

The Role of Principal Leadership in the Development of Islamic Education Management

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Abstract:

The development of Islamic education management in madrasahs continues to face various challenges, particularly regarding the optimization of principals' leadership in managing institutional resources, improving teacher quality, and integrating Islamic values into educational practices. These challenges highlight the strategic role of school principals in ensuring the effectiveness of Islamic education management. This study aims to describe and analyze the principal's leadership role in developing Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim Kiarakoneng, Neglasari, Tasikmalaya. The study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation and analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques. The findings indicate that the principal effectively performs multiple leadership roles as a manager, supervisor, motivator, and innovator in developing Islamic education management. These roles are reflected in strategic school management, teacher professional development, the strengthening of organizational culture, and the integration of Islamic values into all aspects of educational administration. The study concludes that visionary, collaborative, and values-based leadership is a key determinant in establishing effective Islamic education management and achieving the vision and mission of the madrasah. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on educational leadership by providing empirical evidence on the critical role of principals in strengthening Islamic education management within the context of Indonesian madrasahs.

Keywords: *principal leadership, Islamic education management, madrasah, educational leadership, case study.*

Abstrak:

Pengembangan manajemen pendidikan Islam di madrasah masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, antara lain belum optimalnya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam mengelola sumber daya, meningkatkan mutu tenaga pendidik, serta mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam penyelenggaraan pendidikan. Kondisi tersebut menempatkan kepala sekolah sebagai aktor strategis yang menentukan keberhasilan pengelolaan lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam mengembangkan manajemen pendidikan Islam di MTs SA Al-Mukarrim Kiarakoneng, Neglasari, Tasikmalaya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah berperan secara efektif sebagai manajer, supervisor, motivator, dan inovator dalam mengembangkan manajemen pendidikan Islam. Peran tersebut diwujudkan melalui penyusunan strategi pengelolaan sekolah, peningkatan kompetensi tenaga pendidik, penguatan budaya kerja, serta pengintegrasian nilai-nilai Islam dalam setiap aspek penyelenggaraan pendidikan. Temuan penelitian menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang visioner, kolaboratif, dan

berorientasi pada nilai-nilai Islam merupakan faktor penting dalam mewujudkan manajemen pendidikan Islam yang efektif serta mendukung tercapainya visi dan misi madrasah.

Keywords: *kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, manajemen pendidikan Islam, madrasah, kepemimpinan pendidikan, studi kasus*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main instruments in forming quality human resources, Ilmi, I., Muliawati, T., Kurnia, D., & Ruswandi, U. (2024).. In the context of Islamic education, the success of education implementation is not only determined by curriculum and infrastructure, but also by the quality of school principal leadership in managing all educational resources. The school principal has a strategic position as a leader responsible for planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of all educational programs so that institutional objectives can be achieved effectively.

According to Mulyasa (2022), the school principal is an educational leader responsible for the success of education implementation through functions as educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (EMASLIM). Wahjosumidjo (2018) states that the school principal is a functional teacher personnel assigned to lead the school where the teaching and learning process takes place.

Muhaimin (2009) explains that Islamic education is a process of forming humans who are faithful, pious, of noble character, and able to develop their potential based on Islamic teachings. Greenleaf (1977) through the servant leadership concept emphasizes that effective leaders are leaders who prioritize service to others. Leithwood dkk. (2006) add that transformational leadership is able to improve teacher motivation and school quality.

Research by Fadla dkk. (2021) shows that madrasah principals play an important role in improving learning management quality through teacher coaching, religious culture development, and strengthening cooperation with the community. However, research on private madrasahs in rural areas is still limited so it needs to be studied more deeply.

Based on the above description, this research aims to describe and analyze the role of school principal leadership in developing Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim Kiarakoneng, Pancatengah District, Tasikmalaya Regency.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Creswell (2018) states that qualitative research is used to understand the meaning of a social phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Yin (2018) explains that case studies are used to examine phenomena in depth in real-life contexts.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling as stated by Sugiyono (2023). Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Moleong (2021) explains that in-depth interviews aim to obtain information directly regarding informants' experiences.

Data validity was conducted through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking referring to Lincoln dan Guba (1985). Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña (2014) which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Islamic education is one of the important pillars in forming a religious generation with noble character. In this context, the success of Islamic education is greatly influenced by effective educational institution management and strong leadership. The school principal

as a leader has great responsibility in guaranteeing the quality of education implementation, especially in terms of management and coaching of educational personnel.

