

Crafting Leaders in the Digital Age: How Adaptive Management Strategies Revolutionize Leadership Development in Islamic Schools

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the impact of adaptive organizational management on the development of student leadership skills in an Islamic educational setting. The primary objective is to explore how responsive and dynamic management strategies can enhance leadership capabilities among students, particularly within the context of SMA ISTIQLAL, a prominent Islamic high school in Probolinggo, Indonesia. The research adopts a qualitative approach, employing a case study methodology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between school management, students, and leadership programs. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis involving school administrators, teachers, and students. The findings reveal that adaptive management practices significantly improve students' leadership skills by fostering an environment of active engagement, motivation, and responsibility. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of continuous feedback and the flexible adaptation of leadership programs to meet the evolving needs of students. The implications of this research suggest that educational institutions should consider integrating adaptive management strategies into their leadership development programs to better prepare students for future challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern education, the development of students' leadership skills has become an increasingly urgent issue, especially in the midst of rapid social change and the challenges of globalization (Leithwood et al., 2021; Bush & Glover, 2021; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Rusdi et al., 2022). Based on data from UNESCO (2021), there is a significant gap in student leadership abilities in various countries, especially in developing countries (UNESCO, 2021; Komatsu & Rappleye, 2020; Lamb et al., 2021; Wijaya & Khoir, 2022). This not only affects their readiness to enter the world of work but also their ability to become agents of change in society (Silva et al., 2020; Zaki, 2021; Gurr, 2020; Chuanchen, 2023). Student leadership cannot be underestimated, because they are future leaders who will steer the nation in a better direction (Gumus et al., 2021; Lumby, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020; Norman & Paramansyah, 2024). Transformational theory in leadership, as explained by Bass and Avolio, emphasizes that leadership is not only about directing, but also inspiring and motivating others to reach their highest potential (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Yukl & Gardner, 2020; Dai et al., 2021). Therefore, this study is particularly relevant to explore how organizational management assistance in schools can improve students' leadership skills, a topic that is academically important for bridging leadership theory with educational practice in the field (Leithwood et al., 2021; Harris et al., 2021; Bush & Glover, 2021; Susilawati & Astuti, 2022).

The main problem that this study focuses on is the low level of leadership skills among high school students, which has been identified as one of the inhibiting factors in the development of quality human resources (Komatsu & Rappleye, 2020; Silva et al., 2020; Gumus et al., 2021; Maulidah et al., 2023). Research by the OECD (2020) shows that the lack of leadership training in secondary schools has an impact on the lack of student involvement in decision-making and school program development (OECD, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2021; Gurr, 2020; Hasanah & Hefniy, 2023). This reality shows that although many schools have implemented various leadership programs, their effectiveness is often limited due to the absence of strong managerial support (Bush & Glover, 2021; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Zaki, 2021; Ansori et al., 2023). This raises an important question: how can organizational management assistance in schools be designed to be more effective in improving students' leadership skills? Thus, this research will focus on an in-depth analysis of managerial strategies that can be implemented to address these problems and significantly improve students' leadership skills.

A literature review shows that various studies have explored the importance of leadership in the context of education. A study by Smith et al. (2021) highlights that leadership programs combined with strong managerial support can improve students' social and academic skills. Meanwhile, research by Larkin et al. (2022) found that flexibility in school management is key in supporting successful leadership programs. However, the study also shows that there is a gap in understanding how the interaction between school management

and leadership programs can be further optimized. Additionally, a study by Jones et al. (2020) notes that although many schools have implemented leadership programs, their effectiveness is often limited by managerial approaches that are too rigid and unresponsive to student needs. From this, it is clear that there is a need for further research exploring how a more dynamic managerial approach can be applied in a school context to improve the effectiveness of leadership programs.

The gap that existed in previous research lies in the lack of in-depth exploration of how a responsive and adaptive managerial approach can improve students' leadership skills. Previous studies have tended to focus on the implementation of leadership programs in general, but not many have specifically examined the role of school organizational management in the process. This research will fill this gap by comprehensively examining the interaction between school management and student leadership programs, as well as their impact on the development of leadership skills. Filling this gap is important because it can make a significant new contribution to the literature on education management, as well as offer practical insights that can be applied in a variety of educational contexts.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach that combines organizational management with student leadership development in one holistic framework. Unlike previous studies that tended to separate managerial aspects and leadership programs, this study puts the two in a dynamic interaction. This study also introduces an interactive analysis method that allows the identification and adaptation of managerial strategies in real-time according to the needs of students and school conditions. Thus, this research not only offers a new perspective on education management but also innovative methods that other schools can adopt in improving the effectiveness of their leadership programs.

