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Transformational Leadership: The Practice of Principals in Islamic Schools

Mu'alimin^{1*}, Moh. Anwar¹

¹UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq, Jember, Indonesia *Corresponding Author email: mualimin@uinkhas.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: 07-11-2022 Revised: 06-12-2022 Accepted: 12-12-2022	The purpose of this study was to analyze and find formulations of change leadership practices in Islamic schools at SD Khadijah Surabaya and SD Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo in responding to educational demands and changes. Using a qualitative approach
Keyword: Competences; Leadership; Transformational.	to the type of multi-case study, data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation. Data analysis through a single case to multi-case findings with an interactive model through data reduction, presentation and conclusion. Data validations used member check, source and method triangulation. The research findings showed that the practice of Islamic school principal leadership was carried out through strengthening the school's vision and mission by making organizational values the school's goals, seeing change as a challenge by making changes to aspects of the curriculum, and collaborating with educational institutions at the national, regional and international levels.

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, educational institutions are experiencing changes, including how to position them as educational organizations. These changes require leadership that is able to respond to change. The traditional leadership model is less effective and unable to boost the competitiveness of educational organizations. Leadership oriented towards a democratic and charismatic approach has been replaced by change leadership. Schools are no longer able to compete globally due to low leadership competence. Low ability and management and inappropriate selection of school principals (Gaol & Tua, 2021; Woulfin & Gabriel, 2022), low professionalism (Acton, 2021) impacts on the quality of managing, leading and directing all elements of the school to make changes.

The principal has a role in determining change in the school. In addition, it is required to have various effective solutions to improve existing conditions. However, to make changes requires consideration and the right way (Fadillah et al., 2020). Conversely, making changes in an inappropriate way can be a big problem. It requires concepts, principles, and

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procedures to do it. The principal must have the competence to determine the right solution to improve school conditions by integrating concepts, principles and procedures (Cahyono et al., 2019). The 2019 PISA results ranked Indonesia 72 out of 77 countries, this condition has exacerbated reading and math scores at 72 and 70 out of 78 countries surveyed. Weak leadership competence is the basis for the decline in the quality of education and learning.

Transformational leadership, as a form of response to global changes that are occurring, has the task of being a catalyst and agent of change (Zainal, 2012) in which Islamic schools as a model of modern Islamic educational institutions can be a solution to the needs of society. In its journey, Islamic schools are no longer able to compete at the global level, do not have a positive influence on the innovation capabilities of teachers (Fadillah et al., 2020). This leadership is the right model to bring competitive Islamic schools at the local and global levels. The need for good education is the hope of the community so that the learning output is appropriate.

This study focuses on transformational leadership in schools by looking at school leadership practices. This aspect is being studied because of its uniqueness in managing schools. In addition, the fundamental reason for selecting unique cases is the occurrence of negative perceptions or low attention from the government and society towards Islamic educational institutions. The results of research conducted by Brooks (2020) stated that this Islamic educational institution received less attention, especially with regard to leadership. This research seeks to investigate how Islamic school leaders have shown their capacity to position themselves as agents of change and bring schools to a better position.

Although some of the studies conducted previously have discussed about transformational leadership in Islamic schools in Indonesia, all of them used quantitative methodology. It can be seen in the study of Tanjung et al (2020) that talked about the effect of transformational leadership, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior on the teacher performance of Islamic schools teachers in Jakarta. Arifin et al (2014) that investigated the effects of organizational culture (formality, rationality, achievement orientation, participation and collaboration, communication professional orientation and teacher autonomy) and transformational leadership on work engagement and teacher's performance in 15 Islamic high schools in Jakarta. Mukhtar et al (2020) that examined the correlation among the transformational leadership, interpersonal communication, organizational conflict and organizational effectiveness in Aceh conducted in three pesantrens involving 90 teachers. Therefore this study tried to fill the gap by conducting a qualitative research. The purpose of the research was to reveal the practice of transformational leadership of Islamic school principals at SD Khadijah Surabaya and SD Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo in responding to the challenges of change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a form of effort to bring about change in the organization to bring about changes in all components in the organization into one and empathize with each other so that it is beneficial and has positive value to the organization (Cahyono et al., 2019). For example, Berkovich (2021) claim that transformational leadership recognizes followers and is committed to empowerment. According to Rafferty

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& Griffin (2004), Rahmi et al (2019), Sahgal & Pathak (2007), transformational leadership changes the status quo in the organization with behavior at each stage of the transformation process by creating a vision and motivational environment for stakeholders to excel. Transformational leaders provide constructive feedback for employees to show extra effort and encourage creative thinking on complex matters (Anderson, 2017; Burić et al., 2021; Keller, 2006).