According to Muhaimin (2006), "Islamic education is an educational activity inspired by Islamic teachings and values". In formal institutions such as madrasahs, the school principal is not only tasked administratively, but also strategically must be able to mobilize all school elements towards achieving Islamic education objectives.

Leadership in education is not merely understood as a structural function, but also moral and spiritual. The school principal must have vision, character, and managerial ability in order to carry out functions as manager, innovator, motivator, and spiritual coach. This is important especially in private madrasahs that are religion-based such as MTs SA Al-Mukarrim.

This research was conducted because there are not many studies that specifically discuss how school principals develop Islamic education management in community-based private madrasahs in rural areas. Therefore, this research is important as an academic and practical contribution in strengthening Islamic education leadership.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of field research and discussion based on the theories that have been studied in. The research was conducted to reveal in depth how the school principal plays a role in the development of Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim. Kiarakoneng, Neglasari, Tasikmalaya. The analysis results show that the school principal plays various strategic roles that have a direct impact on education governance, teacher coaching, school culture development, and student quality improvement. In this context, school principal leadership is not only administrative, but also includes managerial, pedagogical, spiritual, and social dimensions. The following discussion describes the role of the school principal in various main aspects of Islamic education management, and examines its impact on institutional effectiveness and challenges faced in daily leadership practice.

The leadership carried out by the madrasah principal at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim shows a more open, participatory approach imbued with a spirit of togetherness. The madrasah principal, Mrs. Leni Nurlela, S.Pd., does not emphasize an authoritarian style, but rather prioritizes cooperation among teachers, students, and all school members. She strives to make the madrasah a comfortable place imbued with a spirit of togetherness. In an interview, she emphasized that all teachers must feel they own the madrasah programs and students must be involved in various activities that instill moral values and learning spirit.

This leadership style illustrates that the madrasah principal not only acts as an administrative leader, but also as a coach and motivator. She is present as a figure who motivates, sets an example, and opens space for collaboration in making decisions. This is in line with what is called transformational leadership, namely a type of leadership that inspires, gives special attention to individuals, and encourages innovation and work spirit.

The leadership of the madrasah principal at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim is also seen in many programs that are run. For example, there are religious activities such as congregational prayer, routine religious studies, and commemorations of major Islamic days. These programs are not only religious rituals, but also become ways to form students who are religious, polite, and responsible.

In policy making, the madrasah principal always involves teachers and other staff through deliberation. She also opens two-way communication, which means teachers or staff can freely provide suggestions, criticism, or ideas. A work atmosphere like this creates

a healthier and more harmonious relationship in the madrasah environment.

In addition, the madrasah principal is also active in building relationships with students' parents, the madrasah committee, and surrounding community leaders. The goal is so that the madrasah does not only stand alone, but becomes part of the community and gets broad support in Islamic education development.

The madrasah principal's leadership also plays a very important role in improving teacher performance quality. With a democratic and open approach, teachers feel valued and given opportunities to develop. The madrasah principal also provides guidance and encouragement to continue improving teaching quality, preparing good lesson plans, and building good relationships with students.

Furthermore, this leadership model is in line with the concept of "servant leadership" or leadership as service, introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf. The core of this concept is that true leaders are those who are willing to serve first. In practice, the madrasah principal does not act as an absolute power holder, but as a facilitator who listens, understands the needs of teachers and students, and strives for fair and targeted policies.

With this leadership style, the atmosphere in the madrasah becomes warmer, communicative, and full of enthusiasm. Teachers not only carry out duties, but also feel an important part of the institutional vision. Students also feel attended to, so they are more enthusiastic in learning and behave better.

The madrasah principal also ensures that all activities carried out remain within the framework of Islamic values. She views that leadership in madrasah is not only about management, but also about devotion. So every decision made always prioritizes moral values, justice, and spiritual consideration.

Overall, leadership at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim reflects Islamic values combined with modern management principles. The madrasah principal succeeds in carrying out her role as director, coach, and servant for all madrasah members. This simple yet strong leadership style contributes greatly to creating a madrasah that is not only academically superior, but also strong in character formation, spirituality, and togetherness.