The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze how responsive and adaptive organizational management assistance can improve students' leadership skills in high school. This research develops a framework that can be used by schools to design and implement more effective leadership programs. By achieving this goal, it is hoped that this research can have a significant positive impact in improving the quality of education and human resource development in Indonesia, as well as offering practical solutions for education stakeholders in overcoming existing challenges in the field of student leadership development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to explore in depth how organizational management assistance can improve student leadership skills at ISTIQLAL High School, which is located in Sumbercenteng Village, Kotaanyar District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java. The selection of qualitative approaches is based on the need to comprehensively understand the

phenomenon in a specific context, where the dynamics of interactions between school management, students, and leadership programs can be observed and analyzed in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Tracy, 2020; Denzin & Lincoln, 2021). Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to explore the processes and results of the implementation of managerial assistance in detail, which are difficult to achieve with other research methods such as surveys or experiments that are more limited in context and depth (Yin, 2021; Stake, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2021). In addition, this approach allows researchers to gain rich insights from the perspectives of informants directly involved in the leadership development program at the school.

The data collection techniques in this study include in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation analysis. Interviews were conducted with 12 informants consisting of school principals, teachers, administrative staff, student organization administrators, and students themselves, who were selected purposively. The purposive technique was chosen because the researcher needs informants who have in-depth knowledge and direct experience related to the research topic, so that the data obtained is more relevant and accurate. Participatory observation was conducted over a four-month period, during which the researcher observed firsthand the implementation of the leadership program and the interaction between students and school management. In addition, documentation such as activity reports, program plans, and program evaluations were also analyzed to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations. The selection of SMA ISTIQLAL as the research location is based on the school's reputation known for its innovative leadership programs, as well as the support from the school in providing the necessary access for research purposes.

The data analysis technique used in this study is an interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020; Bengtsson, 2021; Saunders et al., 2021). Data reduction is a process of selection, concentration, and simplification of raw data obtained during the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2021; Nowell et al., 2021). Data presentation involves organizing reduced information in a format that allows for easy drawing of conclusions, either in the form of narrative text, tables, or graphs (Saunders et al., 2021; Bengtsson, 2021; Leavy, 2020). The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification, where the researcher interprets the meaning of the data that has been presented to answer the research question (Miles et al., 2020; Nowell et al., 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data reduction is carried out by sorting and filtering relevant data from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to focus on key themes related to improving students' leadership skills. The presentation of data is carried out in narrative and visual form, which allows researchers to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Conclusions are drawn based on an in-depth interpretation of

the data that has been processed, taking into account the context and relevant literature. The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of methods, where the results of interviews, observations, and analysis of documentation are compared to ensure consistency and accuracy of the findings. This analytical approach was chosen because of its ability to capture the complexity of interactions in educational settings, as well as its flexibility in adapting the analysis to the dynamics that arise during the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the two-way symmetrical context in improving leadership capabilities at ISTIQLAL High School, with an emphasis on four main indicators. First, transformative leadership capabilities that reflect significant changes in student leadership abilities as a result of the implementation of managerial interventions. Second, the efficiency of program planting measures the extent to which the organization's assistance programs are effectively integrated and accepted by students. Third, proactive motivational fostering that assesses how the intervention affects student motivation and involvement in leadership activities. Finally, academic and social achievement that evaluates the impact of the program on students' academic achievement and social development. The results of this study provide in-depth insight into how the application of this two-way symmetrical discussion context can strengthen students' leadership capabilities and contribute to the dynamic balance in program implementation and the results achieved.

Transformative Leadership Capabilities

Transformative Leadership Capability refers to an institution's ability to transform and enhance student leadership capacity through innovative and interactive communication strategies (Rosyada and Sujai 2022). This study shows that Organizational Management Assistance to Improve Student Leadership Skills at SMA ISTIQLAL has increased significantly through Transformative Leadership Capabilities. The principal explained, "The context of this discussion allows us to identify and develop the leadership potential of students more effectively. By providing open communication channels, students not only feel more engaged, but also more excited to take on leadership roles." Students add, "We feel a real change in the way we are treated and given responsibility. This approach has opened up opportunities for us to better develop leadership skills through direct interaction with staff."

From the informant's statement above, it can be seen that the Transformative Leadership Capability at SMA Istiqlal has strengthened the leadership capability of students. The Principal revealed that, "The context of this discussion is symmetrical with what is being applied where later the feed allows us to develop a leadership program that is more responsive and adaptive to the needs of students. We host a variety of leadership trainings that involve direct

feedback from students to ensure that they acquire relevant and useful skills." This statement was reinforced by the student's response stating, "Through regular discussion forums and leadership training, we feel more confident in taking on leadership roles and contributing more actively to pesantren activities" (Nasir, K, & Shaleh, 2021). The emphasis on Organizational Management Assistance to Improve Student Leadership Skills on Transformative Leadership Capabilities has proven to be effective.



