

## THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF LEADERS IN MANAGING ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Fina Azizah Dantika<sup>1</sup> dan Mulyawan<sup>2</sup>  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati

<sup>1</sup> [finazd16@gmail.com](mailto:finazd16@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup> [mulyawan@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:mulyawan@uinsgd.ac.id)

### Abstract

An ideal leader is someone whose life and personality can inspire others to emulate. A good leader is authoritative, has a righteous way of life, and is worthy of being a role model. This is not due to their power, prestige, personality, or specific status. On the other hand, most "leadership" in the world today is merely ergonomic, based on the threat of punishment and the promise of reward. The progress of an organization largely depends on its governance and management system. This means that through proactive leadership management, we can produce high-quality human resources. Data collection methods used include interviews, documentation, and observation. Data processing techniques include reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is ensured by credible and confirmable techniques. The research results show that the role of leadership at MIN Bandung is greatly felt by all educators and educational staff. The leader provides guidance to subordinates, is responsible for implementation, and serves as a highly exemplary figure.

Keywords: *Management, Strategic, Leader*

### Abstrak

Seorang pemimpin yang ideal adalah seseorang yang kehidupannya dan kepribadiannya dapat menginspirasi orang lain untuk ditiru. Seorang pemimpin yang baik berwujud, memiliki cara hidup yang benar, dan layak menjadi panutan. Ini bukan karena kekuatan, prestise, kepribadian, atau status spesifik mereka. Di sisi lain, sebagian besar "kepemimpinan" di dunia saat ini hanyalah ergonomis, berdasarkan ancaman hukuman dan janji imbalan. Kemajuan suatu organisasi sangat tergantung pada tata kelola dan sistem manajemennya. Ini berarti bahwa melalui manajemen kepemimpinan proaktif, kita dapat menghasilkan sumber daya manusia yang berkualitas tinggi. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan meliputi wawancara, dokumentasi, dan observasi. Teknik pengolahan data meliputi reduksi, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Validitas data dipastikan dengan teknik yang kredibel dan dapat dikonfirmasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peran kepemimpinan di MIN Bandung sangat dirasakan oleh seluruh tenaga pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan. Pemimpin memberikan bimbingan kepada bawahan, bertanggung jawab atas implementasi, dan berfungsi sebagai sosok yang sangat teladan.

Kata kunci: Manajemen, Strategis, Pemimpin

## A. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are places where society is nurtured, guided, and students are brought to be better (Marlina, 2013). Educational institutions are established by society or the government with the aim of providing formal education to individuals. Leadership is one of the key factors determining the success or failure of an organization. The success of an organization is greatly influenced by leadership. Leadership involves both leaders and followers (Febrianty, 2020). Leadership is the activity or art of influencing others to willingly cooperate, based on an individual's ability to lead others to achieve the desired group goals.

Moreover, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (Arifudin, 2021) stated that leadership is a very important force behind the strength of various organizations and the efforts they can make to create effective organizations. This involves reaching a new vision and then mobilizing the organization to achieve this new vision. Education is a process of transferring knowledge, culture, and moral values (Irwansyah, 2021). Education is crucial because it allows society to learn more about the meaning of life. Education is classified into three types: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education (Tanjung, 2020).

Based on the above, we can draw a connection: 'Leadership in education' refers to the skills and processes of influencing, guiding, coordinating, and mobilizing others, and is linked to the development of educational knowledge. The organization and implementation of education activities aim to achieve educational goals more effectively. Effective educational administration is carried out through management, particularly the role of educational leaders. The etymology of management is "to manage," which means "to organize." Management is a process to achieve desired goals by organizing through processes and structured based on management functions (Hasibuan, 2016). Management involves the use of administrative functions (planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling) to manage all resources within an organization so that it can organize, control, communicate, and utilize objectives effectively and efficiently (Kristiawan, 2017).

Etymologically, the word management comes from an English term that means to manage. The root word is 'manage' or 'managiare,' meaning: to train a horse to move its feet. The term management has three meanings: mind, behavior, and attitude (Masyhud, 2014). In Arabic, administration is referred to as *idaarah*, derived from the word *adaara*, which means the management of an organization or the act of managing (Ma'shum, 1997). Organizational leadership and management are very important themes in management (Tanjung, 2021). The progress of an organization greatly depends on its governance and management system. This means that through proactive leadership management, we can produce high-quality human resources, leading to the automatic advancement and development of the organization. Conversely, if leadership management is less active, the institution will fail to achieve effective management.

