



PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract :

The quality of education that is still at a low level requires school principals to act as architects of change, with roles that are carried out optimally to encourage overall quality transformation. The objectives of this study are: (1) how is the leadership role of the principal in improving the quality of education in SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan (2) what are the factors that support and hinder it? The method used in this research is qualitative with the type of phenomenology. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews and documentation. Data were analyzed with Milles and huberman analysis. Data validity by triangulation The results showed: (1) Principals are effective in carrying out their roles as educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, motivator, figure, mediator. (2) Supporting factors include various supports such as adequate learning facilities, conducive school environment, and giving rewards and reprimands by effective principals in improving teacher performance. The inhibiting factors include the principal's difficulty in changing the mindset of some teachers to follow the development of technology as a learning medium.

Keywords: *Leadership, Principal, Education Quality*

Abstrak:

Mutu pendidikan yang masih berada pada tingkat rendah menuntut kepala sekolah untuk berperan sebagai arsitek perubahan, dengan peran yang dilakukan secara optimal mendorong transformasi kualitas secara menyeluruh. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah: (1) bagaimana peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan (2) apa saja faktor yang mendukung dan menghambatnya? Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan jenis fenomenologi. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan analisis Milles dan huberman. Keabsahan data dengan triangulasi Hasil penelitian menunjukkan: (1) Kepala sekolah efektif dalam menjalankan perannya sebagai educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, inovator, motivator, figur, mediator. (2) Faktor pendukung mencakup berbagai dukungan seperti fasilitas pembelajaran yang memadai, lingkungan sekolah yang kondusif, dan pemberian penghargaan dan teguran oleh kepala sekolah yang efektif dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru. Faktor penghambat meliputi kesulitan kepala sekolah dalam mengubah pola pikir beberapa guru untuk mengikuti perkembangan teknologi sebagai media pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan, Kepala Sekolah, Mutu Pendidikan*

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education requires serious attention from various parties. The problem of low quality of education must be immediately addressed through improvements and changes in various sectors, especially in management, as part of efforts to improve the quality of education. Education in Indonesia is currently still lagging behind neighboring countries, ranking fifth out of ten countries in Southeast Asia. According to (Hidayat Sutisna et al., 2023) this decline in the quality of education can be linked to the leadership role of the principal and the management system used, which includes learning activities, school management, community participation, and strategies to improve the quality of education.

Effective management can develop and respond to the changing needs of society quickly and appropriately. Therefore, the principal must create a system that empowers all school members so that human resources can be optimized. The principal must be proactive and creative in empowering his staff, for example in formulating a clear vision, mission, goals, and strategies that are accepted by all school members to improve the quality of education. The creativity of school members must emerge not only from *top-down* policies, but also from collaboration with stakeholders (*bottom-up*) (Sudarta, 2022)

Principal leadership is very important in improving the quality of education. The success of education is very dependent on good school management. Without good management, education will not be achieved optimally. The success of a school in an effort to improve the quality of education can only be achieved through effective management, which is carried out by professional leadership. (Jalaluddin, et al., 2023)

The principal must be active, creative, innovative, dare to take risks, and be responsible in school management. The ability of school management to influence and utilize human resources and other resources determines the achievement of set standards. Empowering individuals can increase self-confidence, awareness, wisdom, and creativity that were previously unexpected. Every school member must have a strong commitment to carrying out their duties and obligations for the success of school activities. According to (Amon & Harliansyah, 2022). Improving the quality of education needs to be planned and implemented in accordance with work targets based on the vision, mission, and goals set in the long, medium, and short term. Efforts to improve the quality of education must continue to be carried out with the determination to fight the existing situation.

Educational leaders must be responsible rationally, socially, and morally. The education system that is implemented must be able to catch up with the times and demands of modern civilization, but must not ignore the social and moral aspects of humanity in order to create balance. This balance greatly influences the quality of Indonesian people in accordance with the goals of national education. School quality can be analyzed from a system perspective where quality is inherent in every component of the system. Low school culture will lead to low quality education. This problem can be analyzed in more detail based on the school culture system each year, namely input, process, and

results. The input component includes 8 national education standards, the process component is the learning process, and the result is graduate competency (Mulyasa, 2017) The principal as a leader in an educational unit is expected to be able to make continuous changes to advance and improve the quality and services of the school. They must remain creative and innovative in holding new programs that can improve the quality of the school, especially school personnel.

Penelitian Komariyah, Dkk (2021) menunjukkan bahwa pola kepemimpinan kepala sekolah cenderung administratif dan hanya melaksanakan kebijakan dari atas tanpa mempertimbangkan apakah kebijakan tersebut sesuai dengan target pengembangan sekolah. Kepala sekolah harus mampu membina dan meningkatkan kinerja guru dan tenaga kependidikan, tidak hanya secara administratif tetapi juga secara profesional untuk meningkatkan mutu pendidikan.

