

**CULTURE-BASED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE INTEGRATED ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF THE TARBİYAH ISLAMİYAH EDUCATION FOUNDATION IN LUBUK CEMARA**

**Rifqi Mahasa<sup>1</sup>, Halimatun Syakdiah<sup>2</sup>, Irwansyah<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>12</sup>Program Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, Fakultas Agama Islam, Universitas Al Washliyah, Medan, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Program Studi Ekonomi Syariah, Fakultas Agama Islam, Universitas Al Washliyah, Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence Email: [rifqimahasa788@gmail.com](mailto:rifqimahasa788@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

*This study explores the multifaceted relationship between school principal leadership and school quality improvement at SMP integrated Islam Islamic Tarbiyah Education Foundation Lubuk Cemara School. Employing a phenomenological approach, this research investigates the lived experiences of teachers and staff to understand how the principal's leadership style, particularly as it relates to fostering a positive work culture, impacts various aspects of school quality. Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and document analysis, focusing on themes related to leadership practices, teacher morale, instructional strategies, and student outcomes. The findings reveal nuanced insights into the ways in which the principal's leadership, both directly and indirectly, shapes the school environment and contributes to overall school effectiveness. The study contributes to a richer understanding of the complex interplay between leadership, work culture, and school quality, offering valuable implications for school improvement initiatives at SMP integrated Islam Islamic Tarbiyah Education Foundation Lubuk Cemara School and similar institutions.*

*Keywords: School Principal Leadership, Work Culture, School Quality*

## INTRODUCTION

Efforts to improve the quality of education are a strategic agenda that is a top priority for every educational unit, including the Lubuk Cemara Tarbiyah Islamiyah Education Foundation Integrated Islamic Junior High School (SMP IT YPTI). Quality improvement does not only depend on facilities and infrastructure, but is also greatly influenced by the leadership of the principal. The principal acts as the main driving force in realizing the vision and mission, as well as shaping a productive and positive work culture within the school environment. Without strong leadership based on healthy work culture values, various school quality improvement programs will find it difficult to achieve optimal results.

To achieve satisfactory performance from teaching and non-teaching staff so that they can perform their duties well, a positive school work culture is needed. The fact is that teaching and non-teaching staff are the driving force behind the achievement of school education (Umi Faizah, 2019). School work culture is an alternative that can motivate educators and educational staff to fulfill their responsibilities and solve problems on a regular basis, which will certainly improve the quality of education (Labudasari & Rochmad, 2018). Therefore, professional educators and educational staff are required to maintain a school work culture that has a positive impact on quality education (Wiryanawan et al., 2020).

School work culture, which includes values, habits, and patterns of interaction in the educational environment, is shaped by the leadership style of the principal. A positive work culture will motivate educators and educational staff to work more optimally, increase loyalty, and encourage innovation in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, school principals are not only required to be able to lead technically and administratively, but also to be role models in integrity, discipline, and collaboration—values that are an important part of school work culture. (Gita Setya Utami & Gst Agung Oka Negara, 2021)

The balance between strength and warmth in leadership is also an important aspect. Leaders who rely solely on authority tend to create emotional distance with their subordinates, while leaders who only emphasize warmth have the potential to lose direction in strategic decision-making. Therefore, school principals must be able to be both strong and warm—serving as inspiration, motivators, and key drivers in creating a conducive work environment for the entire school community. (Cabane, 2024)

The benchmark for good or bad school leadership can be seen from the work culture that exists in the school, and school work culture is the habit of an organization in ensuring the achievement of a profession in the educational environment (Sopaheluwakan et al., 2020). The school's work culture also produces educators and educational staff who are open-minded and willing to participate in various learning activities. (Mutirna, 2019). In the context of Islam, leadership is a responsibility that must be accounted for not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Allah says in Surah At-Taubah verse 71