The study conducted by Kouzes and Posner (2012) analyzed thousands of best leadership practices shew that the best leadership practices involved leaders and were able to do extraordinary things in organizations. The concept of leadership that leads to innovation and change are described as a process where leaders help each other to move forward. In other words, motivational influences can increase motivation by changing how they feel about themselves, which has a direct impact on behavior (Vermeulen et al., 2022).

Principle Competences

In making changes, leaders must have the ability, among the skills needed, namely being able to manage well and see change as strength. In the current era, the competencies needed are not only organizational skills, but also communication that can evoke a leadership crisis in Islamic schools. Educational leadership practices include models of way, inspire a shared vision and challenge the process, which are leadership practices adopted from best leadership practices in overcoming crises.

Table 1. Best Leadership Practices

	1	
Leadership	Operating Definition	
Practice		
Model of Way	Clarifying values and setting the example through: finding own	
	voice, affirming and personifying shared values, and reflection	
	on action	
Inspire a Shared	Envisioning the future through: imagining the possibilities,	
Vision	finding a common purpose, and enlisting others by appealing	
	to common ideals and animating the visio	
Challenge the	Searching for opportunities and taking risk through: seizing	
Process	initiatives, exercising outsight, generating small wins, and	
	learning from experience.	
	A.1. (D. (D. 1. 1. 2020)	

Adopted from: (Dirani et al., 2020)

Transformational leadership requires the ability to deal with more crucial issues about teachers, students, learning and adaptability to global changes. Adapting to technology and changes in society is a difficult situation to rise from an organizational slump. In addition, schools have to spend a lot of money in order to create a competitive education.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach. As stated by Bogdan (2006) a qualitative approach implements systematic investigation of social phenomena in natural settings of individuals or groups. Multicase method was used in this study. According to Yin (2009),

multicase method is used to study phenomena and trace contemporary events through individual cases and theoretical cross-cases.

Before conducting the research, we asked the local Ministry of Education for approval and recommendations for the selection of an Islamic school as a research location. It was recommended that we conducted studies at Khadijah Elementary School located in Surabaya and Muhammadiyah 1 Elementary School Sidoarjo. Both schools were recommended based on 1) having different characteristics organizationally; 2) having a modern curriculum; 3) having succeeded in developing the organization; 4) getting full access in digging data. In addition, the selection of the two locations met very strict criteria, namely in terms of leadership, financial aspects, curriculum and forms of cooperation.

The data collection used in research were interviews, observation and documentation so as to materialize objective data. Interviews were conducted with school principals and stakeholders. Observation and documentation were also utilized in accordance with the focus of the study. Data analysis was done by inductive and interactive categorization stages (Miles et al., 2014) to identify descriptive categories such as leaders and stakeholders making the school's vision and mission, organizational values as a guide in acting to develop schools, curriculum development and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. At the end of the study, member checking was employed for data validation (Catanzaro, 1988).

FINDINGS

Transformational Leadership at SD Khadijah Surabaya

Vision and Mission Strengthening

The existence of a clear vision as a response to global changes is the ideals of the school. The vision mandated by the foundation as the highest corporation. Community involvement with the school is a sign of a harmonious relationship in establishing cooperation to achieve the school's goals. In making the vision and mission of the school, an analysis of needs is carried out which includes an analysis of internal and external, namely the strengths and weaknesses of the school and an external analysis regarding challenges and threats. The analysis is used as a reference for making school programs in the short, medium and long term. As stated by the principal;

"The school was developed from a vision and mission that is in line with the Khadijah foundation. Of course, it cannot be separated from the values of NU, as the core organization. Vision is as a foothold in stepping and determining the direction of the school. With all the elements we carry out internal and external analyzes and put them into short, medium and long term programs."

The basis for this is in accordance with the needs to make school to have competitive advantage and become centers of excellence. The plan launched by the school was to make the school a center of education, have superior and competitive human resources in the midst of global competition. There was a strong desire to develop competitive school at the national and regional levels by developing standards set by the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP). This was conveyed by the vice principal of the school;

"The need to become a quality school is a must, especially in the current era where technology is one of the determining factors for schools to build competitiveness.

Khadijah School is committed to being a center of excellence, especially for schools under the auspices of NU. Doing good planning in human resources, learning, curriculum and infrastructure, so that they are able to compete at the national and regional levels."

The results of interviews, observations and documentation showed that in order to achieve the vision of being a competitive school, the first was to build the facilities and infrastructure which included the procurement of CCTV. The second was to develop the curriculum in the content standards. The third was the development of transformative lesson plans by developing workbooks on math and science. The fourth was setting a minimum KKM of 80. The fifth was to increase graduate competency standards, namely memorizing *juz amma* and *asmaul husna*.