In Islamic educational institutions, effective leadership management conceptually provides dimensions of technical skills and personal skills across all areas. However, in practice, the effectiveness of management activities and their impact on organizational performance greatly depend on the manager's sensitivity in utilizing their personal skills (Ulfah, 2022).

Leadership is an inherent trait of a leader. Robbins, as cited in Na'im (2021), states that leadership is the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals. Islam provides guidance through the Quran and Sunnah on various matters related to leadership. According to Islamic teachings, becoming a leader is a natural disposition for humans, as stated by Allah SWT in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30, which means: "And (mention) when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.' They said, 'Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?' He said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know.'"

In another verse, the superiority of humans over other creatures of Allah SWT is explained, justifying the assertion that humans are fit to be leaders. Allah SWT commanded the angels and Iblis to bow down to Adam (humankind), as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 34, which means: "And (mention) when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam'; so they prostrated, except for Iblis.

He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers."

Muslims have the best role model of leadership in the person of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The principle of exemplary leadership demonstrated by the Prophet SAW is the best principle of leadership, where a leader must set an example for his followers. This is reflected in the Quran in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21, which means: "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often."

Islam has specific criteria for selecting a good leader. According to Islamic teachings, the criteria for a good leader are aligned with the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which are:

a) Shidiq: Truthfulness and sincerity in attitude, speech, and actions in carrying out their duties.

b) Amanah: Trustworthiness, which means maintaining and safeguarding what is entrusted to them by both the people they lead and, most importantly, by Allah SWT.

c) Fathonah: Intelligence, competence, and skillfulness that produce the ability to face and resolve emerging issues.

d) Tabligh: Honest and responsible communication about all actions taken (accountability and transparency).

In relation to leadership, a leader possesses the characteristic of constantly striving to create something new (Arifudin, 2020). The ideas and concepts they have are not imitations of others but originate from within themselves. They continually endeavor to develop everything they do and instill trust in their subordinates, fostering belief among their members. They maintain ideas and thoughts from a long-term perspective. Leaders ask their subordinates "what" and "why". They challenge complacency, are never satisfied with the status quo, take responsibility for their subordinates' actions, and uphold what is right. Furthermore, Fahmi explains that one of the characteristics a leader must have is being a decision maker, meaning they can make the best decisions when needed (Fahmi, 2013).

Additionally, research by Suharnomo (2004) describes the following characteristics of

leadership: a) Intelligence (smartness), leaders generally are relatively smarter than their followers on average. b) They possess motivation and internal desire to achieve, meaning leaders have a strong drive to accomplish tasks. c) Emotional maturity and broad social vision. Leaders are generally emotionally mature, capable of managing critical situations, and they typically have confidence and self-belief. d) They possess the ability to establish relationships among people. Leaders understand that achieving goals depends heavily on others, thus they always seek to understand others. Furthermore, O'Toole (in Bairizki, 2021) explains several characteristics that leaders should possess: integrity, trust, listening, and respecting followers.

On the other hand, according to Bass (in Hasbi, 2021), there are four characteristics of transformational leadership: a) Idealized influence, where a leader acts and sets an example through behavior for their subordinates. b) Inspirational motivation, where a leader inspires their subordinates by clearly communicating goals and expectations. c) Intellectual stimulation, where a leader creates a conducive climate for the development of innovation and creativity. d) Individualized consideration, where a leader pays special attention to the needs of each individual to participate and develop.

These four leadership characteristics are believed to create stronger organizations capable of adapting to new changes. Considering the various characteristics of leadership presented by these experts, it can be inferred that the characteristics of leadership generally have similar meanings, differing mainly in quantity and choice of words.

Based on research findings, leadership management in educational institutions serves as a benchmark for the quality of these institutions. It greatly depends on management. Many problems in educational institutions arise from inappropriate goals and policies set by the institution's managers. To address these issues, further research is needed to ensure that Islamic educational institutions are of high quality and relevant to societal life.

