
Research Article

School Leadership Role in Nurturing a Sense of Responsibility in High Schools: A Comparative Study of Afghanistan and Indonesia

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Abstract

The development of a school and the readiness of teachers to teach with dedication, accountability, and enthusiasm depend significantly on leadership. Afghanistan has been a hub for educational advancement, and teachers' dedication and sense of accountability have been a key problem. The majority of Indonesia's educational administration and leadership challenges in schools, in contrast, have been resolved by professional leadership. Through a comparison of Indonesia and Afghanistan, the current study explored the function of school leadership in fostering a feeling of responsibility in teachers. They conducted interviews with school principals and teachers in both nations using a qualitative research design. The study's findings showed that school leaders were crucial in fostering a sense of responsibility at both research sites. Each nation has its own unique school principal practices and nurturing styles. In terms of fostering a sense of responsibility in school teachers, the leadership styles in both nations may be described as democratic in Indonesia and authoritative in Afghanistan as a result of the findings.

Keywords

Responsibility; leadership; educational leadership; Indonesia; Afghanistan

Introduction

Leadership is often considered an important area behind schools' improvement and success. Leaders possess a variety of styles or particular leadership styles to effectively lead schools and foster trusting connections facilitating significant teacher satisfaction and performance (Gomez-Leal, 2022) as a result of their influential skills. Studies on leadership ongoingly discover new aspects and areas of this complex yet important concept. For instance, Heifetz (1994) states that bringing a spirit of activeness in people to deal with problems in an effective manner is leadership. School leadership in scholarly



discussion is seen as a direct influencer of quality teaching and learning (Dinham, 2005; Leithwood, 2007) that eventually leads to better school outcomes.

Although teachers have assigned duties and responsibilities, sometimes it comes forth particularly in third-world countries like Afghanistan that teachers often neglect their roles or duties of teaching students. There might be several reasons behind neglecting duties and responsibilities such as longer hours of work (Easthope & Easthope, 2000), low incentives (although Samo et al. 2022 argue that incentive doesn't have any correlation with teachers' performance) authoritative school leadership, first-year teachers (Hope, 1999), teacher and administration relations (Farber, 1984). Tan et al. (2022) found that teachers were more effective in school outcomes compared to principals. This signifies the role teachers play in bringing about a change in school culture, school effectiveness, and students' achievement.

A sense of responsibility is an essential factor in driving schools toward effectiveness. According to Lauermann & Karabenick (2011), teachers' sense of responsibility refers to "a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or prevent designated outcomes or that these outcomes should have been produced or prevented" (p. 127). Teachers' sense of responsibility has undoubtedly impacted teachers' personal characteristics, job satisfaction, and engagement, but this also has implications on students' achievement, since the relation between teacher and student is deeply rooted and affected by teachers' sense of responsibility. According to Yough et al. (2022), a sense of responsibility aims at achieving a particular outcome with the assistance of a group of motivated behaviors. A sense of responsibility remains a critical dialogue to explore and dig deep in order to see the positive and negative factors behind it.

Afghanistan, a country located in the heart of Asia is home to respect, hospitality, and friendship. Even from very early childhood, children learn basic and important values at home (Adamec, 1985). Girls and boys learn the responsibilities of hospitality and guests early. Both must learn when to display pride and when to maintain modesty as well as the ideals of honor and shame (Balland et al. 1985). This brings the issue of responsibility being regarded as a required trait in Afghan culture and society. The most significant component of life in Afghanistan is one's family. Afghan culture is essentially collective, and people frequently prioritize the needs of their families before their own. This implies that family responsibilities typically take precedence over individual demands. In most cases, loyalty to one's family comes before all other commitments to one's tribe or culture (Evason, 2019).

