



Key Leadership Traits in Madrasah Principals: Decision-Making, Motivation, Communication, and Management Skills

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the leadership traits of school principals in Madrasah, focusing on their decision-making abilities, motivational skills, communication proficiency, and capability to manage subordinates. The research utilizes a qualitative descriptive methodology. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, with informants selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and accuracy. The findings reveal that effective leadership in Madrasahs is characterized by the principal's strong decision-making abilities, the capacity to motivate staff, excellent communication skills, and effective control over subordinates. These traits collectively contribute to the school's overall success and smooth operation. The study underscores the importance of these leadership traits in educational settings, providing valuable insights for developing training and professional development programs for school leaders. Enhancing these skills can lead to improved school management and better educational outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a crucial role in the dynamics and sustainability of a company (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021; Hidayah, 2023; Zhao et al., 2023). An organization, whether large or small, is a collaboration of individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and motivations. In this context, a leader acts as a guide, director and motivator for his team members (Novitasari et al., 2021; Lemoine & Blum, 2021). Theory and research, as stated by Crossan and Apaydin (2013) in (Banmairuroy et al., 2022; Einola & Khoreva, 2023), consistently emphasize that leadership is not just a formal role in an organizational structure, but rather a valuable asset capable of moving a company towards success. Effective leadership includes skills in establishing a clear vision, motivating a team, managing conflict, and making the right decisions in complex situations (Baharun et al., 2023; Kilag et al., 2024). Leaders who are able to convey the

company vision clearly and convincingly will encourage employees to embrace shared goals (Haider et al., 2023; Hefniy et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the ability to motivate and guide team members in achieving optimal performance is the key to company growth and success.

However, the role of a leader is not only limited to the managerial aspect. Sustainable leadership also requires the ability to build strong interpersonal relationships, facilitate collaboration, and create an inclusive and inspiring work environment (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). A good leader is not only oriented towards the end result, but also towards the welfare and development of individuals in his team (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). In the current era of uncertainty and rapid change, the role of a leader becomes increasingly important. Being able to navigate an organization through change and adapt strategy to changing market and environmental conditions is a highly valued ability in modern leadership (Quansah & Hartz, 2021). Therefore, selecting, developing and empowering effective leaders is a top priority for any organization that wants to survive and thrive in a competitive business environment.

In increasingly difficult economic conditions, the role of effective leadership becomes increasingly important for the sustainability and success of a company or organization (Schiuma et al., 2022; Alshurideh et al., 2022). An effective leader is not only able to manage strategic and operational aspects, but also has a deep understanding of individual and group dynamics in the organization.

One of the main tasks of a leader is to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of his team members. With a comprehensive understanding of the potential and challenges faced by each individual, a leader can allocate resources efficiently, provide the right support, and direct team members towards maximum performance improvement. The ability to solve problems by leveraging the collective strengths of a team is one of the characteristics of effective leadership in difficult economic situations (Hashimy et al., 2023; Martinez et al., 2023). Apart from that, leadership is also an important or core component in the organizational structure. Leaders are not only responsible for making strategic decisions, but also play a role in shaping organizational culture, setting the vision, mission, goals and strategies that will be carried out by all members of the organization (Lasrado & Kassem, 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022). Effective leaders are able to create a positive work climate, facilitate collaboration, and build strong relationships between various parts of the organization.

In this context, leadership is not just one component of various aspects of an organization, but is the foundation that directly influences overall performance and success (Ridwan, 2021). Without effective leadership, the organizational structure, culture, managerial practices, and various established policies and procedures will not be able to function optimally (Purwanto et al., 2023). Thus, in difficult economic situations, it is important for companies or organizations to prioritize the development and empowerment of effective leadership. Only with leaders who are able to understand the internal and external dynamics of an organization and manage change wisely, a company or organization can survive and develop in facing complex economic challenges.

Principals in educational institutions have an important role in improving school effectiveness (Acton, 2021). They must have the leadership skills and wisdom to manage a school organization and collaborate with teaching staff in achieving educational goals. Schools are considered as important partners in realizing family and community goals, especially in religious and scientific education. Madrasas, as Islamic educational institutions, aim to form students with competency in faith and knowledge.

In Gowa Regency, the leadership of school principals is key in improving the quality of madrasa education. The leader is responsible for managing the organization and collaborating with teachers to achieve educational goals. Leadership is a crucial factor in achieving organizational goals, because they influence the policies and activities carried out. A leader uses an approach that is appropriate to the situation and problems faced to influence the behavior of his staff.

