



Leadership Style in Improving the Quality of Education at SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh

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Abstrak

Pendidikan merupakan proses yang disengaja untuk mengembangkan potensi peserta didik. Peran penting kepala sekolah dalam lembaga pendidikan memastikan tercapainya pendidikan bermutu. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi berbagai gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan strategi yang diterapkan untuk meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh, Kabupaten Sragen, Jawa Tengah. Metode penelitian lapangan digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Hasilnya ditemukan bahwa kepemimpinan demokratis yang inklusif dan berorientasi kekeluargaan telah berhasil menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang kondusif bagi pertumbuhan dan inovasi. Kepala sekolah yang efektif mampu mengintegrasikan visi pendidikan dengan praktek sehari-hari di sekolah, mendorong kolaborasi yang kuat antara staf dan siswa, serta membangun lingkungan yang mendukung inovasi dan pembelajaran yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan; Kepala Sekolah; Mutu Pendidikan

Abstract

Education is a deliberate process aimed at developing the potential of students. The principal's significant role in educational institutions ensures the achievement of quality education. The purpose of this research is to explore various leadership styles and strategies implemented by the principal to improve the quality of education at SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh, Sragen Regency, Central Java. Field research methods were used to collect data through interviews, observations, and documentation, with a qualitative descriptive approach. The results found that inclusive, democratic leadership with a family-oriented approach successfully created a conducive school environment for growth and innovation. An effective principal can integrate the educational vision with daily practices at the school, foster strong collaboration between staff and students, and build an environment that supports innovation and continuous learning.

Keywords: Leadership Style; School Principal; Quality Education

Introduction

Education is a deliberate learning process to develop every potential that exists in students, for this reason in an educational institution, an important role lies in the leadership of the head. (Zarnazi et al., 2024). Education is an important discussion, considering that education is a human urgency in achieving life goals. Education in schools can be perfectly structured

and achieved which depends on the leadership of a school principal.

A professional principal will deliver quality education. The quality of school principals who can lead well will influence improving the quality and success of an educational institution. (Fitriyah & Santosa, 2020), (Mariana, 2021), (Muftahu, 2020).

In achieving improved quality of education, school principals must have a leadership style that can balance between managers and leaders. (Octavia & Savira, 2016). A school principal must also have a strategy with millions of innovations, able to see every change in the situation and conditions that will be faced by his institution in the future.

The strategy of the principal in leading the school produces a good image of the view of any institution to the school it is taught. The formulation of a strategy is not necessarily from the perspective of a mere school principal. The existence of a discussion forum with teachers provides a breakthrough in improving the quality of schools.

The principal as a leader has a strategic role in directing, managing, and facilitating various programs and policies that aim to improve the quality of education. (Leithwood et al., 2020). In this overall case, of course, quality education is produced by the leadership of quality school principals, quality school principals are professional. ones (Waston & Taryanto, 2019). A professional principal can manage and develop the school comprehensively or comprehensively.

Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Plupuh District, Sragen Regency, Central Java is one of the educational institutions that has great potential to develop. This school carries out a vision and mission to not only provide superior academic education but also instill strong Islamic values in its students. Based on the existing vision, students are also trained to excel, be independent, modern, and Islamic. With this vision, this Islamic-based school can realize it with the right Islamic education.

In recent years, there has been increased attention to how the leadership of the principal can contribute significantly to improving the quality of education in these schools. This can be seen from the acceptance of the number of students, in 2024 it is known that there are only 4 9th-grade students, then 8th-grade students are 8 people, and 7th-grade students are 18 people. The difference in the number of students from this level can be a benchmark for improving the quality of education.

The challenges that school principals usually face are related to budget limitations, lack of participation from the community, and resistance to changing times. As research

conducted by Agus Setyo Wibowo, Nurul Latifatul Inayati (Wibowo & Inayati, 2023) Research shows that effective principal leadership improves the quality of education by motivating teachers and students and creating a conducive learning environment. A school principal needs to manage human resources, design innovative programs, and establish good relationships with all relevant parties. Leadership training and support from relevant parties are essential to achieve more optimal educational goals.

Then Mukhlisin (2024) in his research also stated that a school principal is a leader in an educational institution who has a role and strategy to improve the quality of education. The figure of the school principal must have authority in leading the school organization. The role of the principal as a leader is very crucial in the implementation of quality education. Teachers and staff position themselves to help support the achievement of quality education. Quality education has outputs in the form of academic competency achievements and non-academic competency achievements. These achievements are in the form of internal and external achievements of the school.

