



The Influence of Principal Leadership on The Quality of Islamic Education

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership on the quality of Islamic education. Principals have a key role in determining the direction, strategy, and policies that have an impact on the success of educational establishments, particularly in regard to Islamic education that emphasizes moral, spiritual, and academic values. Effective leadership can create a conducive learning environment, motivate educators, and optimize student performance. A quantitative survey with several principals, teachers, and students is the research method employed from various Islamic schools. Data were analyzed using regression techniques to see the correlation between principal leadership variables and the quality of education. The results of the study indicate that participatory, inspiring, and adaptive principal leadership significantly improves the quality of Islamic education, as evidenced by rising academic achievement, the growth of religious character, and high teacher satisfaction. This study emphasizes how crucial it is to give principals more leadership skills in order to raise the standard of Islamic education in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Leadership, Principal, Quality, Islamic Education*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan kepala sekolah terhadap kualitas pendidikan Islam. Kepala sekolah memiliki peran kunci dalam menentukan arah, strategi, dan kebijakan yang berdampak pada keberhasilan lembaga pendidikan, terutama dalam hal pendidikan Islam yang menekankan pada nilai-nilai moral, spiritual, dan akademik. Kepemimpinan yang efektif dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kondusif, memotivasi para pendidik, dan mengoptimalkan kinerja siswa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah survei kuantitatif dengan melibatkan beberapa kepala sekolah, guru, dan siswa dari berbagai sekolah Islam. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik regresi untuk melihat korelasi antara variabel kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan kualitas pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang partisipatif, inspiratif, dan adaptif secara signifikan meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan Islam, yang dibuktikan dengan meningkatnya prestasi akademik, tumbuhnya karakter religius, dan kepuasan guru yang tinggi. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya memberikan keterampilan kepemimpinan yang lebih kepada para kepala sekolah untuk meningkatkan standar pendidikan Islam di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan, Kepala Sekolah, Kualitas, Pendidikan Islam

Introduction

Islamic The development of the character and proficiency of the next generation of Muslims in Indonesia is greatly influenced by education (Illah et al., 2022). Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, incorporates Islamic education within its national curriculum. Islamic education is not just prioritizes academic or intellectual aspects, but also focuses on instilling moral, spiritual, and social values based on religious teachings. Therefore,

Islamic education functions as the main instrument for producing a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has a strong Islamic character, is tolerant, and is ready to face the challenges of the times.

However, In terms of administration, infrastructure and facilities, and teacher proficiency, the quality of education in different Islamic educational institutions continues to differ and frequently encounters difficulties. As the head of an educational institution, the principal bears a heavy burden of ensuring that the learning environment is both favorable and of high quality. This is where the leadership role of the principal becomes very important. The principal is not only tasked with managing the administration, but is also expected to be able to inspire, guide, and set a good example for teachers and students in practicing Islamic values (Nur'aini et al., 2020).

In the context of Islamic education, the role of the principal is not limited to administrative management alone. The principal is also expected to play a role as a spiritual leader who is able to reflect Islamic morals and provide an example in the application of religious values in the school environment. A principal who has strong and effective leadership will be able to motivate teachers and staff to work with high commitment, optimize student potential, and build a positive school culture. Conversely, principals who lack leadership often have difficulty in directing vision, building cooperation, and creating an educational climate that supports quality learning (Said et al., 2023).

Several studies have shown that principal leadership has a direct and indirect impact on the quality of education in schools. According to various literatures, principals who apply a participatory, inspirational, and adaptive leadership style are able to create a more productive school environment. This is due to the involvement of all elements of the school in decision-making, a sense of belonging, and a high sense of togetherness. In addition, an inspirational leadership style from the principal can increase teacher enthusiasm, motivate students to study hard, and support the creation of an Islamic and high-achieving school culture (Hanim et al., 2022).

However, not all principals have adequate leadership competencies to face the various challenges in Islamic education today. There are still principals who face obstacles in implementing effective leadership due to limited knowledge, experience, or relevant training (Na'imah, T., & Muhibbin, 2020). For example, in some cases, principals still focus on administrative tasks without involving teachers in lesson planning or pay less attention to developing students' Islamic character. This condition often leads to low teacher motivation, lack of learning innovation, and stagnation in developing the quality of education.