In the Al-Azhar interpretation, the explanation of the above verse is as follows: In this verse, we encounter the word AULIYA' again, which is derived from the word WALI, which we have previously defined as leader or ruler. Here, the significant difference between hypocrites and believers is explained. Hypocrites may have similar characteristics and behaviors, but there is no leadership or guidance among them. This is because each of them is self-centered, and they only unite when their interests are the same. However, when the opportunity arises, one will inevitably betray the other. The believers are not like that. They unite, lead and be led, help and be helped, men and women alike. Their unity is cemented by their unity of belief, namely their belief in Allah. Because of this shared belief, *ukhuwwah*, or brotherhood, arises. They love one another, leap together, bow together, share the same shame, the same pain, the same joy, the same profit, and the same loss. They help and support one another. (Hamka, 2003)

Therefore, it can be understood that this verse emphasizes the importance of the principles of “leadership” and “mutual assistance” among believers as the basis for building a society that supports each other in goodness. Similarly, in the hadith of the Prophet SAW:

This hadith emphasizes that everyone is a leader and will be held accountable for what they lead. This further reinforces the position of the principal as the main leader in the school, who is responsible for creating a good work culture and improving the quality of education.

A healthy and positive school work culture is an important indicator of successful school management. This culture creates a sense of belonging, increases commitment to common goals, and shapes professional attitudes that directly affect the quality of learning. Conversely, a weak work

culture will hinder cooperation, reduce motivation, and ultimately have an impact on the low quality of education. (Labudasari & Rochmad, 2018)

Given the importance of the principal's role in shaping work culture and improving school quality, this study was conducted to explore how work culture-based leadership can influence school quality improvement at SMP IT Yayasan Pendidikan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Lubuk Cemara. This study aims to examine in depth the relationship between the principal's leadership style, the development of a positive work culture, and its implications for the quality of education at the school. The main focus of this study includes: (1) how the principal builds and internalizes work culture in the school environment; (2) the extent to which this work culture can improve school quality; and (3) the role of the principal in motivating and empowering teachers and other stakeholders through this work culture.

With this approach, it is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the development of value- and culture-based leadership practices in integrated Islamic schools, as well as serve as a strategic model for improving the overall quality of education.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses qualitative research with descriptive methods in the form of written or oral narratives from people and observable behaviors based on observation, interviews, and documentation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on findings from research and information from several sources obtained through a phenomenological approach and documentation study, the researcher found several results. The following are some of the results of this study.

### **The Principal's Leadership Style in Building a Positive Work Culture at the Lubuk Cemara Tarbiyah Islamiyah Foundation Integrated**

Based on findings from research and information from several sources, it can be seen that the principal builds a positive work culture through an integrated approach based on a clear and measurable vision and mission, which serves as the main foundation for leading the school. The principal also implements this vision in every school policy and program and builds good communication channels with teachers, staff, and parents through regular meetings, open discussion forums, and other means of communication.

A successful educational institution must begin with clear planning and rules. Ideally, these plans and rules should always be in line with the needs and developments of society, as well as keep up with the latest developments in the world of education. In addition, for an educational institution to be successful, its management must be well-organized and coordinated (Syakdiah, 2023).

The management team sets an example in implementing a positive work culture through discipline, work ethic, and mutual respect, thereby creating a safe, comfortable, and conducive environment for everyone. This enables teachers and staff to collaborate and actively participate in efforts to improve the quality of the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Foundation's integrated Islamic junior high school.

It can therefore be concluded that the success of building a positive work culture begins with a strong commitment to a clear, measurable vision and mission that is relevant to the needs of the school and the community. This vision and mission are not just written statements, but must be internalized and implemented in every aspect of school operations, where in practice the principal applies them by ensuring that the school's vision and mission are understood and internalized by the entire school community, and reflected in every policy, program, and activity carried out.

The principal must also engage in open, honest, and two-way communication, which is key to building trust and a sense of belonging among the entire school community. The principal must be able to create effective communication channels, both formal and informal, to ensure that all parties feel heard and involved in the decision-making process.

Regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of work culture is an important mechanism for ensuring that a positive work culture can be realized and maintained. This process must be carried out objectively, transparently, and participatively, involving all school stakeholders.

Indra Kusuma Nasution mentions in his book that recurring problems in organizations are often not resolved effectively due to a lack of appropriate solutions. Effective and rapid problem solving requires the right strategy, especially for frequently recurring problems. The strategy for handling

recurring problems must be communicated to new members so that their behavior can be managed and directed in accordance with the organization's work culture. Thus, articulating the work culture is important for shaping consistent and productive behavior among members of the organization (Nasution, 2019).

