

Leadership Strategies of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Principals to Realise Students with Islamic Character

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Abstract

Keywords:

Education,
Leadership
Strategy,
Head of
Madrasah

The madrasah head as the person in charge of educational institutions is a leader in the field of education who bears great responsibility and influence on the development of educational institutions. In line with this, the role of the madrasah principal will have a significant impact on the progress and development of education, with the aim of improving standards and human resources in the quality of education itself. This article aims to find out the strategy and implementation of the principal's leadership to build the growth of students with Islamic character, which is carried out at MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel, Balong, Ponorogo. Therefore, there is a strategy in growing quality and good character students. This research is a field research with a qualitative approach, data collection through interviews, surveys, observations and documentation. This research uses qualitative methods to capture and translate phenomena and facts related to the leadership of the principal of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. The results of this study show there are several strategies of the principal in shaping students, namely (1) being a role model for students; (2) Conducting dhuha prayer, dhuhur prayer in congregation, Tahfidz, and BTA every day; (3) implementing honesty, this is something that will be fundamental and very important in the formation of good character for students in accordance with the guidance of Islamic teachings; (4) Developing of manners and responsibilities related to behaviour, morals, and values in interpersonal interactions as well as in the context of class and society.

Abstrak:

Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan,
Strategi
Kepemimpinan,
Kepala
Madrasah

Kepala madrasah sebagai penanggung jawab lembaga pendidikan merupakan pemimpin dalam bidang pendidikan yang memikul tanggung jawab dan pengaruh yang besar terhadap perkembangan lembaga pendidikan. Sejalan dengan ini, peranan kepala madrasah akan membawa dampak yang signifikan dalam kemajuan dan pengembangan pendidikan, dengan tujuan untuk meningkatkan standar dan sumber daya manusia dalam kualitas pendidikan itu sendiri. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi dan implementasi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah guna membangun pertumbuhan peserta didik yang berkarakter islami, yang dilaksanakan di MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel, Balong, Ponorogo. Maka dari itu adanya strategi dalam menumbuhkan peserta didik yang berkualitas dan berakhlak yang baik. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif,

pengambilan data melalui wawancara, survei, observasi dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berupaya menangkap dan menerjemahkan fenomena dan fakta-fakta yang berkaitan dengan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa strategi kepala sekolah dalam membentuk peserta didik yaitu (1) menjadi suri tauladan bagi siswa; (2) Melakukan pembiasaan shalat dhuha, shalat dzuhur berjamaah, tahfidz, dan BTA setiap hari; (3) penerapan kejujuran, ini merupakan sesuatu yang akan menjadi fundamental dan sangat penting dalam pembentukan karakter yang baik bagi siswa-siswi yang sesuai dengan tuntunan ajaran agama Islam; (4) Pengembangan sopan santun dan tanggung jawab terkait dengan perilaku, moral, dan nilai-nilai dalam interaksi antar pribadi serta dalam konteks kelas dan masyarakat.

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1. Introduction

Change will always be a part of human existence. These changes can have both positive and negative impacts. Therefore, in human change both from individual, social, cultural, economic and also in the political realm, in the community environment, and which is included in the context of leadership (Juhju, W. Wahyudin, E. Muslihah 2020). Leadership is strongly associated with groups or groups, where an association has one leader who can direct and have great responsibility for the group. For example, the leader in a school institution is the principal who leads the school. Leaders have a personal capacity, a leader has a duty to persuade, inspire, invite, uphold, and urge people or groups to take a chosen action known as leadership. Humans are social creatures, or creatures that cannot be alone, therefore leadership is needed because humans cannot survive alone and must rely on others to share ideas, provide support, solve problems, and try to improve things. Being a social creature, humans definitely need help from others, even from being born to entering the grave must require the help of others.

A leader must be able to persuade others to collaborate in order to realise a common goal, be it in a work group, organisation, or educational institution. The responsibility of a leader is to guide, direct, and help group members to use their abilities effectively to achieve the common goals that a group wants. Whether an organisation, company, or educational institution is successful or not is highly influenced by the leader, and an assessment must be made by the organisation's management every time a failure occurs. Education management in Indonesia is plagued by several problems. First, the mindset of those who work for the organisation; a leader does not give people the freedom to carry out their own tasks, and followers only follow orders. Secondly, evaluation results are not sustainable, meaning quality is not improved by implementing additional education. Third, a lacklustre leadership style. Fourth, the lack of a sense of togetherness of educators (Fauzi 2018).

