

## REFINING EDUCATION QUALITY: A NOTE ON PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

**Ahmad Muzakki Zen**

UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember  
[ahmadmuzakkizen753@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadmuzakkizen753@gmail.com)

**St. Rodliyah**

UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember  
[st.rodliyah@uinkhas.ac.id](mailto:st.rodliyah@uinkhas.ac.id)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35719/jieman.v4i2.146>

### **Abstract**

A successful institution requires a strong and capable leader to lead the institution. One of the Principal's primary duties is to improve the quality of education in the institutions he directs. The quality of education is constantly improving, at least to keep up with the times and to maximize the dynamics of people's lives. Improving the quality of education is therefore characterized by improving student learning outcomes. This study focuses on identifying key leadership types and models for improving the quality of education at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis Tempurejo Jember. This study aimed to describe the nature and model of school leadership in improving the quality of education. This research uses a qualitative approach. The type of study used is the field study type—data collection techniques through observations, interviews, and documentary studies. Data analysis techniques used descriptive qualitative analysis with Miles and Huberman's interactive descriptive model of data condensation, data presentation, and inference. Data validity using technical and source triangulation. The results of this study show that the most important type

of leadership in improving educational quality is the democratic type of leadership, and the second model of principal leadership to improve educational quality is adequate. It Demonstrates the use of leadership models.

Keberhasilan lembaga pendidikan memerlukan seorang pemimpin yang mampu dan tangguh dalam memimpin sebuah lembaga pendidikan. Salah satu tugas utama kepala sekolah adalah meningkatkan mutu pendidikan pada lembaga pendidikan yang dipimpinnya. Mutu pendidikan senantiasa ditingkatkan agar minimal selalu dapat mengikuti perkembangan zaman dan maksimal dapat mewarnai dinamika kehidupan masyarakat. Maka meningkatnya mutu pendidikan ditandai dengan meningkatnya hasil belajar murid. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mengungkap bagaimana tipe dan model kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis Tempurejo Jember. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan tipe dan model Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Adapun jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah jenis penelitian field research. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara dan studi dokumenter. Teknik analisis data menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif dengan model interaktif deskriptif Miles dan Huberman yang terdiri dari kondensasi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi teknik dan triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Pertama tipe kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan adalah tipe kepemimpinan demokratis dan Kedua Model kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan menggunakan model kepemimpinan yang efektif.

**Keywords:** principal's leadership, quality of education, senior high school

## Introduction

In an educational institution, the Principal of a school or *madrassa* (Islamic-based school) is considered to be a top manager in carrying out their duties and are required to have good leadership quality so that they can carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. The duties of a school principal cover quite a wide-ranging area. It is not only limited to the efficient teaching and

learning activities process but also involves all aspects of education. The Principal is the highest leader in the school. Consequently, the pattern of leadership used will affect and determine the school's progress. As a leader, the Principal must know that his success depends on other people, such as teachers and education staff. Therefore, the personal characteristics of the school principal play a significant role and are part of his success or failure at school.<sup>1</sup>

The task of the school principal as a manager is very complex. Not only does he need to manage the curriculum and textbooks used, but also the aspect of human resources management for the teachers and administrative staff, managing and developing assets, and the institutional finances. Thus, he must have three bits of intelligence, such as professional, personal, and managerial intelligence. Professional intelligence refers to the mastery of knowledge related to educational responsibility. A school principal must comprehensively understand the curriculum development techniques, lesson planning, learning strategies, evaluation, classroom management, and other knowledge regarding the education and learning process. It is doubtful that someone who has no knowledge of education or has never experienced the teaching profession at all to be chosen as the school principal, as he must manage all resources for the education and learning process.

At the same time, the Principal must have personal intelligence that refers to the ability to accept and always have respect for the teachers and his staff, all of the students and their parents, and even some notable figures around the school. Likewise, school principals must respect their students, including those who are seen as low achievers (students who lack ability in learning), and always support them so that not a single student is left behind. There should not be any desolate disparity between one student and another, and there should not be any altered services for them, significantly when they have differed in ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. The Principal must have good self-confidence in dealing

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Mulyasa, *Manajemen dan Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2012), 56.

with regional and central officials and must not be superior to teachers and all levels of the administrative staff at his school.