Curriculum Development and Collaboration

In addition, to develop educational standards set by BSNP by making breakthroughs and collaborating with educational institutions both at the national and international levels, the school also made collaboration with national educational institutions, namely SD Lab School and State University of Malang. While international cooperation was conducted by having Ameec International Test, an institution trusted by the Directorate General of Kindergarten-Elementary Institutions to prepare various matters relating to school development and by using Cambridge Exam to do international exams with ID 268 (CIE Center ID 268).

"Seeing the global changes that are happening right now, schools cannot just stand still. It must try to capture change as an opportunity to compete. Changes we make regarding curriculum and learning. For the curriculum, we are collaborating with the national institution SD Lab School, State University of Malang, at the international level collaborating with Ameec International Test (AIT) and Cambridge University."

Collaboration with educational institutions at the national and international levels, namely the formation of an international class program (International Class Program) called ICP which applies to grades 1, 2, 3 and 4. In addition to supporting content and process standards, the national curriculum is used by synergizing the international curriculum from Cambridge University. Synergy by revising the curriculum using a transformative curriculum in grades 3, 4 and 5. Meanwhile, the developing process standards were run by conducting math, science and English workbooks in grades 3, 4 and 5. Facilities and infrastructure were available in schools using technology-based learning. The learning strategy used was Team Teaching which consists of two teachers in each class.

The development of educational standards carried out is a step to prepare superior and competitive human resources at the national and international levels. Therefore, SD Khadijah conducts exams conducted by Cambridge University as a fulfillment of cooperation by conducting tests conducted every semester. The exams conducted were standards set by Cambridge to produce qualified education at an international level. After taking the exam, students get an internationally certified diploma from Cambridge University with ID 268.

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Vision and Mission Strengthening

School changes were based on the vision and mission that became the goals of the school. The vision and mission were clearly stated and oriented towards ideal values, challenging and innovative in nature and used as the basis for preparing school programs. It was carried out with various components of the school, namely the community, school committee, teachers, staff and guardian association (IKWAM). Community and school relations were very close in achieving school goals. This fact was clear from the existence of the Guardian Association (IKWAM) in schools as an institution that functions to accommodate all complaints and aspirations of the community related to schools. With the existence of ikwam as a non-structural institution, schools find it helpful in conveying programs and aspirational networks between student parents and schools. As explained by the principal.

"All school programs are based on the vision and mission of the school that has been determined together, taking into account the SWOT analysis looking at strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Digital change has had a major impact on education and learning. To support school changes, they collaborate with guardians of students called guardian associations (IKWAM), invite together to innovate internal and external parties in order to achieve the school's vision. The school's strong vision is as an Islamic and digital school that maintains Islamic values and has a global outlook."

The results of interviews, observations and documentation confirmed that in making changes, school principal was based on accommodative and participatory traits, namely accommodating all the aspirations and hopes of the community. Realizing what the community wanted based on an analysis of the academic needs of students in the global era was also carried out by the school. This was marked by the ability and understanding and commitment in carrying out leadership duties. This could be seen from the mission of the school which consisted of four matters. Firstly, to create graduates who have knowledge of Islamic teachings stated in the Qur'an and As-Sunnah. Secondly, to create the graduates who possess competitive skills in a global world. Thirdly, to create graduates who can be useful for the society and fourth, to create graduates who have istigomah beliefs.

The school foundations are: first, global challenges include information and technology which are increasing rapidly so that they demand the world of education to make changes. Second, the academic needs of schools, namely demands for educational institutions as a forum to educate students who have skills in a global world. Third, society needs for qualified education.

Curriculum Development and Collaboration

To equip students in the digital era and as a digital school, among programs carried out, the first was networking with educational institutions at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level was done with the MIPA Clinic in Bogor. While at the regional and international level was done with Marshal Cavendish Education from Singapore. The second, strengthening education services through optimal utilization of the internet and ICT tools as learning media and alternative learning tools. Not only that, the P-ISSN : 2722-9564 E- ISSN : 2722-9572

school also optimized communication with parents of students through the bulletin published every semester. Third, curriculum development combining language reinforcement with science and mathematics lessons, which then used as a local content curriculum in the form of math, science lessons in grades 3, 4 and 5. This curriculum development was explained by the school principal.

"The school combines the national curriculum and the curriculum resulting from collaboration with Singapore by strengthening math and science lessons. To understand it requires strong English so that schools use English in mathematics and science. Schools must be able to compete with other educational institutions, for this reason language capital is needed which is applied in teaching mathematics and science. The need for technology in schools is fulfilled so that students are able to recognize and use technology optimally in learning and that is what we call a digital school."