According to Abu Sinn, Leadership refers to the ability of Islamic teachings to provide a framework and guidance to a dreamer as well as the ability to change pre-existing beliefs or mentalities to confront and influence individuals and groups of people (Mahlani et al. 2020). In essence, all humans are leaders, therefore humans have a responsibility within themselves and will definitely be held accountable for all the activities they have carried out. There are many explanations in the Qur'an and hadith that explain leadership. Leadership has existed since the time of Rasulluah Saw and the Companions. Leadership in Islam developed after the Prophet Muhammad Saw died there appeared new leaders of Muslims who made Muslims become superior in all respects. The Qur'an explains about leadership, one of which is found in surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 which explains that humans are caliphs or leaders on earth. Humans are given power on earth by God to become caliphs whose job is to protect and preserve what is on this earth. All that Allah created will have their respective roles and humans have a role to be caliphs on earth, therefore as humans must have a good attitude and have good character.

The ultimate goal of leadership is to create a better life for future generations. However, leadership issues in Indonesia have never been stable, including poor educational facilities and the inconsistent and still alarming welfare of educators and other staff members. In addition, children are used to learning in a dirty and rundown environment. The existence of cases like this is strongly influenced by the management of education in it, because management plays an important role in managing and moving educational institutions to move forward and can overcome current problems. According to Nanag Fatah, management theory has a role or helps explain organisational behaviour related to motivation, productivity, and satisfaction (Darim 2020). The definition of management itself is: Management is a discrete process that involves organising, planning, driving, and controlling, carried out to ensure and achieve stated goals through the use of human resources and other means. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that planning, organising, implementing to ensure and trying to achieve the planned target or goal through human resources is a process in management.

Werren Bennis & Burt Nanus in (Zhahira, Jeihan 2022) explained that the driving force behind the strength of an organisation is its leadership, and developing a successful organisation requires first figuring out what can be achieved and then inspiring the group to adopt a new vision. It might be argued that every leader has their moment and that a leader is needed at all times since a leader needs to be acknowledged by a large number of people, whether they are living or deceased. In terms of education, a leader must also be instilled who can direct where the direction of education can be taken and be able to make it as one of the education as a place for students to learn, develop, and have good character and be useful for society. The modern era is an era that has an impact on life, both in terms of positive and negative things (Malysheva et al. 2022). The progress that has spread widely in society from social, economic, cultural, and political aspects requires people to adapt to the various changes that occur in this modern era, by equipping themselves to be safe from all negative things. In this globalization period, the younger generation will undoubtedly be the main participant. Instilling a pious

creed (tawhid) and always istiqomah to the teachings of the religion that is adopted are two measures that should be taken to keep children awake from the bad influence of globalization (Becker 2018). This is because the role of the government, let alone the family, is expected to embrace, protect, and nurture today's children from various cultural clashes of globalization that are increasingly out of control. Putting the family first, as they are the most precious possession and a well-run home will produce children that are well-mannered, well-behaved, and well-religious; sensibly prioritizing rights as the highest ideal of authentic Islamic culture; deftly putting authentic Islamic culture into practice; and educating kids about the need to interpret religion and take personal responsibility for their own rights and obligations (Friberg and Sterri 2021).

Mastery of science and technology requires an ethical perspective and moral guidance, which then raises new dynamics in Islamic education, namely efforts to review all components of education innovatively, progressively, holistically, and adaptively to the demands of modernity. Indonesia's own development goals are to realize Indonesian people who are prosperous physically and mentally (Darim 2020). Education is an important factor in improving the quality of human resources. Various countries must have the desire for human resources in their countries to achieve prosperity and welfare for their citizens. In order to realise this, it is necessary to pay attention to education in order to grow successful human resources, because remembering education is a crucial need. The role of education itself consists of a number of supporting components, such as teachers who direct teaching, principals who have extraordinary abilities in developing moral and quality students, and students who have good morals in themselves (Di Novi, Leporatti, and Montefiori 2021).

