

Leadership Role of Madrasah Aliyah Head in Improving the Quality of Education

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Submitted: 04-03-2021

Revised: 06-04-2021

Accepted: 15-04-2021

ABSTRACT. This study aims to explore the leadership role of madrasah aliyah heads in improving the quality of education. Fenological case study research is used as a research method. Two people were made research informants at Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani. The interview was chosen as a tool in data collection around the role of the Madrasah head. The study results highlighted the privateness of the head of madrasah aliyah as a leader, decision-making mechanisms, and improving the quality of Islamic education. The three data of the study were discussed in the discussion. The competence of the headmaster's leadership is closely related to improving the quality of Islamic Education. Discussions are discussed in the next section.

Keywords: Role of Madrasah Head, Improving the Quality of Education, Islamic Religious Education

 <https://dx.doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v7i01.4258>

How to Cite Salim, S., Azwardi, A., Ritonga, M., & Widiastuty, R. (2021). Leadership Role of Madrasah Aliyah Head in Improving the Quality of Education. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 7(01), 25-32. doi:10.32678/tarbawi.v7i01.4258.

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the world was faced with a global problem, namely the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused people to implement social distancing. The application of social distancing has a significant impact on human life, such as the decline of a country's economy due to restrictions on people's activities in working in offices, factories, shopping centers. No exception in the education sector is affected by the implementation of social distancing to prevent the transmission of coronavirus. Schools and madrasas are not allowed to conduct teaching and learning activities in classrooms. Teachers are required to adapt to the progress of ICT development as an intermediary in conducting learning. Various teacher training and development in ICT were conducted (Vitanova *et al.*, 2015; Ceha *et al.*, 2016; Kadarisma & Ahmadi, 2019) because ICT is proven to affect students' social media utilization activities (Supardi *et al.*, 2021), and this should be prepared for teachers (Nuangchalerm *et al.*, 2020) including their learning process.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic led to the emergence of a new system of order in education, where students study in their own homes online (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020; Juhji *et al.*, 2020). According to Setyorini (2020), there are many obstacles experienced by students, teachers, and parents in students' learning process at home. Nevertheless, teachers must be able to find appropriate ways of teaching academically and socially-emotionally. It is undoubtedly added to new problems in the education sector, such as teacher competence in developing ICT,

uneven internet networks throughout the country, and expensive internet quotas. Although the government, through education, provides special quotas for students, this is allegedly not effective. Education problems in Indonesia, such as tangled threads, are challenging to decipher. According to Megawanti (2015), Indonesia's education problems revolve around inputs, processes, and outputs. Meanwhile, Kurniawan (2016) stated that education problems in Indonesia consist of micro and macro problems. Thus, some problems must be found solutions for the process and output of education to be quality.

Developing the quality of education in a school is inseparable from the role and responsibility of the principal. The goal is to develop quality education during the Covid-19 pandemic, including strengthening and adapting the curriculum (Juhji *et al.*, 2021), planning, implementing, and controlling education marketing (Sari *et al.*, 2020). The principal or head of the madrasah is a school leader who plays an essential role in leading his school (Muzakar, 2014; Supardi, 2017). It means that the quality of education is the headmaster's responsibility as a leader in the institution, although teachers and staff assist his role. In other words, improving the quality of education and competence of the principal has a connection. It makes educational institutions (schools or madrasahs) produce globally competitive output and have Islamic values. Thus, it is essential to pay attention to the development of the quality of educational institutions in this context.

Discussing the quality of educators, there are many factors that affect them, such as training and well-being (Indriyani *et al.*, 2020), professional competence (Kunter, 2013; Syaifulloh & Pranoto, 2017; Darwis, 2019), achievement (Syaifulloh & Pranoto, 2017). In this case, two factors become a reference for quality improvement. The first factor is extensive studies such as government policies (curriculum, applications within the scope of education, and educational facilities). Besides, national education standards become the norm reference for the implementation of the national education system that includes content standards, process standards, graduate competency standards, standards of facilities and infrastructure, management standards, financing standard, and education assessment standards (Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards).