The school principal must establish good cooperation with staff, students, parents and the community. Without good cooperation, the quality of education will be disrupted. Effective collaboration allows teachers to implement learning strategies that suit student needs, ensuring the learning process runs well.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach with descriptive research type. Qualitative descriptive research (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021) aims to understand the experiences of research subjects, such as behavior and actions, through verbal descriptions and discussions using natural methods. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the leadership style of school principals at MA Muhammadiyah Limbung. The main aim of this research is to provide an overview of this leadership style through words so that the research objectives can be achieved.

This research uses qualitative data (Williams, 2021), takes the form of sentences or descriptions in documents. Qualitative data in this research was obtained through interviews with informants regarding the leadership style of the MA Muhammadiyah Limbung school principal. The author chose qualitative data to enable more in-depth and accurate research, and to describe the actual situation.

The determination of informants in this research used a purposive sampling technique, where the determination of informants was based on the researcher's special considerations regarding the characteristics of the data needed. The purposive sampling technique is a method for determining samples based on certain considerations, in accordance with Priya (2021). The informants in this research were chosen because they were considered to have knowledge or information regarding the leadership style of the MA Muhammadiyah Limbung school principal. The data collection technique used was interviews, where informants were asked to provide responses or answers related to research objectively. The author conducted this research at MA Muhammadiyah Limbung. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative data analysis techniques, which refer to the concepts of Milles and Huberman (in Asipi et al., 2022). This data analysis process consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to verify the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Islamic leadership style in madrasas has distinctive characteristics that reflect the principles of Islamic teachings (Suryadi & Al-Shreifeen, 2024; Sanjani et al., 2023). In this context, madrasah principals not only act as leaders of educational organizations, but also as spiritual and moral figures for students and staff. Islamic leadership in madrasas is often based on principles such as justice, compassion, patience, and wisdom (Ezzani et al., 2023). Madrasah leaders tend to prioritize Islamic ethical values in decision making and in daily interactions with members of the madrasah community.

A simple analysis shows that the Islamic leadership style in madrasas has a significant impact on organizational culture and the quality of learning. By prioritizing Islamic values such as justice and compassion, madrasah principals are able to create an inclusive and empathetic environment, where students feel supported and motivated to develop holistically. Additionally, by upholding the principles of wisdom and patience, madrasa leaders can manage conflicts and challenges in a harmonious manner, strengthening organizational sustainability and stability. Thus, the Islamic leadership style in madrasas not only reflects religious values, but also encourages the achievement of larger educational goals.

Decision Making Ability

Decision making is an important process in every aspect of life, both in personal and professional contexts. A systematic approach to available alternatives allows one to carefully consider various factors and consequences before making a decision (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Thus, the decisions taken have a strong basis and are chosen based on rational considerations. However, in practice, decision making often involves varying degrees of complexity, including considerations of ethics, values, and interests involved (Ranerup & Henriksen, 2022). Therefore, while it is important to adopt a systematic approach, sometimes the right decisions also require a touch of intuition and situational assessment. In this case, experience, knowledge and skills in managing risk also play an important role in ensuring that the decisions taken can provide optimal results.

The research results revealed that the principal at the Madrasah had strong decision-making abilities. They consistently involve the Teacher Council through teacher council meetings at every stage of decision making, even for decisions that are considered trivial. This approach reflects a high commitment to the deliberative process and collective participation in decision making. Apart from that, the principal's attention to the implementation of decisions is also an important highlight. By carrying out careful supervision, they ensure that every decision that has been mutually agreed upon is implemented optimally according to expectations. Thus, the decision-making and supervision practices carried out by the principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung reflect a strong commitment to collective cooperation and achieving common goals in the madrasa education environment.

Ability to Motivate

Motivating is the driving force that causes an organization member to be willing and willing to mobilize his or her abilities (in the form of expertise or skills), energy and time to carry out various activities that are his or her obligations, in order to achieve organizational goals. Motivating is a key element in obtaining active involvement from organizational members in achieving common goals (Maulidia & Sanjani, 2023). When organizational members feel motivated, they will be more willing and willing to allocate their abilities, energy and time to complete the tasks that are part of their responsibilities (De Clercq et al., 2021). This helps ensure that each individual in the organization contributes optimally according to their expertise and skills, thereby creating a productive and efficient work environment. With strong motivation, organizational members also tend to be more enthusiastic and persistent in facing challenges and looking for creative solutions to achieve organizational goals.

The principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung is proven to have significant abilities in building strong work motivation for teachers and staff. Through an effective approach, they are able to inspire and encourage team members to contribute optimally in achieving organizational goals. This approach includes recognizing individual contributions, providing support in professional development, and building a positive and inclusive work environment. In this way, the performance of teachers and staff at MA Muhammadiyah Limbung can improve significantly.

Apart from that, the school principal has also been proven to have extraordinary abilities in increasing student learning motivation. Through a holistic approach, both spiritually and physically, they have succeeded in creating a learning environment that motivates students to achieve high levels of achievement and avoid detrimental behavior. This approach includes providing positive encouragement, providing a comfortable learning environment, and implementing spiritual values that encourage students to develop holistically. Thus, the principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung has a crucial role in creating a learning atmosphere that motivates and supports student success.

Communication Skills

Communication skills are one of the critical aspects of human interaction that allows individuals to convey messages, ideas or thoughts clearly and effectively to others (Abdikarimova et al., 2021). This involves the ability to organize and articulate thoughts appropriately, using various forms of communication such as verbal, non-verbal and written. Apart from that, communication skills also include the ability to listen actively and understand the messages received. By having good communication skills, a person can build strong relationships, facilitate effective collaboration, and overcome any conflicts or communication barriers that may arise.

The principal at MA Muhammadiyah Limbung has been proven to have extraordinary communication skills, both in interactions with teachers and staff, as well as with students. In conveying messages, ideas or thoughts, the principal uses words that are simple and easy for the recipient of the message to understand. This approach helps ensure that the information conveyed is well received and understood by all parties involved.

Apart from that, the principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung places openness as one of the key aspects in communicating with subordinates and students. They ensure that everything, whether related to institutional or personal matters, is conveyed directly and transparently. This approach creates an environment where any issues or challenges that arise can be immediately

identified and addressed appropriately, with no room for misunderstanding or ambiguity.

Good communication skills of the principal not only help in managing the day-to-day operations of the madrasah, but also strengthen relationships between the principal, staff, and students. By building a foundation of strong and open communication, principals create an environment where every member of the community feels heard, valued, and supported. This not only impacts the overall productivity and performance of the madrasah, but also the satisfaction and well-being of individuals involved in the educational process. Thus, good communication skills from school principals have a positive and significant impact in creating an inclusive and successful learning environment.

Ability to Control Subordinates

A leader in an organization must have a strong desire to inspire and motivate the people around him to follow the vision and direction that has been set. In this effort, leaders can use convincing personal power or the power granted by their position effectively and appropriately (Arifin et al., 2024). The purpose of using this power is to ensure that every task and responsibility in the organization can be completed well and in accordance with the company's long-term vision. However, it is important for a leader to use that power wisely and responsibly, considering the impact on team members and overall organizational goals.

Along with the desire to lead and mobilize others, a leader must also be able to understand that the long-term success of an organization does not depend solely on their strength or authority alone. More than that, effective leadership also requires the ability to build strong relationships, mutual trust, and solid cooperation among team members. Therefore, a leader must be able to create an inclusive and supportive work environment, where each individual feels valued and motivated to contribute optimally.

By combining personal strength, position power, and the ability to build strong relationships, a leader can create positive and productive work dynamics within the organization. Through this approach, organizational tasks and responsibilities can be completed well, while team members feel supported and motivated to achieve common goals. As a result, companies will be able to achieve long-term success and improve performance in a sustainable manner.

The MA Muhammadiyah Limbung school principal has an active and proactive role in providing direction and guidance to teachers, staff and students. They not only provide general guidance, but also provide individual guidance so that each assigned responsibility can be completed well and produce

performance that meets expectations. This approach reflects the principal's commitment to ensuring that every member of the school community has a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities, and can carry them out effectively.

Apart from providing individual direction and guidance, the principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung is also consistently present in every activity carried out by the school. With their consistent presence, principals provide direct examples and guidance to teachers, staff and students on how to carry out their responsibilities well. This creates an environment where every member of the school community feels directly supported and guided by their leaders.

With a combination of providing direction, individual guidance, and consistent presence in every activity, the principal of MA Muhammadiyah Limbung creates a collaborative and progressive work culture. They ensure that every member of the school community has the resources and support they need to successfully carry out their responsibilities. In this case, the principal not only acts as a leader, but also as a mentor and model who inspires everyone in the school to achieve their best potential.

CONCLUSION

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