From an Islamic perspective, the vision and mission of a school must be in line with Islamic values, such as *ihsan* (excellence), *itqan* (professionalism), and *amanah* (responsibility). This vision and mission should inspire the entire school community to give their best in achieving noble educational goals. Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah *asy-syura*, Verse 38: In the tafsir *al-azhar*, the explanation of the above verse is: "So, in line with strengthening your relationship with God, you should also strengthen your relationships with other human beings, especially your fellow believers." Then comes the continuation of the verse: "And their affairs are [decided] through consultation among themselves." Because it is clear that there are personal matters and there are matters concerning the common interest. So matters concerning the common interest are discussed together, so that the light can be carried together and the heavy can be borne together. (Hamka, 2003).

The emphasis on strengthening relationships reflects the importance of building a strong and cohesive school community. A shared vision and mission can serve as a unifying force, fostering collaboration and mutual support among teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Transparency and Accountability: The collaborative process inherent in "deliberation" promotes transparency and accountability. Decisions are made openly, and all stakeholders are aware of the reasoning behind them. This transparency builds trust and strengthens the school community.

In line with this, Sorahmad mentions in his book that the concept of leadership transcends the narrow definition of formal positions or roles. It encompasses the influence that a person has, regardless of the hierarchical structure of an organization or society. Leaders can emerge from various backgrounds and social strata, not only from the elite or those in power. True leadership is not merely about authority or control, but about the ability to motivate, inspire, and direct others toward a common goal. It involves the ability to positively influence the behavior and thinking of others, build trust, and embrace an inclusive and inspiring vision. An effective leader is able to identify the needs and aspirations of their group, then direct collective energy to achieve greater results than could be achieved individually. (Sorahmad, 2023).

### **How School Principals Lead to Improve School Quality Through a Positive Work Culture at the Lubuk Cemara Tarbiyah Islamiyah Foundation Integrated Islamic Junior High School**

The principal's leadership in improving school quality through a positive work culture at SMP Islam Terpadu Yayasan Pendidikan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Lubuk Cemara involves a series of strategies and approaches that focus on creating a conducive learning environment, empowering teachers, involving students, and building effective collaboration. A comfortable and supportive school environment is an important factor in increasing student motivation and teacher performance. The principal must ensure that school facilities and infrastructure are adequate and well maintained, and create a calm, disciplined, and harmonious atmosphere.

Teachers are at the forefront of the learning process. Principals must empower teachers by providing ongoing training and development, as well as creating open and collaborative communication spaces by holding training sessions and workshops to improve teachers' competencies in various fields, such as innovative learning methods, the use of technology in learning, and student character development. Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah *AT-Taubah*, Verse 71:

In the *Al-Azhar* interpretation, the explanation of the above verse is as follows: In this verse, we encounter the word *AULIYA'* again, which is derived from the word *WALI*, which we have previously defined as leader or ruler. Here, the significant difference between hypocrites and believers is explained. Hypocrites may have similar characteristics and behaviors, but there is no leadership or guidance among them. This is because each of them is self-centered, and they only unite when their interests are the same. However, when the opportunity arises, one will inevitably betray the other. The believers are not like that. They unite, lead and be led, help and be helped, men and women alike. Their unity is cemented by their unity of belief, namely their belief in Allah. Because of this shared belief, *ukhuwwah*, or brotherhood, arises. They love one another, leap together, bow together, share the same shame, the same pain, the same joy, the same profit, and the same loss. They help and support one another. (Hamka, 2003).

From this, we can see that just as people of faith support one another, teachers benefit from collaborative professional development. Workshops, peer observations, and mentoring programs

foster a supportive environment where teachers can learn from one another, share best practices, and receive constructive feedback. This collaborative approach reflects the “lead-lead” and “help-help” aspects of the text, leading to improved teaching skills and enhanced pedagogical approaches.