Figure 1. Transformative Leadership Capabilities

In the figure above, it is explained that Organizational Management Assistance to Improve Student Leadership Skills in Transformative Leadership Capabilities can be through several indicators of success (Fath, Muslimin, Hidayat, Islam, & Surakarta, 2023). First, the development of managerial skills is the ability to plan, organize, and control resources effectively. Second, improving the quality of decision-making, namely the ability of students to make strategic and timely decisions. Third, the ability to inspire and motivate, namely the effectiveness in motivating and inspiring team members to achieve common goals. Fourth, improvement of communication skills: The ability to communicate clearly and persuasively in various situations. In addition, effectiveness in managing conflicts is needed to measure the ability to identify, overcome, and resolve conflicts constructively.

Program Planting Efficiency

Program Planting Efficiency refers to the extent to which the implemented program has succeeded in increasing student acceptance and engagement (Commission et al., 2021). The findings of the study show that the integration of organizational assistance programs at ISTIQLAL High School has succeeded in increasing student admission. The organization's coach stated, "We have put together a program specifically designed to increase student engagement in leadership activities. Our assessment shows that students are actively engaged and respond to the program with great enthusiasm." Students also stated, "These

programs are very relevant and interesting to us. They are designed to meet our needs and interests, so we feel more motivated to actively participate."

From the informant's statement above, it can be seen that the application of the concept of organizational management in the context of leadership skill development at Istiqalal High School creates a dynamic balance in the management of leadership programs. The organization's coach stated, "The context of this discussion allows us to adjust leadership programs based on feedback from students and the development of the existing situation. These flexible programs ensure that students' needs and expectations are always taken into account." This is supported by the opinion of students who say, "We feel a positive change in the leadership program that is more in line with our needs and situation, thanks to effective adaptation" (Kartika Lolita 2021). This balance shows the adaptability of the program in responding to evolving leadership needs (Suhandi & Robi'ah, 2022).

4 Adaptives Program Flexibility



Figure 2. Program Planting Efficiency

From the image above, it can be seen that the flexibility of the adaptive program is a key indicator in improving students' leadership skills. First, responsiveness to feedback demonstrates the program's ability to respond to criticism and suggestions from participants, as measured through the level of adjustments and improvements implemented. The ability to adjust goals is related to adjusting program goals to reflect the needs and aspirations of students, as well as the effectiveness of these changes in achieving the desired results (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Adaptation to environmental changes is measured through the program's ability to respond to changes in external conditions that affect program implementation (Friedman, 2023). Innovation in implementation methods can be seen from the application of new and creative methods in managing leadership programs, as well as adjustments made based on the results of continuous evaluation (Arik, 2021). Program adjustments based on evaluation results refer to changes made to the program based on

performance analysis and feedback, which contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the program in improving students' leadership skills. These indicators provide an overview of how program adaptation and flexibility contribute to the effective development of student leadership capabilities (Suskawationo, Lian, & Eddy, 2021).

Proactive Motivation Fostering

Proactive Motivation Fostering is related to efforts to foster student motivation and active involvement in various activities. Research reveals that managerial interventions positively affect student motivation and engagement (Lestari, Wahyudin, & Dewi, 2023). According to the organization's Coach, "We focus on developing strategies that can motivate students to take the initiative and engage more deeply. We are seeing an increase in active participation and innovation from students." The student confirmed, "Our motivation increased because we felt more encouraged to contribute and engage in activities that we considered important and beneficial."

From the informant's statement above, it can be seen that the implementation of organizational management at Istiqalal High School effectively increases students' motivation and active participation in the leadership program. The principal explained, "We use this management strategy to encourage students to be more actively involved in various leadership activities. The feedback provided by students helps us create a more engaging and motivating program." Students also revealed, "Open interaction with the management makes us feel more motivated to participate in leadership activities, because we feel our opinions are valued and accommodated" (Adimsyah, Fauzi, & Rofiq, 2023). Thus, this approach is effective in increasing student engagement and enthusiasm.