Indonesia, one of the biggest archipelago countries in Southeast Asia is also well known for its hospitality. A country with rich culture, languages, and characteristics. Manners or etiquette is one of the important issues that should be taught from an early age in Indonesian culture. Multicultural education constitutes a process or education strategy in cultural diversity which includes nation plurality, language, ethnicity, and social group (Saddhono, 2015). Responsibility has turned into an area that should be dig deeper, especially in the Indonesian context, Indonesian culture stresses that people are socially responsible for their families and that children must look after their elders. Indonesian people are concerned about the "good name" of their family, the act of an individual will impact the perception of the entire family by others. They are also expected to be loyal to their family before any other connections.

One of the important areas of consideration in fostering a sense of responsibility in teachers comes through school principals or school leadership sense of responsibility since school leadership influences teachers and school staff with the help of their professionalism, leadership skills, and traits to achieve the intended school outcomes and students' achievement. Promoting or nurturing a sense of responsibility is an important aspect of the acculturation of students with the importance and effect of a sense of responsibility. Yet, in Afghanistan teacher attrition (Aslami, 2013), and teaching quality (Samady, 2001; Arooje & Burrige, 2020) mostly come because of lack of sense of responsibility as



one factor. Although far better than in Afghanistan, teacher quality remains a challenge in Indonesia (Himawan, 2016). A recent study by Kawuryan et al. (2021) finds an imbalance of teacher quality and professional development in urban and rural Indonesia.

Taking into account the above research findings, there is a gap in the current literature on the role of the principal in bringing forth of sense of responsibility in high school teachers in both countries. In this regard, the present study investigates school leadership's role in nurturing a sense of responsibility in school teachers through a comparison between Indonesia and Afghanistan. With the help of qualitative research design, the study interviews school principals and teachers in four public high schools in Depok, Indonesia, and four public high schools in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Sense of responsibility is a widely understood and used term. Stott (1976) defined that the word “responsibility” involves a notion of consideration for others, it is important to have a responsibility, especially when it comes to educational fields. Matteucci (2017) stated that Teachers’ professional responsibilities include not only teaching but also feeling responsible for student outcomes. It shows that responsibility is one important point regarding the educational field.

Allen and Mintrom (2010) stated in their article that the concept of responsibility is highly relevant to the organization of public schooling since it allows the adults for the formal nurture and train the children to become full citizens. In contrast, Aliakbari and Kafshgar (2013) conducting research in Iran showed in their research that there was only a significant statistical relationship between a sense of responsibility and two job satisfaction sub-scales; supportive administration and job characteristics.

Other studies conducted by Hargreaves (2009) about how teachers in a rural school have a bigger responsibility through their surroundings rather than the teachers from large urban schools. It is related to Matteucci (2013) who stated that the responsibility of teachers is affected by personal and contextual variables, specifically by the teacher’s self-efficacy, increment theory of intelligence, and a perceived school positive climate concerning the relationships with students. In her other works, Matteucci (2017) found that High school teachers who feel responsible for teaching and their students report higher levels of work engagement and job satisfaction than less responsible teachers, and are more likely to support mastery-oriented instructional practices that emphasize student effort, mastery of tasks, and individual growth. Lauermann (2013) stated that teacher responsibility is conceptually and empirically distinct from self-efficacy and that the relationship between responsibility and self-efficacy varies by type of educational outcome.

School leadership is something important in the educational field. The preparation and development of school leaders are now considered to be fundamental to school and system improvement (Sumintono et al, 2015). Unfortunately, there is not too much research on this issue, especially in Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia. The Indonesian school system has been undergoing significant change since 2002 towards school-based management with mandatory devolution of authority and power to school-level decision-makers structured as School Councils. (Hariri et al, 2015). The current Minister of Education has a new system in Indonesian Education called “Merdeka Belajar”. Most of the relationships between school principal leadership styles and school principal decision-making styles are significant (Hariri et al, 2015).

