

## The Principal's Leadership Style in Improving the Quality of Education

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the leadership style of school principals: (1) the leadership style of school principals who have integrity in improving the quality of education; (2) the leadership style of the principal who is virtuous in improving the quality of education; and (3) the leadership style of the principal who has the ability to improve the quality of education. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. The results obtained from this study are: (1) the integrity leadership style of the principal at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, is quite consistent between what is said and what is done, namely if the principal says "next month the RA children will take part in the hajj". So, he will carry it out, because the hajj *manasik* education program is an annual activity organized by RA as an integral part of the RA Curriculum. This program is held every year to enrich students' understanding of hajj from an early age; (2) The Virtue leadership style of the principal at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, is quite in accordance with the definition of the Virtue leadership style, namely the RA principal who is very wise and very protective of his subordinates; and (3) the leadership style of the principal's ability at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, which is quite in accordance with the definition of leadership style ability. The Principal of RA School, who has been very experienced in teaching for approximately 18 years, is undoubtedly capable of handling RA children.

**Keywords:** Education, Leadership, Principal, Quality

### A. Introduction

Education in Indonesia has a very crucial role in nation building, especially in the development of human resources (Octavia & Savira, 2017). Education is a fundamental need that is very important for human life. Humans, in essence, do not depend solely on nature without the additional influence of other factors (Wibowo, 2020). Quality education is education that is able to meet the expectations and needs of the community. To realize these expectations, schools and teachers must have high expectations for students (Amrullah, 2018). Education is a very important human need in life. Humans basically do not only depend on nature without any other influence.

In this educational process, there is an influence from other humans that will bring a change in attitude to the humans he influences (Handayani et al., 2018). Education plays an important role in improving the quality of human life and supporting the economic evolution and social development of a country (Muhammaditya & Hardjosoekarto, 2021).

Education has a crucial role in shaping individual character. The quality of education greatly affects the formation of a person's character in accordance with applicable normative standards. Awareness of this makes the government very serious in taking care of the education sector. With a quality education system, it is hoped that the next generation will be born who have good quality and ability to adapt to social, national, and state life (Kahar, 2021).

Education is a vital means in the development of human resources, becoming an inseparable need of human life to educate the nation and form individuals who are skilled in their fields. Efforts to improve the quality of education continue to be carried out, both through conventional and innovative methods. A well-managed school, both in terms of learning, human resources such as educators, and management, will produce quality students who are able to compete in a more challenging and complex environment (Sustisna et al., 2023). School quality improvement needs to be planned and implemented in accordance with work goals and targets to be achieved based on the vision, mission, and goals that have been set within a certain period of time. Improvement efforts to improve the quality of education must be carried out with strong determination, despite facing many challenges. Many want to change conditions for the better, but often do not want to change themselves to achieve these goals (Kurniawati et al., 2020).

The presence of a leader is indispensable in an organization because it is the leader who determines the direction that the organization will take. Leadership itself is a person's activity in influencing and moving all members to achieve the goals that have been set (Sudharta, 2017).

Educational leadership in schools, also known as principals, plays a role in organizing schools and their personnel to work efficiently, democratically, and with institutional cooperation that relies on the expertise of workers. Under his leadership, educational programs for students must be well planned, organized, and managed. In the implementation of the program, a good school principal must be able to lead the teaching staff professionally, work scientifically, attentively, and democratically, with a focus on improving the quality of education. Thus, the principal is theoretically responsible for the implementation of all educational programs in the school (Azizan et al., 2022). Leadership is a very important aspect in an institution. The presence of leadership in an institution plays a role in determining the success of the institution. For example, in an organization, a leader is responsible for planning, organizing,

executing, supervising, and evaluating. Thus, the management aspect in the institution will be well managed (Stocks, 2022).

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 28 of 2010 concerning the assignment of school principals function as leaders and managers who have an important role in realizing the school's vision and mission. This regulation states that a school principal is a teacher who is given additional duties to lead and manage a school or madrasah to improve the quality of education. Managing a school or madrasah requires a leadership model and style that is based on certain values. The soft dimension that affects individual performance and the quality of education includes values, beliefs, norms, and quality culture. The formation of a school quality culture is a combination of values, beliefs, assumptions, understandings, and expectations believed by school residents. This is used as a guideline in their behavior and solving internal and external problems, as well as being the basis for changes in their personal or group life (Said, 2019).