## B. GOALS

The research aims to highlight various objectives, particularly regarding the strategies of a leader in managing a specific educational institution. These objectives include:

Identifying Effective Leadership Styles (Determine the most effective leadership styles within various organizational contexts), Analyzing the Impact of Leadership on Organizational Performance (Examine how leadership strategies influence the overall performance of the organization), Evaluating Leadership Communication (Assess the effectiveness of leaders' communication in conveying the institution's vision, mission, and goals), Assessing Decision-Making Processes (Analyze how leaders make strategic decisions and their impact on the organization, Investigate the involvement of the team in decision-making processes and its effects on performance and job satisfaction), Exploring Team Development Methods (Study various methods used by leaders to develop the skills and capabilities of team members, Evaluate the effectiveness of training and mentoring programs in improving team performance), Identifying Challenges in Change Management (Investigate the challenges faced by leaders in managing organizational change, Develop strategies to overcome resistance to change and ensure successful transitions) Exploring Team Empowerment (Study the impact of empowering team members on motivation, productivity, and performance, Identify ways to enhance individual autonomy and responsibility within the team), Investigating Leadership Based on Ethics and Integrity (Analyze the importance of ethics and integrity in leadership, Evaluate the impact of ethical leadership on organizational culture and team trust ), Developing Adaptive Leadership Models (Study leaders' ability to adapt to changing situations and conditions, Develop leadership models that are flexible and responsive to organizational dynamics), Evaluating Conflict Management by Leaders (Analyze strategies used by leaders to manage and resolve conflicts within the organization, Evaluate the effectiveness of conflict management approaches in creating a healthy work environment).

### C. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the role of leadership management in managing Islamic educational institutions. The research objects are divided into formal and material objects (Arifudin, 2018). The formal object in this study consists of data related to a critical review of the role of leadership management in the management of Islamic educational institutions. The material object involves a critical review of the sources of data concerning the role of leadership management in managing Islamic educational institutions.

Data collection techniques used in this study include:

1. Interviews: Conducted to gather information on how leaders manage Islamic educational institutions.
2. Documentation: Involves collecting data on the profiles of the madrasahs and their syllabi.
3. Observation: Employed to observe the process of school leadership at MIN Bandung.

### D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A leader's strategy in managing an institution involves a comprehensive and sustainable approach to achieve educational goals through various programs aimed at enhancing or developing all school resources. This strategy is reflected in the vision, mission, and objectives of MIN Bandung, both in the short and long term.

MIN Bandung implements and has objectives that will make it an outstanding institution. MIN Bandung has seven visions centered on developing children's character in accordance with Islamic principles. These visions include: having strong faith and practicing Islam accurately and reliably, realizing honorable ethics in social and national life, being creative and competitive, having talents and non-academic abilities according to their interests, creating high-quality teaching and educational staff, creating a healthy and comfortable environment, by focusing on these visions, MIN Bandung aims to build a strong foundation for its students, enabling them to thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.

The research was conducted at MIN Bandung, focusing on the capabilities of a leader who can be considered ideal for the educators and staff at the institution. The madrasah leader, such as the principal, is responsible for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This is achieved by the principal of MIN Bandung, who facilitates the professional development of teachers and ensures an effective curriculum. However, ultimately, it is not the madrasah institution that organizes this.

As stated by Mr. Adang (Deputy Principal for Curriculum at MIN Bandung), he said: "The presence of the principal is truly admired and eagerly awaited every day. Mr. Ceceng (Principal of MIN Bandung) is indeed a leader who has ultimately led this institution to become a superior one that can compete with other institutions." This

is proven by the fact that if we look for the school named MIN Bandung, it appears simple but has become a repository of achievements for the students studying there, and this is an undeniable accomplishment.

Mr. Adang also mentioned that, “He is a humble person with everyone. People might be intimidated by him at first, but once they engage with him, time flies by unnoticed because he creates a very comfortable atmosphere. Moreover, any decision he makes is a collective decision. He calls for meetings to discuss issues and decide on the actions the institution should take, even though humans are not free from mistakes.”