Effective collaboration between teachers, students, staff, parents, and the community is key to improving the overall quality of the school. Principals must be able to build strong collaborative networks and facilitate harmonious communication and cooperation. This can be achieved by holding regular meetings with parents, involving the school committee in the planning and implementation of school programs, and establishing cooperation with various external parties, such as universities, companies, and community organizations.

Thahir and colleagues mention in their book that leadership capacity characteristics can be seen from the level of participation and leadership skills, including the roles of principals and other leaders in collaboration, problem solving, decision making, professional learning, communication, integrated vision and goals, access to information and research, interpersonal relationships, and student achievement. (Thahir et al., 2021).

In the context of Islamic education, leadership is like someone who is trusted to be in control of an Islamic school or educational institution. This leader can be appointed by the government or an Islamic educational foundation. Their duties are similar to those of leaders in regular schools, but there is one important difference: they must ensure that Islamic values from the Qur'an and Hadith are always the basis and are reflected in every educational activity at their school. Thus, all teaching and learning processes must be imbued with Islamic teachings. (Syakdiah & Bahri, 2024).

Overall, the interview findings indicate that SMP Islam Terpadu Yayasan Pendidikan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Lubuk Cemara implements a holistic and people-oriented approach in its efforts to improve school quality. The focus on empowerment, collaboration, and participation of the school community is key to the success of this strategy. The success of this strategy, of course, needs to be measured using specific and measurable indicators.

### **The Principal's Leadership Style in Motivating and Empowering Teachers and Education Stakeholders to Create a Conducive Work Culture to Improve the Quality of the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Lubuk Cemara Foundation Integrated Islamic Junior High School**

The principal's leadership in motivating and empowering teachers and education stakeholders is a key factor in creating a conducive work culture and improving school quality. This process involves a series of strategies and approaches that focus on building effective communication, developing leadership, encouraging participation, and implementing clear rules.

Effective communication is the foundation for building good relationships and mutual understanding among all school members. The principal must be able to create open and responsive communication channels and ensure that all parties feel heard and valued. Therefore, the principal must hold regular meetings with teachers, staff, students, and parents, as well as utilize various communication media (such as email, school websites, and social media) to convey information, receive feedback, and establish good relationships.

The development of leadership among teachers and staff is an important investment in improving school quality. Principals must provide opportunities for teachers and staff to develop their leadership potential, as well as provide the necessary support and guidance. Therefore, principals must provide leadership training, delegate tasks and responsibilities, and provide opportunities for teachers and staff to participate in decision-making. Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 2.

In the Al-Azhar interpretation, the explanation of the above verse, namely this verse, is related to the verse about going to Mecca, which states that it is better to do good deeds and be pious by helping one another. Heavy burdens should be carried together, and light ones should be carried together. For example, we can understand this when we Indonesians go on the Hajj to Mecca every year. How difficult the journey is, how much easier it would be if we could help each other, pool our resources, and work together to buy a ship. How much easier it would be if a group could help each other or work together to buy the necessary items for the journey.

The above verse emphasizes that cooperation is the key to achieving goals, both in the context of education and in the socio-religious context. The above verse is also related to the context of synergy in school teams, where the above verse also touches on the importance of collaboration in charitable activities. Both show that by working together, the burden can be shared and the results achieved will be better.