Education is essentially an effort to build individual personalities within the school and community environment that lasts a lifetime (Irfan et al. 2019). Therefore, education is very important and mandatory for every individual. The nation's generation in particular is obliged to learn in order to become a nation that has good ethics and class in strengthening its existence in the face of globalisation. An excellent learning process is a process in which educators who are professionals in their fields play a role. The process in education takes place with learning activities, whether it is learning independently or at school, which will foster a role that has benefits both for yourself and in the community (Salsabilah et al. 2021). To learn the existing sciences, students certainly need educators, educators here are character educators who are needed to be able to build and develop their mindset. Character education aims to teach children how to make moral decisions and practice those lessons in everyday life so that they can have a positive impact on their environment Education is very important for learning because it allows a person to gain a deeper understanding of what life is, and there are three types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal (Supriani et al. 2022)

2. Methods

The type of research used is qualitative research using a descriptive approach. The information that the author gets is obtained from interviews and field studies. According to Bong and Taylor, qualitative research is research that produces

descriptive data in the form of words both orally and in writing from information from the actors observed. This research is qualitative research in the form of a principal's strategy in fostering quality students and Islamic character, at MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. The results of this study describe what is obtained in research from the results of 1) interviews conducted to find out how the principal's strategy in creating quality students and Islamic character, 2) observation by giving questionnaires to students with the aim of obtaining data and implementation of the principal's strategy. The subjects in this study used purposive techniques, where the research subjects were selected based on objectives and in a significant manner. The subjects of this research are the principal, teachers, and students of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel, Balong, Ponorogo.

3. Result and Discussion

The madrasah principal is a main character in the education system and is in charge of overseeing the administration and managing a capable madrasah management in order to realise a madrasah in accordance with the vision and mission of the madrasah itself. Competent implementation of management tasks is necessary so that the principal can utilise all available resources, both human and non-human, to achieve the set goals. The leadership style of a madrasah determines its level of success as an educational institution. Being the leader of the institution, the madrasah head must be able to direct the organisation towards greater achievement (Rofiq 2019). According to Mulyasa (2003), principals in the new paradigm of education management must be able to perform the following tasks: The principal must be able to lead, innovate, and motivate the school as well as play the role of educator, administrator, supervisor, and teacher (Oktarina and Rahmi 2019). The madrasah head is a manager within the scope of an educational institution whose task is to manage and carry out management functions. Planning, organising, mobilising and supervising are part of a defined management process, which is structured to use human potential and other resources to achieve predetermined goals.

Looking at the phenomenon of change in the current digital era, principals must be ready to face future changes and improve the teaching and learning process. With this new era, principals need to have leadership tactics, better changes will result from the way these strategies are implemented. The researcher wants to know about the principal's strategy to cope with these changes and develop Islamic character in students based on the description given above. The formulation of the problem in this study is "How is the principal's strategy in building Islamic character of students?" and refers to the description given above. The purpose of this study is to describe the principal's strategy in building Islamic student character at MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. The discussion of this article is based on data and conclusions that the author obtained from interviews with teachers and principals as well as distributing questionnaires to students in grades 5 and 6 of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. This discussion focuses on two topics, namely: the principal's strategic approach in identifying students with Islamic character, and the implementation of this approach by students at MI Muhammadiyah 12

Ngampel. Below are some of the field findings that researchers found regarding the principal's strategy and its implementation:

3.1. Principal Leadership Strategies

Based on interviews with the principal of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel that have been obtained, the principal has several strategies used in building quality students and Islamic character. Making students have good morals and behave in accordance with religious guidance is the goal of education in MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel. As for the strategies applied by the principal Mrs Nurpriyati, based on the results of interviews that have been obtained there are several leadership strategies of the principal of MI Muhammadiyah 12 in this study can be explained that, the principal applies several strategies to produce quality students and Islamic character, as for these strategies are:



Image 1. The principal's strategy to improve students' Islamic character

a. The madrasah principal as an educator and role model

The characteristics of teachers and principals will become role models for their students. Teaching and implementing character education is an obligation for a teacher, this is because a student will imitate what the teacher does and explains (Prasetyo, Marzuki, and Riyanti 2019). Behaving and speaking well is one of the strategies to make students a person of quality and character. Mrs Nurpriyati as the principal said that she always applies Ki Hajar Dewantara's motto, *Ing ngarso sung tuladha ing madya mangun karso tut wuri handayani*. She means that a teacher when in front of students and fellow teachers must be able to be a role model both in attitude, words, and behaviour. In its implementation at school, students have started to get used to this small thing. With that, it can make students themselves feel a sense of responsibility for their obligations and in obeying existing regulations. this habit will have good influences on students.

