teachers during the pandemic must be creative in making questions that cannot be copied. The student was smart in using internet technology. Teachers have to be smarter than their students to make sure the test results accurately describe student learning outcomes"* (Participant 3, personal interview, April 5, 2021).

The problem was not in academic activity only. The online interaction during pandemics has disrupted communication between teachers, education staff, and school principals. Participant teachers and principals conveyed that there had been several misunderstandings between principals, teachers, and education staff because of information from outside the school on social media. For example, information regarding the prohibition of face-to-face learning caused unrest among teachers and education staff. This problem surfaced in WhatsApp groups.

The communication problem between the school and the parents was not found.

Communication between teachers and parents used Whatsapp communication media in the Whatsapp group of parents and homeroom teachers. Observations of the conversations in the Whatsapp group of parents and homeroom teachers denoted conversations about class schedules, assignments, and matters related to learning. Parents of students have a different Whatsapp group from the Whatsapp group with the homeroom teacher. The discussion in the Whatsapp group for parents was more about things outside of learning.

The online learning problem was encouraging evaluation in school management. The principal, teachers, and parents decided to organize face-to-face learning three times a week since November 2020 to solve the online learning problem. The meeting agreed that the study's hours were reduced to 20 minutes for one hour of learning time. It was reduced from the previous amount of time, which was 45 minutes. The implementation of learning for each class was three days a week.

However, the teachers think limited face-to-face learning was not adequate.

*"Learning during the pandemic was less effective. Face-to-face learning was only three times a week for each grade level. Lesson hours were reduced from 45 minutes to 20 minutes. The time was not sufficient. The teachers need to use time effectively to meet learning objectives"* (Participant 5, personal interview, May 20, 2021).

The teacher's opinion was in line with the student's opinion. Five students gave the same opinion, so they were considered saturated.

*"The learning was less effective. The problem was the hours of lessons were*

*reduced. So before the pandemic, the lesson hours were completed, we were difficult to understand the study subject. So it was better to study before the pandemic, more effective and active"* (Participant 16, personal interview, May 27, 2021).

Observations of the limited face-to-face learning process at SMP I PGRI Cigombong indicated a hasty impression from the teacher when teaching face-to-face. The observation denoted the teacher's opinion regarding the limited teaching time due to reduced learning time was confirmed. Therefore, the observation found that student activities were more active during face-to-face learning than online learning.

Data on school exam scores and student graduation denoted that the scores and student graduation targets were achieved during the pandemic. However, the opinions of teachers and students regarding the lack of effectiveness of the limited online and face-to-face learning process did not fully describe the achievement of student achievement targets. The National Examination scores in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 or before the pandemic were increased higher than School Examination scores in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 or the post-pandemic period. The pandemic period caused the National Examination to be abolished and replaced with the School Examination. The National Examination Score before the pandemic was increased by 3.125%, and the School Examinations post-pandemic increased by 1.47%. The percentage of the final evaluation value has decreased during the pandemic. However, the average target score for the school's national exams was achieved.

**Table 1. National Examination Scores and School Examinations**

No	Target	Results	Year
1	62	64	2017/2018
2	62	66	2018/2019
3	55	68	2019/2020
4	56	69	2020/2021

Source: Data SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong

Online learning problems did not influence the student's graduation achievement target. The percentage of passing grade IX

students in four years (during the principal's tenure) can be observed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Percentage of Graduation of Class IX Students**

No.	Year	Students	Graduates	%
1	2017/2018	55	55	100
2	2018/2019	62	62	100
3	2019/2020	63	63	100
4	2020/2021	67	67	100

Source: Data SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong

It was concluded that online and limited face-to-face learning was ineffective. The students were minor in participation and independence in online learning than face-to-face learning. The teachers needed improvement in delivering teaching material, monitoring, and evaluating. The parents were limited in accompanying their son/daughter to study in their home. The assessment was limited in evaluating online learning problems.

A detailed assessment of the student, the teacher's teaching method, and the parent's participation problem was not found.