Although there is still a little number of research that uncover about the Leadership role in Indonesia, Sumintono et al (2015) could found that even though principal training has been standardized in Indonesia and is now a compulsory part of a principal certification process, micro-political influences still currently govern the appointment of school principals. The other research by Suryadi and Budimansyah (2016) suggested in their research that through the development of curriculum 13 in Indonesia, school reforms would be even more successful, among other things, through establishing



school principals as professional agents of change that help teachers transform their instructional behavior and improve learning. Stated in Kadiyono et al (2020) that in the era of 4.0 education, transactional leadership, transformational, democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, bureaucratic leadership and charismatic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on teacher's performance. The present study, thus, tries to answer following questions:

1. How school principals bring a sense of responsibility in school teacher?
2. How high school teachers perceive principals' sense of responsibility?

Method

The aim of using qualitative research is to explore role of high school principals in nurturing a sense of responsibility in high school teachers from the participants' views and to see how participants construct meaning when it comes to nurturing sense of responsibility. Similar to what Creswell and Creswell (2018) have put that qualitative researcher struggles to create meaning of a phenomenon from the participants' views. For this reason, qualitative method has been selected to conduct research on school leadership role in nurturing a sense of responsibility. An unstructured or in-depth interview provides a life history or holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view (Dawson, 2002). In this regard, the data will be collected through unstructured or in-depth interviews to understand the living experience of discussion regarding school principal's role in nurturing sense of responsibility in high school. The purpose is to see and hear from teachers, and principal about their part in nurturing sense of responsibility (principals) and perceiving sense of responsibility (teacher). On the part of the interview sessions, Gay et al. (2012) State that in unstructured interviews taking notes and expanding them after discussions are critical steps in interview data collection. Similarly, during the interview, participants will be asked to feel comfortable sharing their views or thoughts about a particular point. Later, then interview notes will be taken into expansion where the identified responses will be organized, and specific themes for generating specified themes, which will be presented later in the paper.

Data Collection

The researchers will all the data that support the research question. Unstructured interviews will be conducted with high school principals and high school teachers to share their understanding and views on nurturing a sense of responsibility particularly for high school principals. The reason for choosing unstructured interviews lays in getting a holistic view of participants about sense of responsibility, it is nurturing and it is perception by the teachers. While collecting the data, the researchers will interview the respondents from both Indonesian and Afghanistan high schools mainly located in Kabul and Depok. From Afghanistan, the data will be collected through online interviews sessions using zoom as medium of communication. After that, data will be categorized and analyzed to generate themes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the field note, interview transcripts, and other materials that the researcher accumulate to increase his own understanding. According to Gay (1995), data analysis usually involves application of one or more statistical technique. In the present study, a thematic analysis was performed to look for repeated patterns in the interviewees' responses. Braun and Clark (2006) have identified that in thematic analysis, the researcher must go back and forth through the data several times to familiarize themselves, assign codes for the repeated patterns, and produce reports. In this study, the researchers will take a similar approach for the thematic analysis. (1) collecting the responses, (2) going back and forth through data, (3) assigning codes, or finding repeated patterns. Codes will be in the form of highlighting and coloring participants' feelings views, and ideas the researchers will collect. Codes will help develop themes of broader understanding of the phenomenon under study.



Results

Principals

Through the eight interview sessions with high school principals and teachers in online in Kabul, Afghanistan and offline in Depok, Indonesia. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis technique after going back and forth through the interview responses. The study found the following themes from the collected interview responses (*See figure 1*).