Considered as digital school, SD Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo also conducted sister schools with educational institutions to support learning. The collaboration was carried out with Sri Utama International School Malaysia and Madrasah Al Arabiyah Al Islamiyah Singapore. The implementation of cooperation was conducted by teacher exchanges with the schools mentioned. This teacher exchange focused on the abilities and competencies of teachers in the teaching and learning process and digital learning.

"The school icon as a 'digital school' is tough, but it must be done to be able to compete with other schools. Global changes that are so fast bring schools to be better or vice versa. It takes leaders who are able to make breakthroughs and leaps to make it happen."

The results of the interviews and observations are corroborated by documents showing student achievements at the national and regional levels in the field of robotics. It was strengthened by S who mentioned "in 2022 our students got a silver medal by outperforming 202 participants from 6 countries". This illustrates that to make changes in schools required the ability and commitment of all components.

Transformational Leadership Practices in Islamic Schools

Principals are not only equipped with managerial skills but also need personal and communication skills. In practice, the transformational leadership model is more responsive to changes in the industrial era. Because the principal is able to read the direction of change and determine steps to address current educational problems. The results of research from 2 Islamic schools in practice were first, using the model of way, namely religious values from organizations or foundations as acting norms in school development. Second, using inspire a share vision, namely the school's vision and mission to achieve goals by involving all components. Third, challenge the process, looking at reading and using opportunities to make changes by strengthening cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. All the explanation above can be concluded in table 2 below:

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Tabel 2. Trans	formationa	l Leadersh	ip Practice
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Leadership	SD Khadijah Surabaya	SD Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo
Practice		
Model of Way	Sharing values used in reflecting	Making organizational values a
	on actions by prioritizing	norm of action and school
	exemplary	development
Inspire a	Using vision as joint action to	Making the vision as an aspiration
Shared Vision	determine goals by involving	to achieve goals together by
	stakeholders.	involving IKWAM
Challenge the	Taking advantage of opportunities	Seeing opportunities by reading
Process	by minimizing risks through	changes in order to achieve goals
	collaboration with foreign	by collaborating with Marshal
	institutions Cambridge University	Cavendish Singapore, Sri Utama
		International School and Madrasa
		Al Arabiyah Singapore

DISCUSSION

In the era of disruption, the leadership of school principals was a bigger challenge. It takes the ability to make changes, so it requires strong skills, courage to make decisions and responsive to change (Ackoff, 1999). It requires transformational leadership and as an approach for school leaders to succeed in achieving goals (Leithwood et al., 2004; Simsek, 2013). Principals in this study agreed that their existence was important in carrying out school reforms. They also share that professional development is about leading a school. They received very little training on leadership, so that they had to use more expensive costs. This condition also occurs in Islamic schools which are located on the outskirts of the city, so that their professional skills are reduced and they are unable to compete with other schools.

Organizationally the two schools have differences in the organizational values of NU and Muhammadiyah in traditional-modern terms which indirectly impacted on policies and management in schools. The school principal stated that the training program they received did not substantially change their competence. In addition, leadership material is still out of date for current use. In line with Leithwood et al (2004) comment that the principal's professional development has not had an impact on school change. The leadership model provides benefits and is able to penetrate the culture of the school system and what is needed is transformational leadership (Acton, 2021). Being a school principal not only has the ability to manage learning but, the role as an agent of change (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Rahmi et al., 2019; Sahgal & Pathak, 2007) with the vision of providing exemplary values by personifying shared values. Taking the leap to see the future, the two schools were able to collaborate with international schools in the form of 'sister schools'. This had an impact on learning technology, curriculum, teaching resources and school quality.

Based on the discussion, on the theory of change leadership carried out by experts Fadillah et al (2020), Keller (2006), Rafferty & Griffin (2004), and Vermeulen et al (2022) that the mentioned Islamic schools had implemented this leadership model. Transformational leadership in Islamic schools had a positive impact on managing which P-ISSN : 2722-9564 E- ISSN: 2722-9572 Mu'allimin, Moh. Anwar

caused implications for the quality of learning, learning technology, educators and school competitiveness. In addition, school principals were more responsive to global changes and able to read changes.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided insight into how Islamic school principals are positioned as change leaders, by making efforts to create change in the organization. First, the Principal's Model of Way made the values of religious organizations a shared value in taking action and setting an example for all components of the school. Second, a Shared Vision provided inspiration to all components of the school through a vision and mission to achieve common goals. Third, Challenge the Process read opportunities to minimize risk through regional and international cooperation in aspects of learning, technology, curriculum and resource development. Change leadership was a force for school principals, teachers, students, staff and the community to create leaps and bounds for Islamic education institutions to face crises. Due to limitations in geography and region, so that the practice of change leadership could not be fully implemented considering the cost and psychological impact for teachers in schools. Therefore, interested researchers who want to conduct further study might want to conduct comparative study between provinces or other level of education institutions.

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