***The Principal' Communication Style***

The interviews with teachers and education staff denoted that the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong communication leadership style was equalitarian, structuring, dynamic, and relinquishing.

**Table 3. Participants' Choice Regarding Principal's Communication Style**

	Teacher	Education staff
Limiting, regulating, and coercing	0	0
Two-way	11	3
Structured	11	3
Aggressive and dynamic	11	3
Accepting ideas, suggestions, and opinions	11	3
Withdrawing	0	0

Source: Research data, 2021

The teacher participants said the principals apply two-way and open communication by allowing teachers and education staff to express suggestions and opinions (the equalitarian style).

*"The Principal was open in conveying information. The principal provided opportunities for teachers and education staff to express suggestions and opinions. The principal was also quite concerned about the needs of teachers and education staff. Sometimes the principal helped teachers or education staff who were having a monetary problem with his*

*personal money"* (Participant 6, personal interview, May 25, 2021).

The teachers and education staff participants informed that they could provide input and suggestions regarding school learning to the principal (the relinquishing style). The principal was conveyed messages or information in a structured manner in a verbal or written message. Formal information was delivered as a notification letter or a statement (the structuring style).

*"The school principal was conveyed in writing such as official letters, notification letters, decrees, or certificates from the agency or foundation. In addition, the informal*

*message was conveyed verbally or in-person"* (Participant 7, personal interview, May 25, 2021).

The three communication styles did not eliminate the principal's aggressive and firm style in stimulating the teacher's and education staff's performance (the dynamic style). Principals used a dynamic style when the teachers and education staff were less motivated or late to teach. For example, teachers and education staff stated that the principal once reprimanded a teacher who was late in teaching. The principal confirmed the teacher's opinion. The principal said that firmness in punishment or reward was an effort to improve the quality of learning in schools.

*"Improving the quality of learning started with the teacher. Every time the bell rings, the teacher must be ready according to the lesson schedule. Every teacher should set an example of punctuality. Teachers improve their abilities by attending workshops and upgrading to increase their knowledge and abilities in the academic field. If the teachers make a mistake, the teacher will be rebuked. Usually, without an official letter of reprimand, the teacher has corrected the mistake. We motivated students to learn by rewarding scholarships for the class's overall winner. Every year, we provide additional lessons for class IX in February-May"* (Participant 1, personal interview, May 26, 2021).

The teacher and education staff participants did not mention the control and withdrawal styles. The principal's assertive attitude was considered a work stimulus by the teachers and education staff (the dynamic style) because the principal's reprimand was never delivered loudly. The principal was considered to have never withdrawn from the relationships with teachers and education staff. The principal never silenced teachers or education staff if

there was a problem. Instead, the principal would call and talk to solve the problem. Teachers and education staff participants prefer the absence of both styles of communication. According to participant 8, they were unpleasant to work with a boss who was too rugged or silent.

The students and parents participant was confirmed the teacher and education staff participant's information. The student participant informed the principal came to class sometimes to inform school policies or the education agency. The five student participants agreed that the principal was friendly, polite, and never excessive anger. The principal allowed the students to talk in person and during the class meeting. The possibility to ask, answer, debate, and critique the principal's opinion was open. The student participant also confirmed the motivation through rewards and suggestions.

The three parents participants only meet the principal when school meeting or in incidental contact. Before the pandemic, schools regularly held annual meetings with parents through the school committee. During the pandemic, meetings with school committees are held on a limited basis. Communication barriers and issues related to the pandemic were resolved via telephone and WhatsApp groups.

The parent participants confirmed the student participant's opinion. In addition, the parent participant confirmed that the principal was sufficient to respond to every complaint and concern of the parents of students. The principal does not shy away, silent, or communicate loudly. The parent participants also confirmed a formal letter as traditional communication media.

*"The principal was quite active in responding to the opinions of representatives of parents, both during direct communication and in WhatsApp groups. The principal answers questions*



*from parents in the committee group or when a representative from the committee submits them to the principal. The principal never silences students' parents or communicates loudly. Usually, the principal provides explanatory information relaxed (Participant 21, personal interview, May 28, 2021).*

The principal uses the same communication style when communicating with parents, teacher participants, and education staff. However, the participants' parents did not mention the controlling and withdrawal styles.