Finally, a school principal must have managerial intelligence, which refers the managerial competence in having big ideas for the progress of their school, being able to organize all staff to carry out programs that have been set as an annual work plan, being able to motivate all academic staff and non-academic staff to work with enthusiasm, and always appreciating all their hard work. A school principal must be able to communicate well to make all the staff understand what they have to do and can encourage them to work on some improvements for the schools. Moreover, a school principal must be able to objectively evaluate the work completed by his entire work team and make the evaluation results as a reference for future improvements.<sup>2</sup>

Some types of leadership are different and it is varied. Some experts say that the leadership types and styles are somewhat the same, but others say they are different. Therefore, several leadership types are identical to the leadership styles, such as authoritarian/autocratic, democratic, pseudo-democratic, and laissez-faire.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the leadership model is an overall pattern of the actions of a leader that are both visible and invisible to his subordinates.<sup>4</sup> The leadership model describes a consistent philosophy, skills, traits, and attitudes that underlie one's behavior. The model can be interpreted as a reference which is the basis or groundwork for certain things. Several outlooks about the leadership

---

<sup>2</sup> Dede Rosyada, *Paradigma Pendidikan Demokratis: Sebuah Model Pelibatan Masyarakat dalam Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2004), 233.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Rahmat dan Kadir Syaiful, *Kepemimpinan Pendidikan dan Budaya Mutu*, (Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2017), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Vina Merliana dan Albert Kurniawan. "Pengaruh Strategi Biaya Rendah Dan Diferensiasi Terhadap Keberhasilan PT Tahu Tauhid". *Jurnal Manajemen Maranatha* 15, no. 2 (May 2, 2016), 244. <https://doi.org/10.28932/jmm.v15i2.16>

model are the visionary leadership model, the transformational leadership model, and the effective leadership model.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education is a philosophy that has a continuous improvement approach that can provide educational institutions with a set of practical tools to meet their needs, wants, and expectations for their current and future customers.<sup>6</sup> A quality implies a degree (level of superiority of a product of work/effort) in the form of goods and services, whether tangible or intangible. Tangible quality refers to a value that can be observed and seen in the form of the quality of an object or activities and behavior. For example, the quality of the television can be seen from its durability (it cannot break down easily), transparent color, sound resonating excellent sound, and the spare parts that are easy to get. Meanwhile, intangible quality is a quality that cannot be seen or observed directly. However, it can be felt and experienced, for example, an impression of discipline, familiarity, cleanliness, and so on. Likewise, the quality of education is dynamic and will occasionally change due to its relative nature.

The quality of education in schools must be considered and improved to have better quality. This is a challenge that must be responded to positively by educational institutions. Quality in education includes the quality of input, process, and output. A school is said to have a good quality in educational input when it is ready to have some progress following national minimum standards for education. Moreover, it has a good quality for the educational process when it can create an active, creative, innovative, and fun learning atmosphere to achieve better educational goals. The educational output refers to the quality achieved by students in

---

<sup>5</sup> Silvana Intan Maris, Aan Komariah, dan Abu Bakar, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah, Kinerja Guru Dan Mutu Sekolah," *Administrasi Pendidikan* XXII, No. 2. (2016): 177-179. <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/JAPSPs/article/view/5645>

<sup>6</sup> Zamroni, *Meningkatkan Mutu Sekolah*, (Jakarta: PSAP Muhammadiyah, 2007), 2.

having comprehensible and high learning outcomes both in the academic and non-academic fields.<sup>7</sup>

Several previous studies have become the basis and insight for researchers; they are; research by Yuliza Utmi Yati entitled "Leadership of Principals in Improving the Quality of Education at SMP Negeri 19 Jambi City in 2019". The research was conducted by Dewi Kartika Harahap entitled "Management of Principal Leadership in Improving the Quality of Islamic Religious Education at Sihepeng 001 Public Elementary School, Siabu District, Mandailing Natal Regency in 2019". Then a study by Indah Dwi Wahyuni entitled "Leadership of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education at the Al-Asror Tulungagung Integrated Islamic Elementary School in 2018". These studies concluded that each school principal has his type and model of leadership.

There are several similarities and differences between the research conducted by the researcher and the three previous studies mentioned. Among the similarities is that in terms of the research focus studied. They both discuss school principals' leadership in improving education quality. Then those studies employed the same qualitative research methods and data collection techniques: interviews, observation, and documentary studies. Further, the data analysis techniques used are the Miles and Huberman models, and validation checking techniques are used in technical and source triangulation. The difference lies within the discussion of school principals' leadership in the quality of education at the senior high school level. At the same time, previous research discussed the quality of education at the elementary and junior high school levels. Then the difference that stands out is that during the implementation of learning activities, this research is conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

From those rationales, the researcher decided to conduct research on educational institutions within the research setting chosen. According to the observations done by the researcher, SMA

---

<sup>7</sup> Masrokan Prim Mutohar, *Manajemen Mutu Sekolah*, (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2014), 135.