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the leadership style of the principal at SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah to improve the quality of education. The novelty in this study is in the form of a deeper exploration of the leadership style and implementation applied by the principal. This is done in order to be able to obtain concrete data so that this research can make a meaningful contribution to the development of educational leadership science and more effective school management practices.

Method

The research used uses field research. Researchers directly interact with the research object to collect data in the field. (Van De Ven & Poole, 2017). The focus of this study is education, using a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach aims to accurately describe reality based on appropriate techniques and data analysis. (Sugiyono, 2019). With this approach, the researcher will provide an appropriate description based on the analysis of the data that has been obtained.

The data analysis process in qualitative research begins with the preparation of the

proposal, followed by data collection in the field until all the necessary data is obtained. The data collection methods in this study include interviews, observations, and documentation. The research was carried out at Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Plupuh District, Sragen Regency. The data analysis used is interactive analysis, which involves three main components: data reduction, data presentation (data display), data validity test, and conclusion drawing. (Sugiyono, 2019).

Result and Discussion

Quality of Education

Quality in general has the meaning of the level (degree) of a product in the form of goods or services. Related to education, quality is something that is aimed at the process and results of education. Quality education is education that focuses on students, the education is able to serve, meet, and meet the expectations of various parties. (Megawati, 2022). In the process of improving the quality of education, schools must have a well-programmed plan, including answering the challenges of the times that continue to progress. So that with this, the inputs, processes, and outputs of the quality of human resources continue to increase through education (Amon & Harlyansyah, 2022).

In order to improve the quality of an organization, there is a crucial role of a leader. A leader must certainly have a leadership spirit. Leadership is a person's ability and readiness which includes influencing, encouraging, inviting, moving, guiding, and sometimes also forcing his will on others which can then help certain purposes or goals. (Utu & Sintasari, 2021). Thus, leadership in an educational institution greatly determines the success or failure of an educational institution, especially in realizing its goals and ideals. (Arafat & Wardiah, 2021).

At the national level, the quality of education in Indonesia refers to Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards (SNP), which includes the following aspects:

To find out that the quality of education has improved, several indicators are needed, including:

1. Graduate Competency Standards: This criterion establishes the qualifications of graduates' abilities, including attitudes, knowledge, and skills.
2. Content Standards: This criterion relates to the scope of the material and the level of competence that must be achieved to meet the graduation standards at certain levels and types of education.
3. Process Standards: Refers to the criteria for the implementation of learning in each educational unit to ensure the achievement of graduate competency standards.
4. Standards for Educators and Education Personnel: These criteria include educational requirements, professional competence, and personal and moral feasibility for educators.
5. Facilities and Infrastructure Standards: This criterion regulates learning rooms, sports facilities, places of worship, libraries, laboratories, places of work, and other learning resources, including the use of information technology to support the learning process.
6. Management Standards: It is a criterion for planning, implementing, and supervising education at the level of educational units, both district/city, provincial, and national, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of education implementation.
7. Financing Standard: This criterion includes the components and the amount of operational costs required by the educational unit for one year.
8. Educational Assessment Standards: These are criteria for the mechanisms, procedures, and instruments used to evaluate student learning outcomes.

Principal Leadership Style

Everyone who does leadership or becomes a leader certainly has a different leadership style and its uniqueness, The leadership style that can be possessed by every leader is as follows:

1. Autocratic Leadership Style

Autocratic leadership style is a style that has criteria that the leader is absolute. Leaders who use this style always consider that the organization is its own, restricting or lacking input from subordinates, making or even having its own decisions, not wanting to accept criticism and suggestions, being too dependent on its formal power, and taking actions often using coercive and punitive approaches. Leadership with this style also pays less attention to the needs of subordinates because personal goals are often identified with organizational goals. (Wahyuni et al., 2022).

In an autocratic style, the leader may ask for ideas and input as a form of feedback, but all of that will not change the decisions that the leader has made. In the view of subordinates or the community around them, leaders with an autocratic style will usually be considered negative, because they seem selfish. His selfishness will change the existing factors to conform to what is subjectively considered reality. With his ego, the autocratic leader sees himself as the center of everything in the life of the organization. (Chishty-Mujahid, 2016).