Teachers and education staff considered digital communication media not as good as direct communication. The principal used Whatsapp digital media to solve the online learning problem. The discussion in the Whatsapp group was about formal and informal issues such as the prohibition of face-to-face learning issues or informal issues. The discussion in the Whatsapp group was complemented face-to-face communication. The direct meetings did weekly at schools. Reducing interactions between principals, teachers, and education staff can hinder communication between teachers, education staff, and principals. This problem was resolved because the communication between teachers and education staff could convey problems without worrying about getting an inadequate response from the principal and the principal responded quickly.

Participant teachers and education staff feel a reduction in the intensity of aggressive and dynamic communication (the dynamic style) and accept ideas, suggestions, and opinions (the relinquishing style). The reduction occurred due to reduced interaction between teachers, education staff, and school principals, resulting in a reduction in the flow of information from before the contact restrictions occurred during the pandemic.

*"We used to see each other almost every day. Sometimes, the principal was given suggestions and opinions for things that arise in our daily lives. For example, when the principal finds an education staff coming late, the reprimand will immediately be delivered. 'Let us be late,' as the principal usually did gently. Now teachers did not come to work every day. All the staff will only meet when necessary. So, the suggestions or reprimand was not conveyed every day"* (Participant 9, personal interview, May 27, 2021).

The online learning situation during the pandemic did not change the opinion of teachers and education staff much about the principal's communication style. The teachers and education staff participants agreed that the principal's communication style was not changed during the 1,5 years of the pandemic. The difference was from face-to-face communication to mediated online communication. The communication in Whatsapp groups had occurred before the pandemic but became more frequent after the pandemic as a means of communication.

It was concluded that the principal's communication styles were the equalitarian style, the structuring style, the dynamic style, and the relinquishing style. The equalitarian style was the principal's communication style that plays a role in overcoming communication barriers in a pandemic situation.

### ***Principal's Communication Style and Learning Effectiveness in a Pandemic Period***

Interviews and observations regarding the effectiveness of learning during a pandemic found the problems in students, teachers, and parents. Teachers, education staff, student and parent participants confirmed no problem with the principal communication style. The principal confirmed to have communicated in a style that students, teachers, and parents receive

well. Why are there problems in learning during the pandemic?

The students learning during the pandemic problems were that the students were minor in participation and independence in online learning. Formal and informal communication between students and the principal has not been enough to increase the activities of all students. The principal's strategy to motivate students by providing rewards scholarships for the class's overall winner has not motivated all students. The principal's move to provide additional lessons for class IX succeeded in making all students graduate and achieve academic targets. The finding denoted that the principal's communication style has not succeeded in solving the problem of all students' activities in learning, particularly online learning.

The problem of teachers in learning during the pandemic was that the teachers needed improvement in delivering teaching materials, monitoring, and evaluating. The Principal mentioned that steps to improve teacher capacity were by attending workshops and upgrading to increase their knowledge and abilities in the academic field. Interviews with teachers stated that the principal would reprimand teachers who were late in teaching or made mistakes. There was no information about principal reprimand to the teachers who can not teach effectively.

The problem with parents learning during the pandemic was that they were limited in accompanying their son/daughter to study in their home. Good parent-principal communication has not succeeded in increasing parental participation in online learning.

Interviews and observations found no assessment to set teaching standards during the pandemic. The absence of teaching standards during the pandemic causes difficulties in determining the steps for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of online and limited face-to-face learning. Schools only

measure the effectiveness of learning by the number of graduations and the achievement of student grade targets. This measure did not solve the problem of student activity in class, teacher teaching methods, and parental participation. The other problem was that a complete online learning system through Learning System Management was not well developed. As a result, the learning process is still direct communication, either through a face-to-face communication or digital media.