04 Ma'arif Perintis Tempurejo Jember is a private institution in Jember Regency whose quality is seen to be improved every year, as it was proven by some participation identified in non-academic competitions which always successfully sealing the podium, including the Besuki residency scout competition and the marching band competition in the Jember Regency. All of these achievements are backed up by the Principal of SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis that the Principal must have the personality or characteristics and abilities, as well as skills, to lead an educational institution. Principals also have a big responsibility and a significant role in improving the quality of education.

## **Methods**

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach that focuses on understanding the phenomenon regarding the experiences practiced by the research subject. For example, using various scientific methods, behavior, perception, motivation, and action are holistically described descriptively in words in a unique natural context. This research used field research in which the researchers collected the data from SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis. Some research subjects also act as the research informant; involved are school principals, deputy heads of curriculum, deputy heads of student affairs, educators, and students. For this reason, the data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentary studies. Likewise, the data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman model, starting with data analysis, condensation, data presentation, and conclusion. To check the validity of the data, the researcher used technical and source triangulation.

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***Principal Leadership Types in Improving the Quality of Education***

The leadership type used by the school principals in improving the quality of education at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis is a democratic type. This can be seen from the performance of the

school principal, which starts the managerial activities by planning what will be done to improve the quality of education in the future, dividing personnel into certain sections to improve the quality of education, dividing the main tasks and functions (lit. translate form *Tupoksi* in Indonesian) to improve the quality of education and encourage them to achieve the objective and make some evaluation in the end.

Democratic leaders are good mentors for their groups. A leader who realizes that he has a duty to coordinate the work and duties of all his members by emphasizing a sense of responsibility and good cooperation with each member. Thus, the Principal knows that the school he leads is not a personal matter but realizes that the school's strength lies in the active participation of every member.<sup>8</sup> The Principal must be willing to listen to the advice and opinions of all parties and be able to take advantage of everyone's strengths as effectively as possible at the appropriate time. The Principal must also realize that he can only work with others. Therefore, school principals need help from teachers, other educational staff, and school members; they also need support and participation from their subordinates and appreciation and encouragement from higher ranks. Lastly, the school principal also needs moral support from colleagues.<sup>9</sup>

The theory mentioned is in accordance with Robbin's statement that leadership is the ability to influence a group of people to achieve goals and objectives. The source of the influence can be obtained formally by engaging a managerial position in an organization. Meanwhile, Saunders argues that educational leadership refers to every action against educational facilities to achieve predetermined educational targets.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Subry Sutikno, *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan*, (Lombok: Holistica, 2014), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Kartono Kartini, *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2008), 188-189.

<sup>10</sup> St. Rodiyah, *Manajemen Pendidikan, Sebuah Konsep dan Aplikasi*, (Jember: IAIN Jember Press, 2015), 155.



Likewise, the leadership used by the Principal within SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis is through establishing a direction to be followed, making people associate themselves in that direction, and giving them the strength to achieve the objective set by any means, which includes persuading people and others. Furthermore, during the Covid-19 pandemic, school principals improved teachers' quality to create learning methods that were appropriate to the situation. Among those efforts is by providing training on new learning methods so that teachers continue to carry out their duties in conveying their knowledge and always continue to improve the school.

The Principal plays an important role in helping the development of students and the success of their students at school, including helping some students who do not have the instrument to support the distance learning media (cell phones/laptops) to help develop the quality or ability of students to achieve an effective and efficient teaching-learning process.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the school principal strives to have a good quality educational institution, including; carrying out leadership functions by retaining curriculum implementation as the main goal, emphasizing the quality of the teaching and learning process, having clear goals and high expectations for educators and students, developing a good and conducive organizational atmosphere, providing monitoring and evaluating activities as part of the educational, organizational culture in their institutions, managing staff development, and involving community support in its development.<sup>11</sup>

The leadership model used by the school principal is effective. This can be seen from the performance of the school principal such as monitoring educators daily, then conducting evaluations and training for educators and administrative staff so that the school administration is considered adequate in providing services. Another

---

<sup>11</sup> Moehariono, *Pengukuran Kinerja Berbasis Kompetensi*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2012), 386.

matter to be observed is that the Principal has a democratic nature in leading its members.