Research by Komariyah et al (2021) shows that the leadership pattern of the principal tends to be administrative and only implements policies from above without considering whether the policy is in accordance with the school's development targets. The principal must be able to foster and improve the performance of teachers and education personnel, not only administratively but also professionally to improve the quality of education.

Research by Muslim et al (2020) This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Indralaya, the study highlighted the principal's leadership in terms of communication, motivation, decision-making, and the application of positive power, which supports the implementation of the eight National Education Standards.

Research by Kurniawati et al. (2020) This research was conducted at SD Negeri 14 Betung revealed that the Principal carried out his main role as a leader and manager well, in addition to his other roles as a strong entrepreneur in efforts to improve the quality of education. while the strategy carried out to improve quality through School-Based Management (MBS) is quite good, this can be seen from the performance of the principal, teachers, employees, in collaborating and establishing communication in carrying out each activity that is their duty and responsibility in order to achieve the expected educational goals

Meanwhile, this study highlights the role of principal leadership as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, motivator, figure and mediator through the pesantren culture approach. and identifies supporting factors such as adequate learning facilities and a conducive environment, while inhibiting factors include difficulties in changing teachers' mindsets

Thus, the difference is that previous studies provide a general overview of the role of leadership in improving the quality of education through various approaches such as the implementation of School-Based Management, effective communication, and pesantren culture. While this study delves deeper into the role of principal leadership and what factors influence it in improving the quality of education that is adjusted to the needs of today's young generation to

face the challenges of the times.

This study has a crucial role to ensure that leadership in educational institutions remains relevant and effective in improving the quality of education. This will have a direct impact on the creation of students who are not only academically superior, but also religiously with the habit of learning yellow books so that they are ready to face global challenges and are able to make a positive contribution to society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach, namely by emphasizing more on a socially constructed reality, a close relationship between researchers who form the investigation. (Denzin, Norman K dan Licoln, 2009) and the type of phenomenology, research that describes human life experiences about a particular phenomenon as explained by participants. (Creswell, 2016) The techniques used include observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. The validity of the data used is technical triangulation and source triangulation (Sugiyono, 2021). Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model with data reduction steps, data display, and drawing conclusions (Milles, 2014)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education

The principal is a person who has the task of leading his subordinates at a madrasa/school where the teaching and learning process is carried out in the school. When carrying out his duties, a principal has the responsibility to be responsible for the quality of existing human resources (HR). This aims to enable them to carry out the tasks that have been given (Anshar, 2022). The principal of SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan utilizes communication to manage school programs. The principal creates good and continuously improving learning quality. Democratic leadership creates harmonious and family relationships in the school environment, as well as solid teamwork. So with this statement, improving the quality of education in this school is greatly influenced by the role of the principal, the principal is able to plan, organize, direct, and supervise continuously.

According to Mulyasa, the principal plays a role as (EMASLIM-FM) Educator, Manager, Administrator, Supervisor, leader, innovator, motivator, Figure and mediator (Ibrohim, 2018). In line with this theory based on the results of research at SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan, the leadership of the principal plays an important role in improving the quality of education. The role of the principal in this madrasah is:

Tabel: 1 The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education

No	The Role of the Principal	Indicator
1	Educator	As an educator, the principal provides guidance to teachers, so that they can ensure that the learning process runs effectively and in

		accordance with educational goals,
2	Manajer	As a manager, the principal is responsible for planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating all madrasah programs.,
3	Administrator	As an administrator, the principal ensures that the madrasah administration runs smoothly and according to standards.
4	Supervisor	As a supervisor, the principal is tasked with supervising and guiding teachers and staff to carry out their duties according to standards
5	Leader	As a leader, the principal must be able to move all components of the madrasah towards achieving the vision and mission.
6	Inovator	As an innovator, the principal is tasked with creating renewal in the education process to improve quality.
7	Motivator	As a motivator, the principal is tasked with providing enthusiasm and encouragement to all members of the madrasah.
8	Figur	As a figure, the principal acts as a role model, such as with a disciplined attitude to come to school on time and also being involved in several activities that support the education process
9	Mediator	As a mediator, he plays a role in bridging the interests of various parties involved in the education ecosystem, for example, the principal is a liaison between the school and the school committee or the surrounding community

The role of the principal, which is quite diverse above, is useful to ensure that what is done also runs in accordance with the Vision, Mission, and objectives of SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan. At the school, teachers feel that the principal is a democratic, friendly, and disciplined leader. The principal also listens and provides solutions to teacher problems, both professional and personal, so that closeness is established between the principal and staff, so that teachers are able to work well. And also the leadership that is carried out includes empowering all school residents, increasing the participation of school residents, the community, stakeholders, establishing cooperation with related parties, promotions, holding training, deepening material, social activities, and other activities that support improving the quality of education. In line with the opinion According to Andang (2017) that

the leadership of the principal involves the ability and readiness to influence, guide, direct, and motivate school staff to work effectively.