An educational institution is an entity consisting of various organizational elements that are interrelated and inseparable. This organizational relationship is an important factor that affects the achievement of the goals of educational institutions in accordance with the mandate of the Constitution and Pancasila. Therefore, it is necessary to have the right strategy, efficient, and creative in the application of leadership styles. Leadership style is a strategy or approach taken by leaders in implementing policies that have been set. The school's achievement is greatly influenced by leaders who have strong commitment and integrity in improving all potential organizational resources. A school leader must be able to apply leadership skills, including a) technical skills; b) human skills; and c) conceptual skills (Yandrizal et al., 2021).

The principal plays a very crucial role in mobilizing and harmonizing all educational resources available in the school, as well as using them as needed. In other words, the leadership of the principal is a key factor in realizing the school's vision, mission, goals, and goals through programs that are planned and implemented in stages. School principals must have adequate management and leadership skills to be able to take initiatives and steps to improve the quality of education in schools. Leadership is the core that is the center of the organization's movement in achieving goals. In the context of school principals, leadership plays a role in creating opportunities to hold effective meetings with teachers in a conducive environment. The behavior of the principal must be able to encourage the performance of teachers by showing a friendly, close, and considerate attitude towards teachers, both as individuals and groups. Instrumental behavior includes tasks that are oriented and directly clarified in their roles (Sanjani, 2019).

A leader, such as a school principal, must have quality standards that are an essential

element for the progress of the school he leads. The principal must have a leadership attitude such as being honest, trustworthy in carrying out his duties, and sincere in every job, so that he does not feel burdened in his activities (Latifah, 2022).

The school requires a qualified principal who has in-depth knowledge of school management to achieve optimal achievement and performance (Loca et al., 2022). Leadership style is a process that involves an element of influence. With the application of leadership styles in the organization, cooperation will be established and the vision and mission can be realized to achieve common goals. The role of the principal is likened to the heart or leader of an educational organization, where the policy will direct the school to achieve the goals that have been set. Leadership in the organization will improve performance, motivate, and direct subordinates to be more competent in achieving goals and more responsible for their work results (Suryadhiningrat et al., 2022).

Leadership style is a characteristic of a person in influencing others or organizations so that they are willing and able to move and emulate their personal attitudes and traits to achieve goals. Leadership style is a norm of behavior that a person uses when influencing others (Ali et al., 2015).

School principals need adequate competence to handle every problem and school development. The required competencies include (1) personal competence, (2) managerial, (3) supervision, (4) entrepreneurship, and (5) social (Wiyono, 2017). In addition, Ross and Cozzens' (2016) research identifies the main competencies that school principals must have (1) assessment, (2) instructional leadership, (3) unity of purpose, (4) visionary leadership, (5) diversity, (6) learning community, (7) reflection, (8) organizational management, (9) professional development, (10) collaboration, (11) curriculum and instruction, and (12) professionalism. However, the reality is that many school principals in Indonesia do not know how to use their authority to manage schools because they are afraid of making changes (Gaol, 2017). Leadership style is a specific method necessary to influence, encourage, direct, and motivate (Rosaliawati et al., 2020).

The principal is a functional teacher assigned to lead a school, where the teaching and learning process takes place and the interaction between the teacher who teaches and the students who learn. The success of education in schools is highly dependent on the ability of the principal to manage the existing education personnel. School principals are one of the important components in education that play a role in improving teacher performance (Nur et al., 2016). The principal is a functional teacher assigned to lead a school, where the teaching and learning process takes place and the interaction between the teacher who teaches and the students who learn. The success of education in schools is highly dependent on the ability of the principal to manage the existing education personnel. School principals are one of the important

components in education that play a role in improving teacher performance (Simatupang et al., 2023).

According to (Sudadi, 2018) several factors to identify trust in a leader, 1) integrity, it refers to honesty and truthfulness. It is considered the most important element by many. Leaders with integrity are those who are consistent between what is said and what is done; 2) virtue, it means that a leader can attract the attention of his followers even when he is not with them. An example is a leader who cares, supports his followers, and builds strong emotional bonds; 3) ability, it includes knowledge and expertise in work as well as interpersonal ability. Leaders who have expertise and confidence in their abilities will make their followers or subordinates also confident and work effectively.