The Second Factor is a narrow study, which are the Factors that make students competent and have life skills and the professionalism and welfare of teachers. The description of competent learners can be reflected in their ability to master information, science, and technology (Budiman, 2017; Prayitno *et al.*, 2018; Syamsuar & Reflianto, 2019). It is due to the demands of the development of the times that require learners to achieve that. Therefore, educational institutions (schools or madrasahs) must be able to develop and produce superior and competent human resources to face the arena of globalization by remaining Islamic values.

Based on the above problems, an educational institution can be of good quality if it can produce participants who master cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies in an integrated manner; this is by the content standards in the 2013 curriculum. In fact, in its application, there are still some people or groups who consider that the 2013 curriculum can not represent educational institutions in social aspects. However, the government still believes that the curriculum is a solution to national educational goals. Thus, implementing the curriculum requires a leader of the principal or madrasah in an educational institution. Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani is part of the educational institutions that run the 2013 curriculum. This research aims to explore the leadership role of the head of Madrasah Aliyah in improving the quality of education.

METHOD

Design

This research focuses on narrative depictions that aim to explore and study "cases." It includes qualitative research with a case study approach that focuses on the leadership of madrasah heads in Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani. This phenomenological case study aims to understand the nature of human experience through informants' views (Gallagher, 2012).

Participants

Participants in this study numbered two people. The first was Mr. Sahril Ritonga as the Head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani. The second is his deputy, Mr. Arfi Suhandi, as Deputy Head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani for Curriculum.

Research Procedures

The interview was chosen as a tool in data collection around the role of the Madrasah head. After finding an agreement, the researchers provided questionnaires containing questions about the role of madrasah head leadership in improving the quality of Islamic education and their experience in the leadership of madrasah heads, plus some questions about the background of informants. After all, is filled by the informant, researchers and informants approve the interview directly after the written interview is conducted to dig up the information obtained and verify the validity of the data of the research results.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, researchers made observations related to madrasah heads' leadership role in improving the quality of Islamic education. An in-depth interview was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani Namo Rambe Subdistrict on December 29, 2020, twice. The purpose of the interview was to explore the head of madrasah leadership in improving the quality of Islamic religious education. Furthermore, the data obtained through this interview is transcribed in the narrative for further analysis. Then, in the last step or at the time before presenting the study results, the researcher verifies the data collected and adds the informant (informant) and the study's time so that the data collected continues until it is finally completed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Based on field studies, obtained data is then processed so that it takes the form of narrative. The study results highlighted the privateness of the head of madrasah aliyah as a leader, decision-making mechanisms, and improving the quality of Islamic education. The three data of the study were discussed in the discussion.

Discussions

Personality as a Leader

Islam is a universal religion and discusses every aspect of human life, including becoming a leader (Mir, 2010; Khan *et al.*, 2015; Shah, 2015; Jamil, 2015; Amen, 2019). From an Islamic perspective, leaders can be reflected in Rasulullah Saw, such as: trustworthy (*amânah*), communicative (*tablîgh*), intelligent (*fathônah*), honest (*siddîq*), responsible, visionary, and inspirational. If an educator can imply this to themselves, then each has a good work ethic. Currently, the headmaster is responsible for having a powerful leadership charisma. It was observed when researchers made observations in the field and the accounts of teachers and staff. The principal at Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani has a good work ethic and always tries to improve his leadership qualities. If someone becomes an educator and staff who has a good

personality and makes Rasulullah Saw a role model, it illustrates a good work ethic. The study results show that work ethic affects performance (Basri, 2017), and teacher performance affects students' learning motivation (Widoyoko & Rinawat, 2012; Raisyifa & Sutarni, 2016).

Personality is very different from charisma; charisma associates leadership based on the quality of individual personality. Meanwhile, personality cannot be determined because human personality is always dynamic. It illustrates that a principal must have a leadership trait reflected in the Prophet. Iskandar (2013) stated that leadership provides a correlation to teacher performance. In his writing, it is stated that performance is measured based on competency specifications that can be raised through the mastery of pedagogic, professional, personality, and social competencies. The progress of an educational institution is undoubtedly inseparable from financial management. Good financial management is, of course, required to have a good plan. In addition to its management, bookkeeping is one of the essential aspects to advance education. Because in accounting, aspects of transparency, accountability, and good governance are needed (Juhji et al., 2020). It is also reflected in the management and management of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani. In the observations made by the researchers, The Head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani highly upholds the attitude of transparency of financial management by describing all expenditures in the annual meeting conducted with stakeholders, and the results of this annual school meeting are very well recorded to advance the institutions it manages.