In his capacity as principal, MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel has the responsibility to fulfil his role as an educator. From the results of the researcher's interview with Mrs Nur Priyati as the head of MI

Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel, she said that: "I invite the teachers to get used to giving good examples to the students. For example, from small things such as putting shoes on the shoe rack, and arranging sandals facing forward and neatly arranged in front of the mosque after finishing wudhu. Furthermore, I adhere to the principle of *ing ngarso sungtulodho ing madya mangun karso tutwuri handayani*. With the foundation of nature and independence and emphasis on the family spirit in the education system. The data below are the results of the questionnaires of fifth and sixth grade students regarding the application of getting used to putting shoes in place. In order for students and female students to be inspired and imitate positive things, therefore the principal must provide a good example. The principal will always prioritise students as important in delivering teaching and being a good role model for students, both socially, and in behaviour that will be accountable. This is corroborated by the strategy implemented by the principal and based on observations carried out in a school environment that not only provides formal education but also non-formal.

The educational process is inseparable from the activities of preparing, managing, leading and realising the role of teachers and the efficiency of human resources in order to obtain the goals that have been made. The madrasah education manager is the principal by making a work plan that is interrelated with educators and also students to achieve the vision and mission of the school. From Mrs Nur as the principal of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel she said that: "Seeing now that the era has advanced and the influences of the gadget are easily accessible to children, and the child if he already holds the gadget, he will forget to do other activities. The development of science and technology will also have a positive and negative impact. The school itself implements programming by implementing afternoon dismissal, not fullday because the students themselves in the afternoon are required to go to TPA at Nurul Iman which is close to the school, and we have also collaborated with TPA Nurul Iman." Regarding this matter, TPA Nurul Iman Ngampel Balong Ponorogo and madrasah leaders work together so that students can get intensive learning to read the Qur'an. This application starts when students are in grades one to six. It is hoped that students will gain useful knowledge and make good and useful habits both in the school environment and society.

b. Conducting morning habituation

Prayer is the second pillar of faith and the pillar of the religion for Muslims. The law of the five daily prayers is obligatory for a Muslim. The cultivation of dhuha prayer in congregation as a sunnah prayer that is faithfully performed in the morning before carrying out learning activities by students to instil a moral soul and make the beginning of cultivating good student character. Likewise, the dhuhur prayer is done in congregation. One of the programs at MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel is the tahfidz programme, which is implemented to get students used to studying, reading, and memorising verses of the Qur'an. This programme also aims to foster a sense of love for the Qur'an and instill the values contained therein. There is also a programme, namely reading and writing the Qur'an which is carried out before leaving

school. All of these existing programmes are strategies implemented by the principal and teachers to add insight into how to read and write the Qur'an properly, correctly and to foster good character for students. According to the principal, students can follow, even required for this Tahfidz programme, which later in this activity is accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. teachers from each class. This Quran memorisation programme is a useful step for character development, a successful stage in the development of one's character students can easily develop an excellent character by memorising the Quran (Husna, Hasanah, and Nugroho 2021). In addition to maintaining their memorisation of the Quran, students should have noble traits.

c. The cultivation of honesty

The attitude of honesty is something that may now be difficult to obtain, this is the need for instilling honesty in students, because this will be the basic knowledge to develop students who have a positive attitude, independent character, and responsibility (Munif, Rozi, and Yusrohlana 2021). Therefore, the need for honesty values that must be instilled in students both at school and in the community environment. The basis of honesty that is embedded in the character of students in order to give birth to responsibility, discipline, and self-confidence for doing honest deeds and not lying or harming others. Character in shaping honesty comes from the heart and also comes from the soul and thinking. But sometimes honesty is a little difficult This shows that students who behave dishonestly will eventually get used to cheating. If the teacher does not stop this habit, students will develop resistance to the situation, making it even more difficult to stop. In this planting, the teachers instill in the students to always be honest in everything. This attitude of honesty must be applied to every student. Teaching honesty to students is very important in social life, because this affects relationships with fellow humans, both in the school environment and society. Eka Santika said that character education involves fostering an environment in the classroom that helps children's ethical growth, therefore, schools should continue to improve teaching standards to accelerate learning, especially in terms of developing the moral character of honesty in students. From the cultivation of this goal, the principal revealed that the activities carried out were not cheating during exams, buying snacks in the canteen honestly.

d. Cultivating good manners and a sense of responsibility

Adab is a habit adopted and practised by a person through actions that will eventually lead to morality. Adab is necessary in life, especially for students, so that they can develop into noble people (Musthafa and Meliani 2021). Adab is one of the strategies in shaping student character, and learning related to several aspects of behaviour, values, and morals, both personal and relationships with the school environment and society. Good manners will be able to influence life, in a proverb related to manners, namely manners above knowledge. From this proverb, it can be concluded that the level of manners is above knowledge, which must be learned and implemented in everyday life. In Islam, the position of manners is higher than knowledge. To shape the character of Islamic children, adab is one of the strategies to foster children's character to be better, ethical, noble in accordance with religious law, which

can later be used as provisions for the next life. According to the results of the interview, developing ethics and manners is one of the tactics used by the principal to foster the character of students who have good manners, understand the law, and obey the rules that have been set. Therefore, adab is very necessary and very much needed in students and its application in everyday life. Adab here is applied in terms of when you want to eat to pray, before starting learning activities it is customised to pray first as well as when finished in learning activities. The implementation of a sense of responsibility at school involves getting used to picket duty to clean the class in the morning according to the specified schedule, being honest and having a sense of responsibility for the work entrusted by the teacher.