Andang explains in his book that building a conducive culture and work climate in schools is very important for motivating teachers and improving their performance. This is achieved not only by assigning tasks, but also by paying attention to other important aspects. The tasks assigned must be interesting and challenging, not just monotonous workloads. Clear objectives and teacher involvement in the planning process are essential for building a sense of ownership and commitment. Regular and constructive feedback, not just annual evaluations, helps teachers to continue to develop and improve the quality of their work. A fair and transparent reward system will motivate teachers to excel, while punishment should only be used as a last resort and as a corrective measure. Finally, principals need to pay attention to teachers' holistic well-being, including physical, psychological, and social aspects, to create a supportive and comfortable work environment. By paying attention to all these aspects, schools can create a positive and productive work environment. (Andang, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The research concludes that effective school leadership is achieved through an integrated approach rooted in a clear and measurable vision and mission, which guides all policies and programs. The principal's role in fostering effective communication and collaboration among teachers, staff, parents, and students creates a safe and conducive environment that supports active participation in improving school quality. Teacher empowerment through continuous training and leadership development enhances professional competence and collaboration, ultimately elevating the quality of student learning. Overall, the principal's leadership in cultivating a positive work culture significantly contributes to the improvement of school performance and the creation of a productive, collaborative, and high-quality educational environment.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adib, H. S. (2017). Teknik Pengembangan Instrumen Penelitian Ilmiah Di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam. *Journal Unimus*, 3(2), 1.
- Andang. (2022). *Manajemen & Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah* (Rose Kr, Ed.). Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Augina Mekarisce, A. (2020). Teknik Pemeriksaan Keabsahan Data Pada Penelitian Kualitatif Di Bidang Kesehatan Masyarakat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan Masyarakat*, 12(3), 147.
- Cabane, O. F. (2024). *The Charisma Myth* (S. Ramadhan, Ed.; Cetakan 1). Rene Turos Group.
- Gita Setya Utami, N. L., & Gst Agung Oka Negara, I. (2021). Kontribusi Budaya Sekolah Dan Motivasi Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru. *Jp2*, 4(1), 168–178.
- Hamka, A. A. A. (2003). *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (1,2,3,4,9). Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd Singapura.
- Hasanah, H. (2016). Teknik-Teknik Observasi (Sebuah Alternatif Metode Pengumpulan Data Kualitatif Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial). *Jurnal At-Taqaddum*, 8(1), 26.
- Kasiram, M. (2008). *Metodologi Penelitian : Refleksi Pengembangan Pemahaman Dan Penguasaan Metodologi Penelitian*. Uin-Malang Press.
- Labudasari, E., & Rochmad, R. (2018, March). Peran Budaya Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dasar 2018*.
- Mutirna. (2019). Peningkatkan Kinerja Kepala Sekolah Binaan Dalam Mengelola Sekolah Dasar Melalui Supervisi Klinis Berkelanjutan Di Kecamatan Gunuang Omeh Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota. *Menara Ilmu*, Xiii(4).
- Nasution, I. Kusuma. (2019). *Budaya Kerja Kelas Dunia : Mengenal Kaizen Dan Omotenashi Jepang* (B. Eko, Ed.; 1st Ed.). Mulia Sejahtera Grafika.
- Salim, & Syahrums. (2012). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (5th Ed.). Citapustaka Media.
- Sopaheluwakan, N., Limbong, M., & Kailola, L. G. (2020). Hubungan Antara Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dan Budaya Kerja Dengan Kinerja Guru Sma Negeri 1 Seram Barat Kabupaten Seram Bagian Barat. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 9(2).
- Sorahmad. (2023). *Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Melalui Pendekatan Quality Management* (1st Ed.). Pt. Literasi Nusantara Abadi Grup.
- Syakdiah, H. (2023). Eksistensi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tatanan Pendidikan Indonesia Dimasa Depan. *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 741. <https://doi.org/10.51468/Jpi.V3i1.56>
- Syakdiah, H., & Bahri, S. (2024). *Paradigma Dasar Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* (U. Kalsum, Ed.; Digital). Pt Adab Indonesia Grup .

- Thahir, M., Komariah, A., & Kurniady, D. Achmad. (2021). *Kapasitas Manajemen Mutu Dalam Peningkatan Layanan Sekolah (Konsep, Teori, Dan Kasus* (Rachmi, Ed.; 1st Ed.). Pt Refika Aditama.
- Umi Faizah. (2019). Evaluasi Kinerja Pendidik Dan Tenaga Kependidikan Dan Proses Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 2.
- Wirawan, D., Nur, A. A., & Nur, A. R. (2020). Pengaruh Motivasi Kerja Dan Kompetensi Terhadap Kinerja Tenaga Pendidik Dan Tenaga Kependidikan Universitas Kaltara. *Value: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Akuntansi*, 15(2), 140–155. <https://doi.org/10.32534/Jv.V15i2.1270>
- Wood, J. T. (2013). *Komunikasi Interpersonal Interaksi Keseharian* (Rio Dwi Setiawan, Ed.; 6th Ed.). Salemba Empat.