The principal has held school meetings to explore and solve learning problems during the pandemic. The school meeting resulted in the decision to hold limited face-to-face learning. However, this decision did not entirely solve the problems for teachers, parents, and students.

It was concluded that the principal communication style solves the problem of the effectiveness of online learning by resolving potential conflicts between teachers, students, and parents. The absence of an adequate online learning system requires information and communication management to avoid misunderstandings between school principals, teachers, students, and parents. The responses from parents, students, and teachers to the principal indicated that the principal's communication styles were adequate in overcoming the limitations of the digital learning system. The principal's communication style can overcome the barriers that depend on direct communication. However, the principal communication style has not solved the learning problems during the pandemic because the principal did not design specific steps to solve the problem. The case at SMP PGRI Cigombong indicated that the principal communication style was not the only factor determining the effectiveness of learning during a pandemic. The adequate communication between the principal, parents, students, and teachers was not sufficient to

solve the learning problem in the pandemic period.

### **Discussion**

Research at SMP PGRI I Cigombong indicated the online learning problem was student's activity in learning and student learning independence same with previous research (Jaya & Simanungkalit, 2021; Jumadi et al., 2021; Zaitun et al., 2021). The teachers have tried to manage interaction with the student, used YouTube videos to enhance student participation, and same creative ways in supervising students as in previous studies (Basa & Hudaidah, 2021; Jumadi, Laksana, & Prananta, 2021; Mursabdo & Mursabdo, 2021; Sibuea, Sembiring, & Agus, 2020). However, the teachers considered that this step was inadequate to improve students' activity. As a result, the student did not participate optimally in the online or limited face-to-face learning process.

The principal's communication styles can involve teachers, principals, students, and the parent's participation as in previous studies (Anggraeni & Akbar, 2018; Basa & Hudaidah, 2021; Kirom, 2017; Noviardila, 2020; Telupun, 2020). The study found that the principal communication style can overcome communication barriers during a pandemic, in line with previous research (Pamungkas & Nasuha, 2020). However, the principal's communication style has not been adequate for motivating students in the learning process and improving online teaching methods. The ability of the principal's communication styles to involve teachers, principals, students, and the parent's participation did not solve the learning process effectiveness problem. That was not in line with the previous studies.

The student graduation data and score target achievement denoted that the principal can achieve learning goals or effectiveness (Machali & Hidayat, 2016; Suyahman, 2017). However, score assessment was a practical assessment (Biesta, 2017) and has not shown

overall student achievement (Saltman & Means, 2017). In Indonesia, the value in numbers refers to entering the next level of education or a report card value.

The study found the failure was that the principal was not a holistic assessment to evaluate the online system learning effectiveness problem. Instead, the assessment was focused on limited online learning only.

It was concluded that the principal communication style effectively managed communication between teachers, principals, students, and parents of students. However, the principal communication style was not sufficient to solve the problems in student, teacher, and parent. It was indicated that the principal communication style was not a single factor in encouraging online learning effectiveness. A specific pandemic learning problem assessment was needed.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

The study found that the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Cigombong applies four leadership communication styles from the six leadership communication styles proposed by Tubbs and Moss, namely the equalitarian style, the structuring style, the dynamic style, and the relinquishing style. The four leadership styles of communication encouraged an excellent atmosphere of communication with teachers, education staff, students, and parents. Applying these four communication styles can overcome barriers due to the lack of interaction during the pandemic in schools that still depend on direct communication and have limited digital learning systems. The principal's communication styles encouraged the graduation and score target achievement but less in encouraging student activity in online learning, improving the teacher's capacity, and encouraging parent participation. It was indicated that the principal communication style did not encourage online learning

effectiveness. The principal's communication style failed to encourage learning effectiveness because the problem was not only in communication. The principal was not arranged a particular assessment to solve the learning effectiveness problem. As a result, the problem was not solved.

### Suggestion

The study results suggest strengthening the four principal communication styles as the fit communication style to overcome barriers due to the lack of interaction in the pandemic period in schools. In addition, the study suggested that the principal needed to arrange a particular strategy to solve the online system learning problem.

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