The improvement of the quality of education at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis has been maximized starting from the identifying needs of the school community, carrying out the vision and mission, compiling programs (annual and biannual programs), implementing the programs that have been prepared, conducting evaluations, facilitating students' talents and interests with extracurricular activities in Boy Scouting, *Palang Merah Remaja* (Young Indonesia Red Cross Society), *Paskibra* (Flag raisers), speeches, Quran Recital Competition, table tennis, and others, as well as supporting students in competitions at the sub-district, district and provincial levels. Moreover, quality improvement within the facilities and infrastructure is also maximized. It was proven by the fact that some new rooms were built, such as a science laboratory, language laboratory, computer laboratory, canteen, ample parking space, adequate toilets, and environmental cleanliness. Further, creating a comfortable working climate and establishing good communication with stakeholders so that the teachers are getting better at administrative matters such as fulfilling the learning equipment needed.

The findings above follow Blake and Mouton's theory which states that the behavior of influential leaders tends to show high performance in two aspects: institutional structure and consideration.<sup>12</sup> This leadership study provides information about the types of behavior of influential leaders. The behavior of leaders can be categorized into two dimensions: institutional structure and consideration. The institutional structure dimension describes how leaders define and structure group interactions to achieve organizational goals and how they organize their group activities. The consideration dimension describes the level of the working relationship between the leader and his subordinates. The leader

---

<sup>12</sup> Fauzan. "Kepemimpinan Kharismatik Versus Kepemimpinan Visioner." *Al-'Adalah* 22, No. 1. (2019): 70-71. <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v22i1.11>

pays attention to the social and emotional needs of subordinates, such as the need for recognition, job satisfaction, and appreciation which affect their performance in the organization. The consideration dimension is characterized by leadership prioritizing two-way communication, participation, and human relations.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

*First*, the leadership type used by the Principal in improving the quality of education at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis Tempurejo Jember is democratic. *Second*, the Principal's leadership model used in improving the quality of education at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis is effective. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Principal, as a leader and control center in an educational institution, should maximize and always improve the quality of his education and increase intimacy, maintain harmonious relations with his subordinates, develop democratic leadership values, maintain an open and enthusiastic attitude towards his subordinates, and pay attention to the comfort and well-being of the educators and their education. As working partners of school principals, educators and education staff are always expected to improve their professionalism, develop their abilities, and work well with school principals and fellow educators and education staff at SMA 04 Ma'arif Perintis. Then, the following researchers are expected to review, continue, and complete the research by adding to the observational components of the Principal's leadership theory to improve the quality of education.

## References

- Fauzan. "Kepemimpinan Kharismatik Versus Kepemimpinan Visioner." *Al-Adalah* 22, No. 1. (2019): 68-79. <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v22i1.11>
- Kartini, Kartono. *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2008.

---

<sup>13</sup> St. Rodiyah, *Manajemen Pendidikan*, 178.

- Merliana, Vina, dan Albert Kurniawan. "Pengaruh Strategi Biaya Rendah dan Diferensiasi terhadap Keberhasilan PT. Tahu Tauhid". *Jurnal Manajemen Maranatha* 15, no. 2 (2016). Accessed January 2, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.28932/jmm.v15i2.16>
- Maris, Silvana Intan, Aan Komariah, dan Abu Bakar. "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah, Kinerja Guru Dan Mutu Sekolah." *Administrasi Pendidikan XXII*, No. 2. (2016): 177-188. <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/JAPSPs/article/view/5645>
- Moeheriono. *Pengukuran Kinerja Berbasis Kompetensi*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2012.
- Mulyasa, E. *Manajemen dan Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2012.
- Mutohar, Masrokan Prim. *Manajemen Mutu Sekolah*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2014.
- Rahmat, Abdul, dan Kadir Syaiful. *Kepemimpinan Pendidikan dan Budaya Mutu*. Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2017.
- Rodiyah, St. *Manajemen Pendidikan, Sebuah Konsep dan Aplikasi*. Jember: IAIN Jember Press, 2015.
- Rosyada, Dede. *Paradigma Pendidikan Demokratis: Sebuah Model Pelibatan Masyarakat dalam Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan*, Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2004.
- Sutikno, Subry. *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan*. Lombok: Holistica, 2014.
- Zamroni. *Meningkatkan Mutu Sekolah*. Jakarta: PSAP Muhamadiyah, 2007.