The sound and poor quality of Islamic religious education in schools can also be influenced by the stakeholders' personality qualities involved in the school area because good stakeholders' personality can create a religious atmosphere in the scope of learning. The religious atmosphere in schools can improve students' personalities. It is reinforced by Febriyani's finding (2019) that there is a positive influence of schools' religious activities on students' morals. Besides, Sholihat and Said (2020) also stated similarities. Thus, religious activities carried out in schools have an impact on changes in students' attitudes, mental, and behavior so that they adhere to Islamic values.

Personality can also be defined as behavior. Discussing the school's behavior, the principal will be an initial reference in the assessment because the principal is a central figure and a leader for an educational institution. It causes the principal to be in the spotlight in every behavior in an institution he manages. In this case, Mulyasa (2007) argues that two factors affect the principal's personality. First, it is the person who always wants to develop, and this factor makes the headmaster's personality more dynamic in socializing with all people and maintaining that harmonious relationship. Second, factors are derived from the environment.

In socializing life, a principal who is also human must have the ability to adapt and improve his quality. The headmaster is expected to improve personal qualities spontaneously without thinking about the consideration of having spiritual intelligence. Principals should avoid spontaneous behaviors that never think about values and have no control over a personality that can create reciprocal relationships with various aspects of itself with reasonable emotional control. This personality is what the principal needs in order to socialize well (Wahyudi, 2019).

This personality is embedded in the head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani. The principal can socialize well with all stakeholders there. It can be proven because there is no social gap between stakeholders. According to him, a personality that can protect and realize justice in his leadership is Islam's order. The principal should also try to develop a mutually necessary personality (perfect personality), which is a personality that can control his emotions to foster a good personality. This personality can be seen in the headmaster's social relationships with stakeholders and their environment.

It shows that the headmaster's personality competencies must be able to continue to develop, be able to receive criticism and advice, be open, and be able to carry out duties as a

principal and continue to want to improve the quality of the school. This personality development or failure can be seen in the principal's understanding of its vision and mission. The openness that can receive criticism and suggestions and a strong desire to develop themselves by understanding the school's vision and mission is a requirement that must be met in order for the principal to be able to improve the quality of Islamic religious education. In the leadership of a principal, it must be accompanied by an understanding of the vision and mission in depth so that the principal understands the school's direction and objectives. So, this is where the principal needs to socialize about understanding the vision and mission of all stakeholders hoping that all stakeholders can understand and strive to achieve the vision and mission.

Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani's leader understands his vision and mission, which is to create graduate students who have a commitment to Islam, nationality, and intelligence by the demands of his needs, society, nation, and country. Currently, Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani has socialized this vision and mission to stakeholders and parents through the annual meeting agenda, hoping that the stakeholders and all parents can help achieve the shared vision and mission. In its implementation, a principal must understand the vision philosophically, which is the basis of an organization that becomes a reference because vision is the core form and application of abilities, habits, and abilities in analyzing. Therefore, one of the principal's duties is to socialize the vision and mission to all stakeholders.

Decision-Making Mechanism

A leader can be seen in the way he makes decisions and his communication style. The indicator of success in decision making is when the principal can satisfy all parties. In contrast, the indicator of success in the communication style is the ability to persuade (to induce) and convince (persuade), mobilize (to move) teachers, staff and students to behave in a way that achieves educational goals. The head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani does not currently have an iron hand in making decisions. He seems creative and has many ways to make decisions and solve problems. He is also a democratic type of leader and has many strategies for achieving joint decisions without losing his ideas or ideas. He uses a relatively simple strategy to approach each individual for a cultural agreement, holds a formal meeting to reach a joint decision. In making this decision, he used the principle of democracy to make decisions based on the most votes.