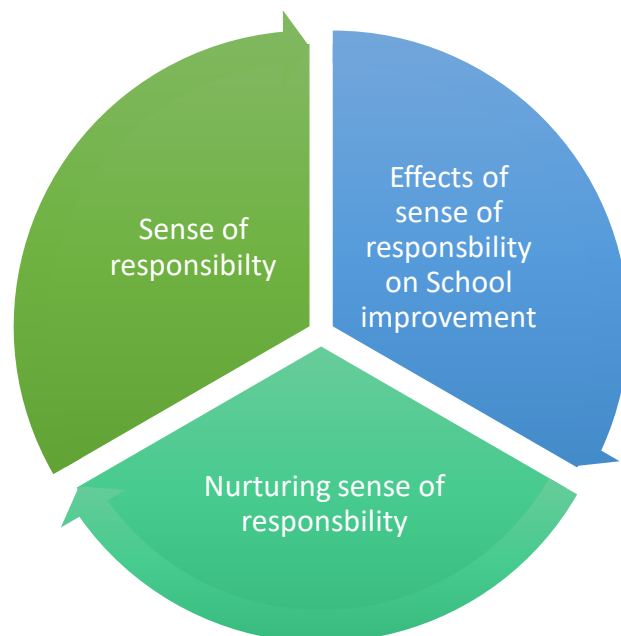


Figure 1. Generated themes after analyzing the interview responses with principals

The principals were asked to explore their view on three different areas related to sense of responsibility. As the leader of the school how they view and put sense of responsibility as part of the duty, what effects (either positive or negative) might sense of responsibility or irresponsibility have on students' achievement and school improvement as whole, and in what ways they deal with nurturing sense of responsibility in their school teachers.

Sense of Responsibility

Sense of responsibility meant a great to principals in both countries. As being responsible for leading the school, they seemed quite assured of being responsible leaders. The principals from Afghanistan put sense of responsibility as something that made them follow a plan, get prepared, struggle for getting the set target to bring about a long-lasting change in the schools. On the other hand, principals of senior high schools in Indonesia thought of sense of responsibility as a broad sense for making sure every aspect of learning and teaching process run smooth and completes. From both views, we can clearly elaborate that sense of responsibility played crucially important role for them. In order to elaborate on that principals paid careful attention to teachers to make sure they act and teach according to the passion of teaching they brought while coming to the field of teaching. In the same respect, it was deemed important to have their view on the fulfilling the needs of teachers in order to overcome lack of sense of responsibility. Principals mainly focused on teachers' professional development, assigning them class according to their level of expertise, and prioritizing every of teacher's need.

Effects of Sense of Responsibility on School Improvement

School improvement is the primary concern when it comes to effective leadership. While its also important for school principals to keep close eye on teachers' sense of responsibilities in his or her teaching. The effects could be drastic if teachers become irresponsible in their teaching as it has direct impact on students learning achievement and school improvement in general. In both countries, the

principals primarily pointed out two areas as a result of lack of sense of responsibility first, it hinders students learning, and reduces teachers' efforts in teaching properly. These areas are very serious when it comes to teachers' sense of responsibility. The primarily goal of a teacher should be to teach and focus on the learner, but if they lack the sense to be responsible to their students, it would lead to lack of learning for students. Reduction in efforts for teaching arise from lack of interest in teaching which is the mainly driver of sense of responsibility in teachers according to a principal from Afghanistan.

Nurturing a Sense of Responsibility

For school leaders one of their responsibilities lies in the area of making everything work in the school as whole to lead productively. An important consideration for principals comes in the form of relating themselves responsible to leave a prototype of sense of responsibility for teachers and students. Nurturing sense of responsibility remained a crucial component of principals' concerns in Afghan schools. Principals believed that teachers although teach with greater enthusiasm, still some of the teachers feel dissatisfied with their teaching and fail short of completing their duties. In Indonesian context, there are two ways school leadership fostering a sense of responsibility i.e., giving teacher an understanding of school vision and mission to remember and maintain vision and mission on daily basis in their teaching. Another way, organizing programs for teachers every month on issues of responsibility. In the case of Afghanistan, seminars, teacher meetings and other informal and formal meetings deals with teaching them about sense of responsibility. While another way Afghan school principals deal with nurturing sense of responsibility comes in the form of painting the school walls with saying regarding the value of teaching and the status of teacher.

Teachers

The following findings are generated from the responses teachers provided in the interview sessions in both countries. In this section, teachers in High schools were asked about two areas related to sense of responsibility namely the importance of sense of responsibility and nurturing a sense of responsibility (see figure. 2).