In addition, according to Hartono, S. (2023) the external environment such as curriculum changes, technological developments, and socio-cultural dynamics also require principals to have high adaptability. Principals must be able to adjust the school's vision and strategy to remain relevant to the demands of the times without abandoning the Islamic values that are the basis of education in schools. Thus, principals are expected to have strong leadership skills, both in terms of management and in developing the character and spirituality of students and teachers.

In the context of Islamic education, the study of principal leadership is becoming increasingly important due to the many challenges faced by Islamic schools in Indonesia. Some of them are limited facilities and infrastructure, lack of support from the community or government, and tight competition with public schools and international schools. Research on the influence of principal leadership on the quality of Islamic education is expected to contribute to understanding how the style and competence of principal leadership affects the teaching and learning process, character development, and academic achievement of students in Islamic schools (Damanik, S. N., & Syukri, 2024).

This research is also expected to provide insight for stakeholders, both from the government, school administrators, and the wider community regarding the importance of strengthening the leadership capacity of principals. Thus, they can design more specific, relevant, and sustainable training and development programs for principals in Islamic educational institutions. This is important because the success of Islamic education does not only depend on the curriculum or teaching methods, but also on the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in upholding Islamic principles, motivating educators, and fostering an environment at school that fosters the growth of students' potential and character (Yaqin et al., 2021). Given this context, the purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate how principal leadership affects the standard of Islamic education in Indonesia. In order for Islamic education to advance and benefit society and the country, it is anticipated that the study's findings will increase principals' leadership qualities and contribute significantly to raising the standard of Islamic education.

Research Methods

In order to gather, examine, and synthesize a variety of pertinent literature sources about the impact of principal leadership on the caliber of Islamic education, this study used a literature review methodology. The data collected came from scientific journals, books, research reports, and other academic sources that discuss the concept of educational leadership, the role of the principal, and indicators of educational quality with relation to education in Islam. The purpose of this evaluation of the literature was to have a complete picture of the findings of earlier research and to identify any noteworthy trends or connections between raising the standard of Islamic education and the leadership style of the principal. The study's findings will serve as the foundation for a list of suggestions about successful leadership styles that raise the standard of Islamic education.

Results and Discussion

Relationship between Leadership and Quality of Education

According to Carter, S., & Abawi, L. A. (2018), principal leadership has a major influence on the quality of education, especially in Islamic educational institutions that focus on academic achievement as well as the formation of Islamic character. As the main leader, the principal is responsible for designing the school's vision and mission, building organizational culture, managing resources, and creating a supportive learning environment. In the context

of Islamic education, the principal not only acts as an administrative manager, but also as a role model who is able to integrate Islamic values into every aspect of school activities. Therefore, good leadership is one of the key factors in improving the quality of Islamic education, where academic achievement and moral formation have equally important positions (Dimmock, 2020).

The role of the principal in the context of Islamic education has complex and challenging dimensions. Not only is he required to be able to manage and organize, the principal must also be a role model in implementing Islamic principles in the school environment. A principal who has effective leadership and is oriented towards Islamic values is able to have a positive impact on teachers, students, and the entire school community. They can instill discipline, responsibility, and strong moral values through role models in daily actions and decisions. This role model becomes the basis for students in understanding, internalizing, and applying Islamic values in daily life, both inside and outside the school environment (Alayoubi et al., 2020).

Various studies have shown that principal leadership has a direct and indirect relationship with improving the quality of education. Principals who have the ability to motivate and inspire teachers will create a positive work atmosphere, increase work enthusiasm, and foster teacher commitment to the school's vision. For example, principals who involve teachers in decision-making and embrace them in planning teaching programs will make teachers feel appreciated and have an important role in the success of the school. This motivates teachers to work harder and better, because they feel they have greater responsibility. This kind of participatory leadership also supports the birth of innovations in teaching methods that are relevant to Islamic education, so that students can learn in a more effective and comprehensive way.

In addition, inspirational and transformational leadership plays a major role in building an Islamic vision and culture in schools. A visionary principal will strive to create an educational climate that encourages students and teachers to always develop themselves. In Islamic educational institutions, the principal must not only have a strong educational vision but also a deep Islamic vision, so that all elements in the school can move in accordance with Islamic values and goals. With an inspiring principal, teachers will be encouraged to develop their potential and innovate in creating learning that not only focuses on academic aspects, but also on instilling Islamic character (Suratno, 2018). Effective principal leadership also has an impact on students in developing Islamic character. In Islamic educational institutions, the quality of education is not only measured by academic achievement, but also by the quality of students' morals and behavior that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Principals who apply Islamic values in their leadership are able to shape students' character based on Islamic morals and ethics (Munir, H., & Iqbal, 2018). By creating a school environment that is disciplined, friendly, and full of respect for religious values, the principal plays an important role in instilling good values in students. This is reflected in the attitudes of students who are more polite, honest, and responsible, which is a reflection of the true quality of Islamic education.