Autocratic leaders tend to show a very selfish attitude, often override the role of subordinates in the decision-making process, and are reluctant to accept advice and views from their subordinates. However, this autocratic leadership style can affect teacher performance, such teachers are more disciplined and orderly, have quick crisis management, have more focused targets, and teachers will increase their self-productivity. (Siregar & Lubis, 2022).

Table 1. Indicators of Autistic Leadership Style

No	Indicator
1.	Not accepting suggestions/opinions/criticism from subordinates.
2.	Considers the organization to be private
3.	Make and make your own decisions.

2. Democratic Leadership Style

The democratic leadership style is a modernist and participatory style, which means that in achieving the goals of the organization, all members are invited to work together to contribute their ideas, innovations, and energy. (Khosiah & Maryani, 2020). This leadership style also can influence others to cooperate in achieving goals that have been set and determined jointly between the leader and subordinates. (Hurint et al., 2023). The democratic leadership style of school principals also has a positive and significant effect on teachers' pedagogic competence, teachers' personality competencies, teachers' professional competencies, and teachers' social competencies. (Yanti, 2021). So a leader who applies this style will always involve his members in decision-making and invite deliberation in solving problems.

Table 2. Indicators of Democratic Leadership Style

No	Indicator
1.	Happy to receive suggestions/opinions/criticism from subordinates
2.	In doing something, leaders prioritize cooperation.
3.	Always share new knowledge that leaders gain.
4.	Always trying to develop his capacity and quality

3. *Laissez Faire's leadership style*

Laissez Faire's leadership style is a style characterized by the absence of an authoritarian leader. This leadership style prioritizes relationship orientation (Relation Oriented) rather than task completion (Result Oriented). In leadership literature, laissez-faire also refers to the "let go, let things happen" approach. In this style, subordinates make their own decisions due to the absence of strict rules set by the leader. (Tumbol et al., 2014).

Laissez Faire's leadership style in educational institutions according to experts is to give complete freedom to teachers, staff, and other employees. The principal does not set an example and is more often passive. This leadership style can be effective if applied by adjusting the level of maturity of subordinates, which in the willingness and ability to carry out the tasks given can be accounted for. for (Mattayang, 2019).

employee has the right to contribute to the responsibilities they carry out and be recognized as an integral part of the school by their dignity and dignity. The principal acts as a director, controller, evaluator, and coordinator of tasks carried out by all school members.

The principal always observes the situation and conditions before making decisions, ensuring that every decision taken is based on the school's objectives and is tailored to the interests and development of all school members, including students, teachers, staff, and other employees. In every activity or plan, the principal always asks for suggestions, opinions, and criticism from teachers or staff as material for evaluation and consideration. The priority work process is cooperation based on each responsibility by their respective places and portions.

The principal also has an interesting philosophy related to the division of duties. According to him, school principals have the task of thinking as much as 70% and working as much as 30%, while teachers and staff have the task of thinking as much as 30% and working as much as 70%. This division is of course adjusted to the conditions, situations, and needs in the implementation of an activity. The principal also does not hesitate to share knowledge and information with students, teachers, staff, and other employees, with the aim that his subordinates can be more successful than him.

Table 3. Laissez Faire's Leadership Style Indicators

No	Indicator
1.	The absence of a leader is characterized by avoiding responsibility.
2.	Leaders only put themselves as supervisors so they do not regulate a policy much.
3.	The leader does not participate in the activities of his group, and the subordinates act on their own volition.

Table 4. Division of Duties between the Principal and the Teacher

Role	Think	Work
Principal	70%	30%
Teachers and Staff	30%	70%

As an experienced leader, the Principal has a great impact on the newly established Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh Junior High School. He has carried out a comprehensive overhaul of the school's administration, management, and infrastructure. According to the educators, the authority of the principal makes all teachers committed to faithfully managing, managing, and advancing Birrul Walidain Plupuh Junior High School. The open attitude of the principal in designing innovations and holding briefings has succeeded in igniting the enthusiasm of teachers in small meetings that focus on improving the school's branding.

Implementation of Leadership Style in Improving the Quality of Education at Birrul Walidain Junior High School Muhammadiyah Plupuh

The leadership of the principal at SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh, led by Amir, S. Ag, shows a democratic approach and is oriented towards the principle of family. In practice, this principle provides space for equality in opinion. Every teacher, staff, and

Amir's principal, S. Ag, also always tries to develop his capacity. He firmly holds that the quality of the school and its output can be seen from the quality of the principal. Therefore, he enjoys exploring new things that can benefit him and the school. This holistic and inclusive approach has led SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh towards a significant improvement in the quality of education.