The principal of MIN Bandung has successfully managed the operational aspects of the school. He is also courageous and capable of proposing the expansion of classroom facilities, which are currently insufficient to accommodate the students who have registered for the new academic year. “The number of applicants this year is overwhelming. In fact, this year, we (the school) are using the prayer room or musholla as a classroom. I, along with the team, decided to request the relevant authorities for a plan to expand and build additional classrooms so that MIN Bandung can accommodate the aspirations of the community and the students who are interested in studying here,” said Mr. Aceng, the principal, in an interview.

The madrasah leader must also manage the school's operational aspects, including financial management, infrastructure, and administration. By appointing several individuals within the school organization, the principal of MIN Bandung is able to inspire and motivate staff and students to reach their full potential and create a positive learning environment. This is evidenced by the numerous achievements of the students. Not only the students, but the teachers at the institution are also able to compete with surrounding educational institutions, with some being selected as Madrasah supervisors in Bandung Regency. They had to compete with teachers from other schools but were capable and chosen to carry out this significant responsibility.

Evaluating the vision and mission of MIN Bandung focuses on creating a quality school environment, demonstrated through successful program implementations achieved through effective coordination among all aspects within the school environment. The quality of a school depends on how the school operates. Resource management and relevant learning are crucial for achieving good

learning outcomes (Gulnaz, 2014). High-quality schools are measured by two critical factors: the quality of the process and the outcomes of the education system within the school (Euis, 2013). Quality education stems from well-planned execution by educators with high-quality components.

The evaluation of MIN Bandung's implementation of its vision and mission regarding educational quality can be seen through several aspects. Firstly, the aspect of successful quality is marked by the progress of all work programs based on key performance indicators that indicate the successful completion of each work program. Secondly, the achievements of MIN Bandung students in various competitions serve as evidence of its educational quality. Thirdly, there are achievements by teachers at the madrasah level, as indicated by three facilitators from the Kab. Bandung district at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah level, all originating from MIN Bandung.

The principal plays a crucial role as someone who can monitor the implementation of activities and programs within the institution. This means that every principal must thoroughly supervise all forms of execution within the school.

According to Mrs. Hesti in her interview: "The monitoring process of MIN Bandung's programs typically carried out by the principal involves several steps:

**Program Evaluation:** At the end of the academic year, just before the holidays, MIN Bandung takes steps to evaluate the effectiveness of its work programs. This evaluation is led by the principal and is based on assessing how well the planned activities (results) have been achieved throughout the year. The results of this evaluation are used as a basis for departments to continue or develop other work programs that align with the school's vision, mission, and goals. The school's work program plans should aim at improving the quality of the institution, which can be marked by producing high-quality graduates who are well-prepared for the future. The outcomes of these evaluations guide the development and adjustment of future programs to ensure they remain relevant and effective in achieving the institution's objectives. By focusing on continuous improvement, MIN Bandung aims to enhance the quality of its graduates and better prepare them for their future endeavors.

The leadership qualities exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are certainly possessed by the principal of MIN Bandung, even though perfection

is far from being claimed. The characteristic of **Shiddiq** (truthfulness) is always evident in his decision-making processes within the institution. The characteristic of **Tabligh** (conveying the message) is executed very neatly and systematically when communicating decisions on policies.

His humble nature and the affection he receives from everyone signify that the principal of MIN Bandung possesses the trait of **Amanah** (trustworthiness). This trait is not only seen as a duty of the principal but is also implemented in his personal conduct. Intelligence, or **Fathonah**, is another essential quality that he embodies. He serves as a role model for both his staff and students.

An additional commendable quality is his willingness and desire to continue teaching. Despite his administrative responsibilities, he still requests teaching hours to interact with his students in the classroom. This is a commitment that not many principals are able or willing to make.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study highlights the principal of MIN Bandung as a leader who embodies qualities reminiscent of Prophet Muhammad SAW's leadership. While acknowledging imperfections, the principal sets a commendable example and serves as a moral compass for his staff and students. His proactive approach in teaching further underscores his dedication and commitment to fostering a supportive learning environment.

Future research could explore more deeply how Islamic leadership principles can be effectively integrated into modern educational contexts, emphasizing practical applications and outcomes in school management and community development. This would contribute to enhancing educational leadership practices that promote both academic achievement and moral integrity within Islamic educational institutions

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