To ensure the quality and quality of education, serious attention is needed from education providers, the government, and the community. In the current national education system, focusing on quality and quality is not only the responsibility of Higher Education and the government, but is the result of synergy between various components, including the community. To carry out quality assurance, systematic and planned activities in the form of quality management are needed (Rabiah, 2019).

In an effort to improve the quality of education, the duties of school principals can be divided into two main aspects, namely work in the field of school administration and professional development of education. School principals must be able to foster cooperation with all personnel in an open climate that is a partnership and increase the active participation of students' parents. Thus, the principal can get full support for each of his work programs. The involvement of school principals in the student learning process is more directly carried out through coaching teachers and efforts to provide the necessary learning facilities (Sutisna et al., 2023).

Education is a conscious effort to prepare learners through mentorship, teaching, or training for their future roles. Education is an initiative designed by the government to educate and advance the nation. A country can be considered advanced if it puts education as a top priority, because without education, a nation will not be able to manage its natural resources. In addition, if Indonesia's young generation does not have adequate skills, this can be an obstacle to national development. The facts show that many developed countries are developing rapidly not only because they have abundant natural resources, but also because they are supported by the intellect, discipline, and work ethic of their people (Sulastri et al., 2020).

These laws and government regulations emphasize the importance of improving the quality of learning to improve the quality of education in schools. This good effort from the government needs to be followed up by educational institutions, both public and private, by holding scientific activities such as seminars, training, and workshops

that can develop teachers' potential in a sustainable manner. Thus, teachers will become professionals who are able to improve the quality of learning in schools, which will ultimately realize the improvement of the quality of education (Barlian, 2022).

The decline in the overall quality of education in Indonesia and the lack of high quality education in particular can be caused by the poor national education system and the lack of adequate human resources (Suparliadi, 2021). Education quality is a standard for evaluating the success of an education system which includes all aspects ranging from initial resources, the learning process, to the final results produced from the process (Rosaliawati et al., 2020).

In schools, the education personnel who play the most role and greatly determine the quality of education are teachers and principals. School effectiveness refers to the empowerment of all components of the school as an organization where learning is placed, based on their main tasks and functions in the program structure. The goal is for students to learn and achieve the results that have been set, namely having competence. An effective school is a school that is able to empower every important component, both internally and externally, and has a good, transparent, and accountable management system in order to achieve the school's vision, mission, and goals effectively and efficiently (Debataraja, 2024).

The principal is the key to the success of a school or educational institution. The achievement of school goals and quality is greatly influenced by the leadership of the principal, which aims to improve the quality of education. Schools or educational institutions are not only limited to public schools, but also include Islamic boarding schools that prioritize Islamic religious education while still using an integrated curriculum like other formal schools. The quality of education in public and private schools is influenced by the role of the principal who must be able to play the role of manager and leader. An institution with good quality must have good principal leadership, so the role of the principal greatly determines the success of the quality of education in the school (Syarifah & Hasanah, 2020).

In the context of education, quality includes educational inputs, processes, and outputs. Educational input includes everything that must be available to support the ongoing educational process, such as the school's organizational structure, laws and regulations, vision, mission, goals, and goals to be achieved. Therefore, the high quality of the input can be measured from the level of readiness of the input. However, the education quality indicator shows an improvement, which means that the quality of education is the ability of the education system to be effectively directed to increase the added value of input factors in order to produce maximum output. Quality education is not only seen from the quality of its graduates but also includes how educational institutions are able to meet customer needs in accordance with applicable

quality standards. Customers in this case are internal customers (education personnel) and external customers (students, parents, the community, and graduate users) (Ilham, 2021).

The quality of education can be realized with the comprehensive support of all elements involved in a well-structured education system. Components such as inputs, processes, and outputs need to get full support from parties who have an important role in educational institutions. However, it should be noted that the evaluation of the quality of education is not only based on academic achievement such as the entry of students into leading universities, but also needs to add indicators of religious values that have been instilled in students. This is important because without awareness of religious values, even if the student has extraordinary achievements, there is still a worrying risk of morality. Therefore, educational institutions, especially at the secondary level, need to integrate religious values through activities that encourage religious culture as part of habituation in education (Fathurrohman, 2016). Product quality is the suitability of product use (fitness for use) to meet customer needs and satisfaction. The suitability of the use of this product is based on five main characteristics (1) technology, which includes strength, (2) psychological, which includes image or status, (3) time, which includes reliability, (4) contractual, which includes the existence of guarantees, and (5) ethics, which includes manners (Turmidzi, 2021).