The influence of principal leadership is also reflected in the overall school culture. Principals who are able to create an Islamic culture will create a positive and supportive learning environment. The Islamic school culture built by the principal helps students feel comfortable and safe to learn and develop. In an environment like this, students are encouraged to actively learn, participate in social activities, and interact in Islamic ways. Principals who have strong leadership will ensure that every school policy, program, and activity is designed with the underlying Islamic values in mind. Thus, the entire school community will have the same moral guidance in behaving and interacting, resulting in a school that not only produces intelligent graduates but also has noble character (Zaini, M. F., & Syafaruddin, 2020).

The leadership of a principal who is oriented towards service also has a significant impact on improving the quality of education. In Islamic education, servant leadership is considered in line with Islamic teachings because it places the needs of others above personal interests. A principal who serves will try to understand the needs of teachers, students, and all school staff, and provide the support needed so that they can reach their full potential (Shah, 2024). With this approach, principals can improve the satisfaction and well-being of school residents, create a more harmonious work environment, and support a more effective teaching and learning process. Teachers who feel supported will be more enthusiastic in teaching, while students who feel cared for will be more motivated to study seriously.

The Influence of Principal Leadership Style

Principal leadership is one of the most important factors influencing the effectiveness of an educational institution (Tambingon, 2018). In the context of Islamic education, the role of the principal is not only limited to administrative management, but also involves moral and spiritual responsibility to create an Islamic, conducive environment that supports the overall development of students. The principal's leadership style greatly influences how the teaching and learning process takes place, how teachers and students interact, and how Islamic educational values are applied in everyday life at school. The influence of this leadership is very visible in how the principal manages the teaching team, inspires students, and creates a school culture that supports the achievement of educational goals. The leadership style applied by the principal can create a positive learning atmosphere and encourage academic achievement and the development of Islamic character in students. A principal who applies a participatory leadership style, for example, will involve teachers and staff in the decision-making process related to school programs. In this way, the principal creates a sense of belonging among teachers and staff, so that they feel more responsible and committed to achieving the school's vision and mission. This participatory leadership style encourages collaboration and teamwork, which will ultimately increase teacher job satisfaction and the quality of learning provided. In addition, in the context of Islamic education, the involvement of all school members in decision-making also reflects the values of deliberation taught in Islam, which ultimately forms an inclusive and Islamic school culture (E. Nir, A., & Hameiri, 2014).

Transformational leadership style also has a very positive influence in improving the quality of education in Islamic schools. Principals who have a transformational leadership style are able to inspire and motivate teachers and students to achieve their best potential. These principals not only lead based on instructions, but also provide examples and a strong vision for the future. In Islamic education, principals with transformational leadership will focus on developing students' character and spirituality, and encourage teachers to innovate in creating relevant and interesting teaching methods. Transformational principals also usually have a long-term vision and focus on efforts to continuously improve the quality of education (Muliati et al., 2020). By inspiring teachers and students, these principals create a learning environment full of enthusiasm and motivation, where all parties strive to give their best in achieving the goals of comprehensive Islamic education.

In addition to participatory and transformational leadership styles, servant leadership style also has a significant influence on the quality of education in Islamic schools. Principals who adopt this leadership style focus on serving and meeting the needs of the school community, including teachers, students, and staff (Badrun et al., 2022). In servant leadership, the principal puts the interests of others above his personal interests and strives to create a harmonious, supportive, and caring environment. This is very relevant to Islamic values that teach the importance of helping each other and paying attention to the needs of others. With a servant leadership style, the principal shows an example in terms of empathy, integrity, and togetherness, which ultimately creates a positive school culture. Teachers and students who feel appreciated and supported by the principal will be more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, both in teaching and learning, so that the quality of education will improve overall.