For example, in the global pandemic Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), on March 11, 2020, all countries in the world implemented social distancing. Including in Indonesia, the Indonesian government implements social distancing to break the chain of transmission of covid-19. However, this policy impacts many aspects such as social, economic, tourism and education aspects. It is where madrasah leader Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani plays in making decisions in difficult times. When the social distancing order has reached Deli Serdang, Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani must make difficult decisions outside the institution's mandate. She decided to use an online learning method that involves parents directly. During his tenure, The Head of Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani had a good communication style and motivated the education staff to carry out their respective duties. The possibility of an exemplary communication style is due to Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani's educational background, who is a preacher (*Da'i*) who can motivate stakeholders.

Because of his educational background as a preacher and Master of Islamic Education, Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani has a good communication style. It is essential to understand so that it can position itself according to its portion. This communication style plays an essential role in social interaction relationships for the principal to all stakeholders because people are social actors who are given the ability to communicate in the face of their environment. In an organizational context, of course, having a good communication style is a plus for a leader and makes it seem mandatory for a leader. Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma

Madani's head motivates stakeholders to develop their skills and continue developing their education. For him, teachers are partners who work in solving problems and improving the quality of learning.

Improving the Quality of Islamic Education

One of the principal's leadership roles must certainly master the strategy of improving the quality of Islamic religious education. Furthermore, at the forefront of Islamic education is the teacher itself, which means that improving professionalism for Islamic religious education teachers is one way to improve the quality of Islamic Education. Departing from this, all principals must understand that Islamic education is not only based on curriculum or learning literature. A principal is also expected to understand the purpose of Islamic education and strategy in carrying out Islamic Education learning. The best strategy in improving the quality of Islamic Education is to improve the quality of professionalism of Islamic Education teachers. Improving the professionalism of Islamic Education teachers can be done by following the induction of novice teachers, Teacher Professional Education, Teacher Working Group, and various other seminars and workshops. In this case, an interactive, efficient, and effective dialogue between the teacher and the principal is required so that the teacher can immediately improve his competence and knowledge to improve his professionalism.

There are several indicators in improving the professionalism of teachers, such as understanding the purpose of Islamic religious education, being able and able to implement lesson implementation plans, syllabus, annual programs and semester programs that are prepared based on the curriculum and adding some essential aspects tailored to the needs of the environment in order to create good relations between schools and the surrounding community based on the teaching values of Islamic Religious Education. In designing the learning implementation plan, it must be adjusted to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 103 of 2014, which was developed and still refers to the syllabus. The success of learning in school seems to be the full responsibility of the teacher. Based on this, the government's efforts in improving teacher competence are to implement teacher working groups. The Teacher Working Group is currently a forum for teachers to solve problems when studying in school. Besides implementing schools, teacher working groups are conducted in the sub-district, even to the sub-district level.

The headmaster's leadership seeks to improve the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers by induction coaching of novice teachers; participation in activities such as Teacher Professional Education, workshops, pieces of training, and seminars to improve pedagogical competence; organizing teacher group work activities in the school. Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani is currently implementing the agenda of implementing the quality of Islamic Religious Education teachers. Although in reality, the probability of success is only about 50 per cent. It is because it is difficult for a teacher to receive new knowledge. Plus, other issues such as the unification of Islamic Religious Education teachers' role with the local community. Cooperation between Islamic education teachers and the community is expected to achieve the basic goals of education and be able to produce global competitiveness of Islamic value.

CONCLUSION

The competence of the headmaster's leadership is closely related to improving the quality of Islamic Education. Furthermore, the principal's step in improving the quality of Islamic Education is to improve the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers. In Madrasah Aliyah, Insan Kesuma Madani has a principal who can improve the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers because they have good leadership competencies such as personality based on the competence of Islamic values, the ability to make decisions that satisfy all parties, an understanding of the vision and mission and the purpose of learning Islamic

education. Steps taken to improve teacher professionalism are as follows: induction of novice teachers; participate in activities (such as Teacher Professional Education, workshops, training, and seminars); pedagogical competency improvement; and the implementation of teacher working group activities aims to ensure that Madrasah Aliyah Insan Kesuma Madani produces graduates who are globally competitive and still have Islamic values.

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