Quality is a comprehensive description of a good or service that reflects its ability to satisfy the needs of users. In the context of education in schools, the quality of education always refers to the standards of educational services that are in accordance with the goals or benefits of education itself (Abdullah, 2018).

Quality is an aspect that distinguishes between good and bad products. A product is considered quality if it can provide satisfaction to consumers in accordance with the standards that have been set (Noprika et al., 2020). The quality of education can be measured by how effective the management of the education system, through School-Based Management (SBM), has an impact on student learning achievement optimally. One way to measure the quality of education is through the results of the evaluation of the final exam which is assessed through the National Final Exam. Although this monitoring activity does not directly measure educational output in terms of student academic achievement, educational relevance refers to the extent to which educational outcomes can meet the needs of society in various fields, such as graduate income, graduate skills, economic growth, and unemployment reduction (Samsidar, 2018).

## **B. Methods**

The approach used by the author in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data by observing the

speech, writing, and behavior of the observed people. This approach is expected to produce an in-depth description of the speech, writing, and behavior that can be observed from individuals, groups, communities, analysis unit organizations, as well as several relevant journals (Diki et al., 2023). Furthermore, the data obtained is recorded and analyzed according to the observed context.

The data collection technique was carried out through observation of the areas involved as comparative data, as well as in-depth interviews to obtain more detailed information. In addition, documentation techniques are used as comparative data, which involves reducing analysis, presentation, and drawing conclusions from the data obtained (Yandrizal et al., 2021).

### **C. Results and Discussion**

#### **Leadership Style of School Principals with Integrity in Improving the Quality of Education**

Stephen R. Covey Defining integrity as being integrated around principles. Integrity itself is a derivative of humility and courage. Humility means acknowledging the existence of natural laws or principles that govern the universe. Courage is needed to live according to these principles, because there are still many social, moral, and value norms around us that contradict these principles. From this integrity comes wisdom and abundance mentality) (Syarkani & Wulandari, 2019). Integrity, it refers to honesty and truthfulness. It is considered the most important element by many. Leaders with integrity are those who are consistent between what is said and what is done.

Based on the results of the research carried out, it is known that the level of leadership style of the integrity of the principal at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, is quite consistent between what is said and what is done, namely if the principal says "next month the RA children will take part in the hajj manasik". So, he will carry it out, because the hajj manasik education program is an annual activity organized by RA as an integral part of the RA Curriculum. This program is held every year to enrich students' understanding of Hajj from an early age.

#### **The Leadership Style of School Principals with Virtue in Improving the Quality of Education**

Virtue, it means that a leader can attract the attention of his followers even when he is not with them. An example is a leader who cares, supports his followers, and builds strong emotional bonds. Virtue leadership means a leader must have a warmth of heart that is reflected in thoughtful behavior toward others.

Based on the results of the research carried out, it is known that the level of virtue

leadership style of the principal at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, is quite in accordance with the definition of the Virtue leadership style, namely the RA principal who is very wise and very protective of his subordinates.

### **Leadership Style of School Principals with Ability to Improve the Quality of Education**

Ability, it includes knowledge and expertise in work as well as interpersonal skills. Leaders who have expertise and confidence in their abilities will make their followers or subordinates also confident and work effectively. A person's abilities play a role in determining behavior and results achieved. Ability refers to a person's innate talent to perform an activity physically or mentally, which is obtained from birth, learning, and experience, ability is an individual's capacity to carry out tasks in a particular job (Rodiyana & Puspitasari, 2021).

Based on the results of the research carried out, it is known that the level of leadership style of the principal at RA AL-Muttaqin Palembang, is quite in accordance with the definition of the leadership style of Ability. The principal of RA who has been very experienced in teaching, which is approximately 18 years, is undoubtedly his ability to cope with RA children.

### **D. Conclusion**

From the results of the above findings, it can be concluded that (1) the leadership style of school principals with integrity in improving the quality of education is achieved through honesty and truth, which is considered the most important element by many people. Leaders with integrity are those who are consistent between what they say and do; (2) the leadership style of the principal with virtue in improving the quality of education is carried out by showing concern and support to his followers, as well as building strong emotional bonds; (3) the leadership style of the principal with the ability to improve the quality of education is achieved through knowledge and expertise in work as well as interpersonal skills. A leader who has expertise and believes in his abilities will make his followers or subordinates also believe and work effectively.

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