The integration of the democratic leadership style with the principle of kinship at SMP Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh has created a conducive school environment for growth and innovation. Amir, S. Ag's leadership as the principal not only builds a strong and harmonious relationship between the principal and teachers, staff, and students but also encourages the active participation of all school members. Each individual feels valued and allowed to contribute, thus creating a high sense of belonging to the school.

The application of the family principle is also seen in the student assistance system. Each student has a guardian teacher who is in charge of reviewing their morals and behavior. This teacher guardian not only acts as a supervisor but also as a guide and companion who provides direction and moral support. With the presence of guardian teachers, students feel more cared for and accompanied in their academic and personal development. The closeness between fellow teachers and also between fellow students is built with their own sense of brotherhood.

Through various activities such as deliberations, outings, and extracurricular activities, family relationships are further strengthened every semester. Teachers often hold informal meetings to share experiences and solutions to various challenges faced. Likewise, students, are taught to respect each other, help, and cooperate in various school activities.

Table 5. Number of Collaborative Activities Held

Collaborative Activities	Implementation
Deliberation with Students' Parents	Once a month
Outing	Twice in one Semester
Extracurricular Activities	Once a week
Informal Teacher Meetings	Once a week

Student Assistance
by Teacher Once a week
Guardians

On the other hand, to improve the quality of education at Birrul Walidain Junior High School Muhammadiyah Plupuh implements the following things:

Educational Standards	Reality at Birrul Walidain Junior High School Muhammadiyah Plupuh
Graduate Competency Standards	Students are trained to excel, be independent, modern, and Islamic through the assistance of teachers.
Attitude	Focus on superior academic education and Islamic values.
Knowledge	Skills development through extracurriculars, deliberations, and outings.
Skills	
Content Standards	
Scope of Materials	General academic education and strong Islamic materials. Students excel academically and understand Islamic values.
Competency Level	
Process Standards	
Learning Implementation	An inclusive and participatory approach with active involvement of teachers and students.

Educational Standards	Reality at Birrul Walidain Junior High School Muhammadiyah Plupuh	Educational Standards	Reality at Birrul Walidain Junior High School Muhammadiyah Plupuh
Learning Evaluation Standards for Educators and Education Personnel	Regular discussions and evaluations to ensure learning effectiveness.	Financing Standards	
Teacher and Staff Qualifications	Teachers and staff have appropriate qualifications, one of which is committed to the school by not participating in P3K or CPNS and participating in development training.	Operational Financing	Financing is managed transparently and efficiently, overcoming budget limitations with innovation.
Leadership and Moral Support	The principal provides strong guidance and moral support.	Educational Assessment Standards	
Facilities and Infrastructure Standards		Assessment Mechanism and Procedure	Assessment of learning outcomes is carried out periodically with clear mechanisms and procedures, for example, the school applies differentiation in assessment where teachers make two or three types of questions with different levels of difficulty, and later the questions will be given to students according to their academic level.
Educational Facilities	Classrooms, computer rooms, libraries, sports fields, and prayer rooms.	Assessment Instruments	The assessment covers both academic and non-academic aspects for comprehensive evaluation.
Information and Communication Technology	The use of technology in the learning process.		
Management Standards			
Planning, Implementation, and Supervision	A collaborative and inclusive approach in strategy formulation and decision-making.		
Efficiency and Effectiveness	Involving teachers and staff to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of education implementation.		

This collaboration allows for the creation of a supportive and shared work atmosphere, where every opinion and idea is carefully considered before being implemented. This approach also strengthens solidarity among school members, increases motivation, and results in more optimal performance. Thus, the integration of democratic leadership style and family principles has become the key to success

in advancing and improving the quality of education at Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh Junior High School.

Conclusion

The quality of education refers to the level of quality of educational processes and outcomes that focus on students and can meet the expectations of various parties. Improving the quality of education requires a well-programmed plan to answer the challenges of the times so that the quality of inputs, processes, and outputs continues to improve. Leadership

has a crucial role in improving this quality. Leadership styles vary, including autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles, each with its characteristics and impact on the organization. The principal of Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Plupuh Junior High School, Amir, S. Ag, implements an inclusive and family-oriented democratic leadership style, creating an environment conducive to growth and innovation. Effective leadership, the right strategy, and collaboration between school members are key to improving the quality of education.

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