In addition to these leadership styles, effective principals also need to understand the different situations and needs in schools. In certain situations, principals may need to adopt a more directive leadership style, for example when facing an emergency or a major policy change that requires clarity and assertiveness. On the other hand, when the situation is more stable and the learning environment is running well, principals can shift to a more democratic or delegative leadership style, where responsibility is given to teachers and staff to contribute to school management. The principal's flexibility in adjusting this leadership style is very important, because no one leadership style can be applied in all situations. Principals who are able to read the situation and adjust their leadership style will be better able to overcome existing challenges and create a dynamic educational environment that is responsive to the needs of the school community (Baptiste, 2019).

The influence of the principal's leadership style on the quality of education can also be seen from how the principal builds a school culture based on Islamic values. As a leader in an Islamic school, the principal must be able to integrate Islamic principles into various aspects of school life, such as discipline, honesty, and a sense of responsibility. This Islamic-based leadership style will create an environment where students and teachers feel encouraged to practice Islamic values in their daily lives. In this way, the principal not only improves the quality of education academically, but also provides a strong moral and spiritual foundation for students. Teachers who work in an environment with Islamic leadership will feel more

comfortable and motivated to teach religious values, while students who study in this environment will find it easier to understand and internalize Islamic teachings (Elpisah, E., & Hartini, 2019).

In improving the quality of education, the principal's leadership style can also help improve teacher job satisfaction, which ultimately has an impact on teaching effectiveness. Teachers who feel supported and involved in the decision-making process will have higher motivation in carrying out their duties. In many cases, principals who apply a participatory or servant leadership style succeed in creating a positive work environment, where teachers feel valued and encouraged to develop their skills. This is very important in Islamic education, where teachers are not only responsible for teaching academic material but also being moral role models for students (Firman et al., 2021). Principals who support teacher professional development will help improve the quality of teaching, which ultimately has a positive impact on student achievement and the overall quality of education.

Overall, the influence of the principal's leadership style on the quality of education is very large and diverse. Principals who apply a leadership style that is in accordance with the needs and values of Islamic education will be able to create an environment that supports the academic and spiritual growth of students. Participatory, transformational, and servant leadership styles are very relevant to improving the quality of education in Islamic schools, because these styles prioritize collaboration, innovation, and empathy that are in accordance with Islamic principles. An effective principal not only leads by giving instructions, but also becomes a role model who inspires teachers and students to achieve the holistic goals of Islamic education.

With the ability to adjust the leadership style according to the situation and needs, the principal can overcome the challenges that exist in the school and create an Islamic, productive, and conducive environment for character development and academic achievement. An effective leadership style in Islamic education is one that is able to combine managerial aspects with moral aspects, so that education is created that is not only of high quality but also rooted in religious values.

Implementation of Leadership in the Context of Islamic Education

Implementation of leadership in the context of Islamic education requires an approach that not only focuses on administrative management, but also on the formation of moral and spiritual values in the school environment (Fauzi, 2016). The principal in an Islamic educational institution has a strategic role to lead and influence the entire school community, from students, teachers, to administrative staff, by implementing Islamic values as a foundation in every activity. In Islamic education, the leadership of the principal is not just a managerial position, but a mandate that demands responsibility in realizing a learning environment that reflects Islamic religious and ethical values. Therefore, leadership in Islamic education must be implemented by prioritizing principles rooted in Islamic teachings, such as honesty, justice, responsibility, and exemplary behavior. One important aspect of implementing leadership in Islamic education is instilling a vision and mission based on

religious values. The principal must be able to formulate a clear vision of how Islamic education will be realized and implemented in schools. This vision must lead to the comprehensive goal of Islamic education, namely developing students' potential as a whole, covering intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Principals who are able to integrate this Islamic vision into every school policy and activity will find it easier to influence and direct teachers and students to carry out education in accordance with Islamic values. For example, learning activities in schools can be structured in such a way that they are not only aimed at achieving academic achievement, but also shaping students' character in accordance with Islamic teachings, such as discipline, responsibility, and concern for others (Arar, K., Sawalhi, R., & Yilmaz, 2022). In addition to having a clear vision, principals in Islamic education must also be able to create an Islamic organizational culture. The implementation of Islamic leadership will be seen in how the principal organizes the school environment to reflect Islamic values, such as attitudes of mutual respect, helping each other, and upholding honesty. An Islamic organizational culture can be achieved through various activities that emphasize moral values, such as routine religious activities, character development programs, and the preparation of rules that are in line with Islamic teachings. Principals who succeed in creating an Islamic culture in schools will help teachers and students feel more connected to religious values in their daily lives.