4. DISCUSSION

The Islamic education management applied at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim is carried out by referring to the vision and mission of the institution based on Islamic values. In an interview, the madrasah principal conveyed that all management elements, from teachers, staff, curriculum, to facilities and infrastructure, are directed to work maximally and continue to develop. This madrasah strives to adapt itself to the times and surrounding community conditions in order to remain relevant and provide benefits.

Education management here is carried out in an integrated manner through three main stages, namely: planning, implementation, and evaluation. All three are carried out systematically and prioritize Islamic principles.

In the planning stage, the madrasah principal involves teachers, staff, and the madrasah committee in joint deliberation. This shows that planning is done together, not unilaterally. One of the flagship programs born from this planning is the Al-Qur'an tahfidz program, which aims to form students who are not only academically smart but also strong spiritually.

In addition, there is also an Islamic character strengthening program, such as the habituation of noble character, discipline, and formation of good social ethics. All of this is arranged not merely for short-term needs, but to form students' personalities comprehensively.

The implementation stage is carried out consistently by all school members. Several main activities that are routinely implemented are congregational prayer in the prayer room, weekly religious studies, religious lectures, and commemorations of major Islamic days (PHBI). These activities are not only routines, but also become ways to instill spiritual and moral values in students' daily lives.

In its implementation, the madrasah principal also ensures that all programs that have been designed truly run well. She acts as a supervisor and spirit booster, so that all teachers and students carry them out with commitment.

Every program that has been implemented is not left to run on its own, but is always evaluated routinely. Evaluation is carried out through observation by guidance and counseling teachers and homeroom teachers, especially in monitoring students' daily morals. In addition, attendance at religious activities such as congregational prayer and tadarus also becomes an indicator in evaluating student involvement.

The results of this evaluation are used to improve programs that are not yet optimal and improve character coaching strategies. Thus, the education provided is not only academic but also touches the moral and spiritual sides of students.

Overall, Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim is designed to form students who have strong character, noble character, and good religious understanding. The madrasah principal plays an important role in ensuring all education elements run harmoniously and balanced between academic demands and Islamic values.

The Role of the School Principal in Developing Islamic Education Management

The madrasah principal at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim, Mrs. Leni Nurlela, has an important role in the development of Islamic education management. In an interview, she mentioned that the madrasah principal must become a dynamicator (driving force), facilitator, and motivator. This means the school principal not only manages from behind, but is also directly involved in creating a positive and supportive learning environment.

The following are the main roles carried out by the madrasah principal:

a) Visionary

The madrasah principal has a forward-looking vision. She sets a big vision for MTs SA Al-Mukarrim to become an excellent madrasah, especially in terms of character and achievement based on the Al-Qur'an and Hadis. This vision is elaborated in annual programs such as tahfidz, character activities, and lessons integrated with Islamic values.

b) HR Manager

The school principal also acts as a manager of teachers and staff. She conducts recruitment, training, and teacher coaching to have good competencies both academically and spiritually. Coaching is done through activities such as Islamic studies, classroom supervision, and MGMP and KKG training. In this way, teachers become more professional and directed.

c) Communicator and Coordinator

The madrasah principal actively builds communication with all parties: teachers, students, parents, and the community. She facilitates regular deliberations, evaluation meetings, and open discussions to hear suggestions and input. Not only that, the madrasah principal also plays a role in bridging relationships between the madrasah and community leaders and other external parties to support educational activities.

d) Motivator and Role Model

The madrasah principal is involved in religious and social activities, such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and Islamic social activities. Her presence as an

active and consistent leader becomes an inspiring example for teachers and students.

5. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that school principal leadership is a key factor in the development of Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim Kiarakoneng. The madrasah principal not only carries out administrative functions, but also acts as a visionary leader, manager, supervisor, communicator, motivator, and role model in internalizing Islamic values. A democratic, collaborative, and transformative leadership style is able to encourage active participation of all school members in planning, implementation, and evaluation of education programs, thereby creating a conducive, religious, and quality-oriented learning environment.

Islamic education management at MTs SA Al-Mukarrim has been applied systematically through deliberation-based planning, program implementation involving all school members, and evaluation covering academic, spiritual, and character aspects. Various flagship programs, such as Al-Qur'an tahfiz, congregational prayer, and character education strengthening, are implemented consistently with the support of school principal leadership. This condition has an impact on increasing student discipline, achievements in the religious field, teacher competence, and parent participation, thus showing that leadership based on Islamic values becomes the main foundation.

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