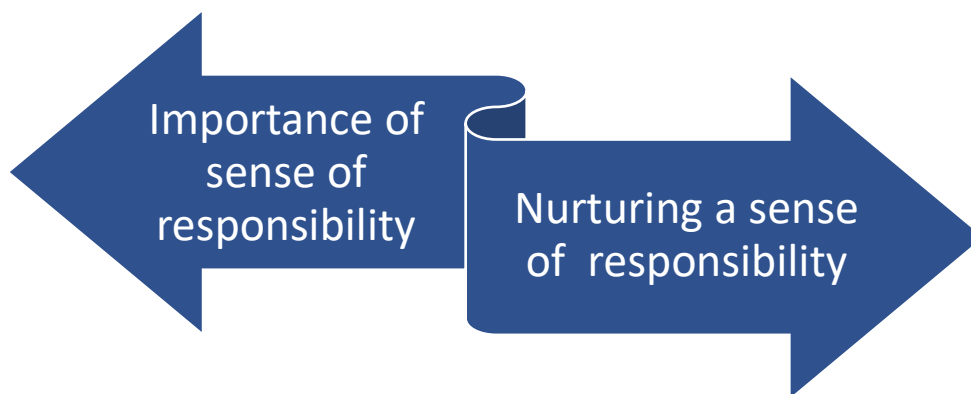


Figure 2. Teachers' responds about sense of responsibility

Importance of Sense of Responsibility

Teaching is a challenging yet rewarding task while having a matured sense of responsibility makes it easy for the teachers as well as the school administration to improve schools. Teachers in this research study from both countries put sense of responsibility as essential as students learning. Particularly, Afghan teacher see sense of responsibility as an integral part of their students' achievements. They believed that without having a sense of responsibility, students' achievement would hinder leading to underperforming student as a result. On the other hand, lack of responsibility as teacher would contribute negatively to the learning objectives and goals. One Afghan secondary school teacher said:

While coming to the profession of teaching, I felt a sense of responsibility, and without having one, I believe that my students would have problems with me and my teaching. (Afghan School teacher, Dec 15, 2022)

Indonesian teachers considered sense of responsibility as an important factor of overall development of students which eventually contribute positively to school improvement. Thus, holistic development of students and school improvement are closely connected to teachers' sense of responsibility for them. To them, lack of responsibility harms students' development and triggers a negative reputation for school that leads school to lag behind in terms of improvement.

Nurturing a Sense of Responsibility

Principals in high school go through a lot to give teachers the motivation and sense for effective teaching resulting in better students' performance and school achievement. In this study, the researchers asked high school teachers in both countries regarding principals' contribution in instilling a sense of responsibility. With overall school principalship, these school principals need to check on and monitor their teachers in terms of their expectations, motivations, and passion for teaching. It leads to students' development and school improvement in return.

First, the Indonesian school teachers in this study, brought the issue of school principal serving as role model of responsibility for them. In plain words, arriving on time, passionately checking on classes, regularly asking teachers about their teaching, and providing insights on making teaching and learning more productive are the examples of principal putting him/her self in the center of nurturing a sense of responsibility. One Indonesian high school teacher puts it:

Our school principal is a nice and professional person, he always puts teachers' feelings and committed ahead. Not only this, but he the way he acts as the principals gives us the passion and feeling to teach from the core of our heart. (Indonesian School Teacher, Dec 18, 2022)

Second, the Afghan high school teachers' story was different to the Indonesian one. Principal never showed signals or model of responsibility, rather put more emphasis on practice and followed strict rules and regulations. When it came to teachers' responsibility, the principals in meetings bring forth rule book, and dealt with the teachers in accordance to that book. While another important issue was saying regarding the status of teacher which were painted on the walls of the schools. Teachers referred to them as method of nurturing sense of responsibility. The first option of nurturing sense of responsibility deals with punishment and reward system in Afghan schools. Rules decide who is responsible as teacher who lack responsibility and in return, they receive punishment and rewards.