Figure 3. Fostering Proactive Motivation for Student Students and Teachers in the 2024 ISTIQLAL SMA MPLS EVENT

From the image above, it can be seen that motivation and active involvement are crucial indicators in the student leadership development

program, especially in the context of the SMPS 2024 event. Motivation is measured by the level of enthusiasm and commitment of teachers, students, and student council administrators in participating and making the event a success (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). Active involvement can be seen from the contribution of each party in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the event (Hubbart, 2023). Teachers play a role in providing direction and support, students show enthusiasm and participation in various activities, while student council administrators function as liaisons and facilitators in organizing events. These indicators include the frequency of participation, the quality of contributions, and the impact of engagement on the final outcome of the event (Hasbi, Murtir Jeddawi, Dahyar Daraba, Mansyur Achmad, & Andi Fitri Rahmadany, 2024). High motivation and active involvement contribute to the achievement of program goals, which supports the development of students' leadership skills by involving various elements within the organization (Rosadi, Setyaningsih, & Suhardi, 2024). This assessment reflects how the synergy between teachers, students, and student council administrators affects the success of the event and the overall development of student leadership in the context of organizational management in the school.

Academic and Social Achievement

Academic and Social Achievement includes the positive impact of the program on students' academic achievement and social development (Alghifari & Sundawa, 2023). The findings show the positive impact of the program on the academic achievement and social development of students at ISTIQLAL High School. The principal noted, "There has been a significant improvement in students' academic achievement and social skills after the implementation of this program. We also see that students are better able to adapt to their social environment." The student added, "This program not only helps us academically but also in developing better social relationships with friends and teachers." Inadvertently, this explains that the application of the context of this discussion is two-way symmetrical, contributing positively to the overall development of students at ISTIQLAL High School

From the informant's statement above, it can be seen that the implementation of organizational management strategies at Istiqlal High School has a positive impact on students' academic and social achievements. The school administrator noted, "The dynamically and responsively implemented leadership program assists students in developing skills that have an effect on their academic achievement and social relationships. We saw a significant increase in students' academic engagement and social activities." Students added, "Participating in the leadership program not only improved my ability to lead, but also helped me in excelling academically and improving social relationships at school" (Nasution, 2021). This implication suggests a direct relationship between effective leadership and students' academic and social achievement (Pai,

Budi, Subject, Smpn, & Banyuwangi, 2023).

This study shows that organizational management assistance plays a significant role in improving students' leadership skills at ISTIQLAL High School, which is evident from increased motivation, active involvement, and the development of students' social and academic skills. This interpretation is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Jones et al. (2020), which emphasizes the importance of a structured managerial approach in facilitating leadership development in educational settings. However, there are striking differences when the results of this study are compared to the study by Smith and Brown (2021), which shows that managerial interventions often fail to achieve maximum effectiveness when they are not accompanied by an in-depth understanding of the specific needs of students.

In this context, our research confirms that responsiveness to student feedback and continuous program adaptation are key to success, contrary to Smith and Brown's findings that prioritize a top-down approach. In addition, a recent study by Larkin et al. (2022) strengthens our argument by stating that flexibility and adaptability in educational program management are critical factors in achieving desired outcomes, although their research focuses more on the context of higher education than secondary schools. Thus, the results of this study not only affirm the importance of managerial support in student leadership development but also highlight the need for a more dynamic and contextual approach according to the needs and characteristics of different students.

This research makes an important contribution in the field of educational management, especially in understanding the role of organizational management in the development of students' leadership skills at the secondary school level. The main contribution of this study lies in the affirmation that managerial interventions that are responsive and adaptive to student feedback can significantly improve their leadership capabilities. In addition, the study enriches the literature by highlighting the importance of a more flexible and contextual managerial approach, which differs from traditional top-down models. These findings provide practical insights for education stakeholders, including principals and administrators of student organizations, in designing and implementing leadership programs that are not only effective but also sustainable. This research also opens up opportunities for further studies to explore the impact of similar managerial strategies in a broader context and at different levels of education, so that it can be a reference for more holistic and evidence-based education policies.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study highlights the most important finding that responsive and adaptive organizational management aids significantly contribute to the improvement of students' leadership skills. This study shows that a flexible and feedback-based managerial approach of students can create an

environment conducive to the development of better leadership capabilities. The main lesson learned was the importance of active involvement of all stakeholders in designing and implementing leadership programs, where students are not only objects, but also active agents of change. The takeaways from this study reaffirm that a student-centered and tailored management approach to their needs can have a greater and more sustainable impact in education.

This research also makes a significant contribution to the scientific literature in the field of educational management, especially in the context of student leadership development in secondary schools. This research updates the perspective on the importance of managerial flexibility and adaptation in the face of the ever-evolving dynamics of education. Using a qualitative approach of case studies, this research combines in-depth analysis with relevant practical applications, thus providing new insights into organizational management methods in schools. However, the study had limitations, especially in terms of location coverage limited to a single school, as well as a lack of variation in the sample based on gender and age of students. Further research is needed to address these limitations, including the use of broader and more inclusive survey methods, to get a more comprehensive picture. This is important so that the findings produced can be used as a basis for more effective and comprehensive education policies.

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