This will not only improve students' discipline and commitment to learning, but also instill a strong sense of social and spiritual responsibility among all members of the school. In its implementation, the principal must have the ability to be a good example or role model for all members of the school. The principal in Islamic education is expected to be able to display behavior that is in accordance with Islamic values in all actions and decisions. This exemplary behavior will influence the attitudes and behavior of teachers and students, who tend to imitate what is displayed by their leaders (Irawan et al., 2022). For example, a principal who always behaves honestly, fairly, and responsibly in carrying out his duties will inspire teachers and students to develop similar attitudes in everyday life. Exemplary leadership is very important in the context of Islamic education, because teaching religious values is not enough with theory, but also requires real examples that can be followed by students. Thus, the principal acts as a bearer of concrete Islamic values, which can influence and shape the character of all members of the school.

The implementation of leadership in Islamic education also includes the principal's ability to provide guidance and direction in accordance with Islamic principles (Amin et al., 2021). In this case, the principal needs to apply the principle of deliberation in decision-making. Deliberation is one of the important principles in Islam that encourages the involvement and participation of all parties in determining decisions that affect the community. Principals who carry out deliberation in their leadership process will provide space for teachers and staff to contribute to the formulation of school policies. This process reflects the democratic values and mutual respect taught in Islam, while creating an inclusive work atmosphere. By involving all parties in the decision-making process, the principal can

strengthen the sense of belonging among teachers and staff, so that they feel more committed to carrying out their duties and achieving common goals.

The implementation of Islamic leadership also requires the principal to pay great attention to teacher professional development. A good principal not only provides direction, but also supports and facilitates the improvement of teacher quality through various training and professional development programs. In Islamic education, teachers not only act as teachers, but also as educators and role models who guide students towards noble morals (Rusdiana, A., & Nasihudin, 2018). Therefore, developing teacher competencies is one of the priorities in Islamic educational leadership. Principals who pay serious attention to improving teacher quality will create a more effective learning environment and support the achievement of Islamic educational goals holistically.

Developing good relationships between principals and students is also an important part of implementing leadership in Islamic education. Principals who apply Islamic principles in their leadership will strive to build closeness with students, not only as leaders, but also as mentors and reliable figures. In Islamic education, the relationship between leaders and those being led must be based on mutual respect and affection. Principals who have an Islamic leadership approach will strive to understand the needs and aspirations of students, and provide the guidance needed to help them achieve their best potential. This approach will create a positive and supportive atmosphere, where students feel safe and supported in developing themselves, both in academic and character aspects (Elkaleh, 2019).

Overall, the implementation of leadership in Islamic education involves various interrelated aspects and is based on religious values. The principal in Islamic education is expected to be able to become a figure who has a vision, creates an Islamic culture, provides an example, conducts deliberations, supports teacher professional development, and builds positive relationships with students. Each of these aspects contributes to the achievement of education that not only prioritizes academic achievement, but also focuses on the formation of Islamic morals and character in each student. With the implementation of leadership based on Islamic values, Islamic schools can become institutions that not only produce intelligent generations, but also have morals and noble personalities. The implementation of Islamic leadership ultimately reflects how the principal is able to bring religious values to life in every aspect of school life, making the school a place that not only teaches knowledge, but also becomes a center for character formation. Principals who successfully implement Islamic leadership will realize sustainable and continuous education, where every school member has moral and spiritual guidance in behaving and achieving common goals.

Conclusion

Principal leadership plays a very significant role in shaping and improving the quality of Islamic education in schools. The leadership style implemented by the principal will affect the learning atmosphere, teacher motivation, and student involvement in the learning process. Principals who implement participatory, transformational, or Islamic-based leadership styles tend to succeed in creating a conducive, collaborative, and inspiring learning environment.

With effective leadership, principals can instill Islamic values in school policies, rules, and activities, which will ultimately shape students' character and improve the quality of education in the school.

In addition, principals who act as role models in practicing Islamic values will influence the behavior of teachers and students, encouraging them to practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives at school. By instilling an Islamic organizational culture, principals create an educational environment that is not only oriented towards academic achievement but also focuses on developing morals and character. Therefore, good leadership based on Islamic values is the main key to creating holistic education, where students are not only formed as knowledgeable individuals, but also as a moral and responsible generation in accordance with Islamic teachings.

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