3.2. *Below is student questionnaire data from the results of the implementation of the existing habituation at school:*

Table 1. Results of data on the application of student habituation

No	Applicability	Category Percentage of students		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Put something on the shoe rack	100%	-	-
2.	Praying dhuha and murojaah	100%	-	-
3.	Carrying out the cleaning picket schedule	100%	-	-
4.	Doing homework independently	65%	35%	-
5.	Taking exams honestly	95%	5%	-

From the results of the data above, it can be concluded that these simple habituation activities will have a positive impact on students. these applications are applied since grade one students, this will bring good changes for students and create students with Islamic morals in accordance with the guidance of religious teachings. As can be seen from the data obtained above, not 100% of students have implemented it, but this is a good start from instilling good morals for students. Motivation is given by the teacher by linking the subject matter being taught with examples of commendable behaviour in the real world. Based on the observation, the students generally showed moral character towards themselves. Students' compliance with school rules has a percentage value of 100%, based on the observation results. Students understand and apply learning material more rapidly when they are given motivational examples that connect it to the use of exemplary attitudes in daily life (Adri et al. 2020).

The purpose of character education is to instil moral values in the next generation (Annur, Yuriska, and Arditasari 2021). The methods and results of the implementation of education are also supported by character education. The principal hopes that from this small thing students can become human beings with

Islamic morals and be useful for society in the future. With the application of good things in this school is one of the educational strategies that are not only about the material alone considering that education is very important for human life and its social environment and is a need that must be fulfilled. The educational process will be experienced by humans and from other humans who teach and will bring changes in attitudes, behaviour and responses that affect them. Article 1 of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2023 lists the definition of education which explains that education is a deliberate and planned effort aimed at helping students actively develop the potential for religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state and to create a learning atmosphere and learning process (Khaidir, Amran, and Noor 2023). As a result, the education system must be able to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality, functionality and utility of education management are evenly distributed in order to face various obstacles and challenges in educational changes in a conceptualised, organised, systematic and sustainable manner.

From the above understanding, education requires careful and professional design, so this requires a person who can control and be a pioneer. This person is often called in the world of education in schools or madrasahs the head/leader of school education. A madrasah head must have knowledge of leadership theory and be adept at practising it. As the person in charge of an educational institution, the madrasah head is a leader in education with significant influence and responsibility for the growth of the madrasah institution (Asyari 2020). The position of the madrasah head needs to be repositioned to better reflect his or her role in improving educational standards, namely as a manager who eventually becomes a supervisor, who can influence fellow teachers to become better and progress. In line with this, the position of the madrasah head will play a major role in the expansion and progress of education, especially in terms of improving educational standards and human resources.

The madrasah principal, teachers and other educators have a role in promoting growth and development for themselves to be professional with the hope of learning new things, adding and developing existing knowledge. One of the elements that contribute to the excellent quality of educational outcomes is the educator. The extent to which teachers are prepared to prepare their students through learning activities determines how well education is organised. However, a teacher's professional teaching aptitude has a significant impact on their strategic position to improve the quality of education outcomes. As a leader in improving teaching standards in their institution, madrasah principals will spend most of their time on teacher development. Performance will improve, especially the performance of teachers themselves, if they receive more attention for the tasks they complete (Hendri Fauza 2020)

4. Conclusion

From the presentation of the discussion regarding the leadership strategy of the principal of MI Muhammadiyah 12 Ngampel in developing strategies to shape the students above, it can be concluded that there are several strategies of the principal

in shaping students, namely (a) being a role model for students; (b) Conducting the habit of praying dhuha and dzuhur prayers in congregation, Tahfidz, and BTA every day; (c) the application of purpose, this is something that is very urgent and will be the basic capital in the formation of good character and in accordance with the teachings of Islam; (d) Teaching manners and responsibility is a matter of behaviour, morals, and values that apply to relationships with the community and school environment as well as personal behaviour.

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