Discussion

In formal context, one of the important ways to maintain social responsibility lays in the core of sense of responsibility as a contributing factor to fulfilling professional duties. On the other hand, in less formal context, it would signify a matter of providing help (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). Moreover, motivation and self-regulation also plays critical role as result of personal sense of responsibility in teaching (Higgins, 1997; Higgins et al. 1994). As the study found teachers connected sense of responsibility to students' achievement while other factors such as professional dedication (Halvorsen et al. 2009), job satisfaction (Winter et al. 2006), positive teaching effects (Guskey, 1984), influencing students, and integrating new learning practices (Guskey, 1988) also been put into concepts as result of being committed and responsible. Students' achievement dependent on teachers' sense of responsibility (Lee & Smith, 1996 & 1997; Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). It could be argued that better sense of responsibility contributes to students' achievement and quality teaching.



Supportive school environment (Matteucci et al. 2017) positive impacts teachers personal and professional sense of responsibility (Lauremann, 2014; Lauremann & Karabenick, 2011). School environment consist of great deal of things and people, but leadership in school produce to be an obvious part of support school environment. As the study finds nurturing sense of responsibility from principal side could be either explicit or implicit. Serving as sample of responsibility or dealing with responsibility in more authoritative manner using rulebook.

An important finding in Indonesian context, realved through principals' school mission and vision is used as a triggered of sense of responsibility in school teachers. According to Bredeson (1989) on the leadership and the roles of school principals, fostering, creating, and shaping school overall environment which contribute to the acceptance and sharing of professional responsibility comes under the responsibility of school principals. Leadership is critical for school development and teacher improved performance (Aas & Paulsen, 2019). Leadership style is important element to contributed to enhancing teacher's sense of responsibility. Warman et al. (2016) educational leadership style promotes, direct, guide school teachers as a collective aim for achieving school goals. In this study, the Indonesian principal adopt realization of school mission and vision to help teachers remember and follow them to have productive outcomes. It came as part of their leadership style.

The study found that school teachers in Afghanistan are reminded consistently for their responsibilities in two ways punishment and reward by the rulebook, and indirectly making teacher sense the responsibility through means of painting school surroundings. In a study by Andreoni et al. (2003) finds punishment and rewards to have strong effect while another study by Schwab (1986) considered rewards and punishment as source of teacher burnout, as they are mostly not on the basis of contingency meaning teachers' performance or they mostly likely do not get for doing wrong or for right. Singly, punishment has also been found to have significant effect on employee's work discipline by 55.6% (Hartawan, 2017).

While punishment and rewards have been studied either positively or negatively affecting teachers' responsibility (Andreoni, 1986), discipline (Syuhada, 2022), improving teachers' performance (Mulyasa, 2018), leadership maintaining school discipline through rewards (Supriyono in Chairul, 2020), the use of implicit instruction through principals with the help of teachers' status, internal contentment, and respect in community in messages painted on school wall is a unique way of dealing with enhancing sense of responsibility. As the principals in Afghans school are putting this into practice helps teachers realize the position and status of teacher before entering classroom everyday which in return according these principals contribute to teachers' sense of responsibility.

Apart from principals' intervention in reminding teachers of sense of responsibility, principals in both countries believed that teachers still have to be reminded constantly of their responsibilities by through professional seminar, coaching program, teachers meeting annually. In relation to this, Postholm (2012) found teacher cooperation an important factor for finding out how teachers develop. Teacher to teacher relations, cooperation, and learning from each other motivates teachers for becoming more and more responsible, thus guidance and direction at school by leaders or teachers significantly contribute to holistic professional development of teachers which serves as supportive network for teachers (Opfer et al., 2011). It could be argued here that although external trainings and coaching play crucial role in teacher sense of responsibility while orientation coming within the school suppresses the one from outside.