From the statement above, it can be said that the principal plays a very important role in improving the quality of education. There are 8 national education standards consisting of Content Standards, Process Standards, Graduate Competency Standards, Education Assessment Standards, Educator and Education Personnel Standards, Infrastructure Standards, Management Standards, Financing Standards (Putra, 2023). At SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan itself, it has adjusted to the 8 standards, such as the principal being able to implement an integrative learning policy that combines national compulsory subjects such as Mathematics, Indonesian, and Biology with religious subjects such as Fiqh, Aqidah, and Nahwu, etc. The study of yellow books is part of the daily learning program. Emphasis on character strengthening material based on Islamic teachings. Utilization of technology such as video-based learning for general topics. General subject exams and syafahi (oral) exams for memorizing the Qur'an or books. And practice-based assessment. Attitude assessment Teachers of yellow books must be at least graduates of Islamic boarding schools or ma'had 'ali equivalent to S1. National subject teachers must have a minimum academic qualification of S1 in their field. Modern classrooms Libraries that provide classical books (turats) and modern scientific reference books. Dormitories that support the preparation of annual programs. Madrasahs involve kyai or ulama in making educational policies. Routine supervision of teaching and learning activities by the head of the madrasah. BOS funds are used for the completeness of facilities and infrastructure, this makes graduates able to understand yellow books, graduates can continue to state universities or higher boarding schools (ma'had 'ali).

Meanwhile, other opinions state that the characteristics of a school can be said to be strong consisting of 8 elements, namely high independence, adaptive and proactive, and having a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Good school performance, strong internal control, commitment, and achievement are the references in implementing programs. This strategy makes it easier to overcome the gaps that exist in schools. (Mukti et al., 2024) At SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan itself, the quality of education also refers to these 8 characteristics, namely Independent, such as the Principal initiating teacher training programs independently by utilizing local resources, such as involving successful alumni as speakers without relying on government assistance or external sponsors. Adaptive, namely by Integrating technology to support learning that is in accordance with the times. Proactive by Collaborating with stakeholders such as the business world, universities, or community leaders to support education programs in schools. Entrepreneurship such as Developing partnership programs. Good Performance, namely the Principal sets clear performance targets for teachers and students, Gives awards to outstanding teachers and students, both academically and non-academically, to motivate improved work quality. Strong external and internal controls such as Establishing an internal evaluation team that routinely monitors the

implementation of learning and provides input for improvement. Commitment such as the Principal being present as an example with high discipline, such as arriving on time, being active in every school activity, and being open to receiving input. and Encouraging all teachers and staff to carry out the school's vision and mission through regular meetings and activities to strengthen work culture. then the last Achievement such as Increasing local, regional, or national level competition activities, such as science, sports, arts, and literacy competitions, which involve students and teachers.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Principal Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education

Each principal in each school he leads has supporters and obstacles, both in terms of the willingness and motivation of educators, the environment, or other factors that can support or inhibit improving the quality of education. At SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan itself, the supporting factors for the role of principal leadership in improving the quality of education are the existence of various supports, such as adequate learning facilities, a conducive school environment, and the provision of effective rewards and reprimands from the principal. In line with this, according Fathonah & Ayuni (2022), adequate facilities and infrastructure can support improving the quality of education

Faktor penghambat peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan adalah kesulitan kepala sekolah dalam mengubah pola pikir guru yang telah melebihi usia produktif, terutama dalam mengikuti perkembangan teknologi yang digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran. Hal ini menjadi masalah serius karena menurut Rafid & Tinus (2019) sumber daya manusia yaitu Tenaga Pendidik (guru) yang merupakan faktor utama dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan.

The inhibiting factor of the principal's leadership role in improving the quality of education is the principal's difficulty in changing the mindset of teachers who have exceeded their productive age, especially in following technological developments used as learning media. This is a serious problem because according to Rafid & Tinus (2019) human resources, namely Educators (teachers), are the main factor in improving the quality of education. The principal of SMAS Putri Al-Azhar Gondang Wetan Pasuruan overcomes this problem by increasing teacher awareness of the importance of technology through socialization and personal communication. Simple and gradual training, as well as mentoring by young teachers, can help them feel more confident. In addition, the principal needs to create a collaborative environment, provide appreciation, and provide adequate supporting facilities. By gradually integrating technology and uniting it with local religious and cultural values, teachers will find it easier to accept change

CONCLUSION

The principal has carried out his role well so that it has a big impact on the quality of education. The principal acts as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, motivator, figure and mediator

which is abbreviated as (EMASLIM-FM). As a leader, he ensures that the implementation of the learning program runs according to the vision, mission and goals of the school.

Supporting factors include adequate learning facilities and a conducive work environment, which support optimal program implementation. However, the biggest challenge is changing the mindset of senior teachers who have difficulty adapting to technology. Solutions to overcome this obstacle include gradual training, mentoring by young teachers, and technology integration tailored to their needs. With strategic and collaborative leadership, these obstacles can be overcome to achieve quality education.

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