Through comparative lens, Indonesian principals put on a more democratic and supportive leadership style in dealing with sense of responsibility for teachers. Although research on teacher performance and principal leadership style favors autocratic leadership to be more effective in developing secondary school teachers (Saleem et al., 2020). Williams (1999) labels democratic leadership as developmental. It leads to fostering an atmosphere of friendliness sharing feelings, ideas, and



experiences and importantly giving everyone's idea value (Brookfield, 2010). Northouse (2018) talks about supportive leadership to overcome obstacles and clarifying paths for teacher to stand out and perform well. Similarly, previous study has shown a largely indirect yet effective relation between principal's leadership and teacher self-efficacy in Indonesian high schools (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). As in the case here, putting the principalship position in the center to function as role model of responsibility, indirectly stimulates the idea of sense of responsibility in high school teachers.

On the other hand, Afghan principals' leadership style can be categorized as autocratic which William (1999) puts this as controlling not giving the employees the right to choose, as in the Afghan context where mostly the responsibility issue is dealt with in accordance with the rulebook. As found in the study of Saleem et al. (2013) autocratic leadership foster better teacher performance, yet in a very strict and following the organizational structure (Brookfield, 2010). The argument comes that the Afghan teachers feel responsible because of the principals' autocratic style, not as personal sense of responsibility as in the case of Indonesia. This could lead to mobbing (harassment, intimidation, pressure, force, and psychological violence) of teachers as result of hierarchical and autocratic leadership (Uysal & Yavuz, 2013).

In summary, the democratic, servant, and supportive high school leadership in Indonesia contribute positively to teachers' satisfaction, commitment, and passion for teaching. In Afghan context, somehow the autocratic leadership brings a sense of responsibility in high school teachers, but without paying attention to personal sense of teachers feeling to be committed and responsible using punishment and rewards.

Conclusion

The study of this research is about nurturing a sense of responsibility in high schools: a comparative study of Afghanistan and Indonesia. The research discovered the importance of a sense of responsibility in school, the effects of a sense of responsibility on school improvement, and the importance of nurturing a sense of responsibility after conducting research in both countries, Afghanistan and Indonesia, from the perspectives of the school's principal and teachers. Both countries' principals and teachers defined responsibility as the process of learning and teaching without a gap or break in schools. Further, in terms of the improvement of schools, the principle's concern was the irresponsibility of teachers. They believe the absence of teachers in school has a direct impact on the student cycle of learning as well as stopping school improvement. Furthermore, in Afghanistan, the sense of responsibility is fostered through two methods: official seminars and interaction with youth. On the contrary, in Indonesia, school leaders should nurture a sense of responsibility and make the teachers understand and realize the aim of a sense of responsibility in schools.

The data from Afghanistan yielded that the sense of responsibility is similar in both countries: following a plan, getting prepared, and bringing about a lasting change in the schools. While Indonesia considers a sense of responsibility to be the process by which learning and teaching occur smoothly and successfully, principals in both countries pay attention to teachers, ensuring they act and teach in accordance with the passion for teaching that they brought with them when they entered the teaching profession, as well as focusing on teachers' professional development.

Based on what is found in the finding, it is stated that there are some cases in the schools which show that some teachers still have a problem regarding to responsibility. This finding leads to a recommendation that schools management, started from the principal still needs to find the best methods in nurturing the sense of responsibility. This can happen because the way irresponsible teachers are handled is still not deterrent or is still not find the right way. This is one of the principle's



homework how the school's environment and how they manage the schools to be the best place to nurture the sense of responsibility without oppression.

We realize that our research still has many limitations that may be corrected if in the future someone will make research with the same theme. This research has been conducted in a very limited time, with a little number of sources. If in future there will conduct similar research, it would be better if the data taken from a broader field. For example; it is not only taken from one area in the country, but we have to combine the data from several schools in other areas of the country. It would make the findings richer and more interesting.

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Author Contribution and Competing Interest

Every author in this study contributed in the part of data collection, drafting, and data analysis. This study has no conflicting of competing interest.

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