

The Power of Principal Leadership in Boosting School Quality

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ABSTRACT. This study investigates how the principal's leadership affects school quality improvement. The research was conducted at MI Al-Ikhlas Cikawung using a quantitative approach, involving survey methods and correlation analysis. The participants included teachers and administrators from the school and Islamic boarding schools, with a sample size of 31 people. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews, both of which were found to be valid and reliable. The normality of the data was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The findings indicate a very strong relationship between the principal's leadership and the quality of education at MI Al-Ikhlas Cikawung, with a correlation coefficient of 0.907. The analysis revealed that the principal's leadership explains 81.2% of the variation in educational quality, while the remaining 18.8% is attributed to external factors, as shown by the regression equation model $Y = 18.12 + 0.66X$. Future studies might explore differences, correlations, and interactions in student learning outcomes based on cognitive stages and gender and compare these results with those of other schools.

Keywords: *School Quality, Principal Leadership, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.*



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INTRODUCTION

Efforts to improve school quality are one of the efforts to achieve national development goals which are carried out in a planned, structured, and directed manner. This takes place continuously (K. D. Ningsih et al., 2021). It has implications for the primary component, namely school quality because it is closely related to human resources in managing education, both formal and non-formal education (Pancawardana et al., 2023). In general, school quality that is connected to life in society has relevance regarding vital issues for the nation that demands serious attention and handling (Al Ayyubi et al., 2024), This is because school management is the main thing in school quality and must be pursued by all levels of education, including at Elementary School level. (Alimohammadlou & Eslamloo, 2016; Azizi et al., 2023; Bolatan et al., 2016; Mbuik, 2019).

In leadership, it is still found that school principals do not have a clear enough vision and mission to develop school-quality (Aisyah et al., 2022; Duryat, 2021; Eberl & Drews, 2021). The leadership of the school principal still does not reflect the leadership that should be applied as a figure and to carry out his mandate as a leader to encourage teachers or his staff to have better performance (Egel & Fry, 2017; Mariana, 2021). In addition, the principal lacks effort in improving his professionalism in modeling how to improve school quality (Rizkita & Supriyanto, 2020; Ulfah et al., 2022). The problems found are also related to the existence of teachers who teach not only in one

school (A. Purwanto et al., 2020), so teachers and their ideas will be drained and also become unfocused (Kusumawati, 2023; Marhawati, 2021; Sahabuddin & Syahrani, 2022).

Then, the impact of this causes problems in the management of process standards in schools that have not been implemented optimally because there are still students who are absent without information due to the absence of teachers who enter the class (Ahmad, 2022; Muslim et al., 2020). This can lead to other external factors due to the lack of supervision and education about students' behavior and abilities (Timor et al., 2018). This can be solved by simply giving assignments to students who cannot be controlled in the process of learning activities, even though the values of honesty and good things should be instilled in students as well. Recent studies on the leadership of school principals in improving quality education are still carried out in a descriptive qualitative manner supported by interviews and documentation to describe conditions in the field (Fitriyah & Santosa, 2020; Hanafi et al., 2021; Hartati, 2022; Nurhayati et al., 2022; R. Purwanto, 2021; Sutisna & Khori, 2024). Besides that, studies that are oriented towards inferential statistical conclusions such as to see whether school leadership has an impact on the quality of education in schools that he leads are still rarely done. Therefore, the novelty of the study is that it will use inferential statistical analysis with parametric or non-parametric statistical data analysis techniques using SPSS version 26 program to know the relationship between principal leadership and school quality, and the form of correlation that occurs.

The leadership behavior of school principals is a crucial factor that influences school quality. This behavior can be used as a basis for developing school quality as an organizer of education (Sari et al., 2021). A leader can reach the achievement of educational goals because it can invite and his staffs to work according to their duties and functions optimally in order to attain quality education as expected (Rizkita & Supriyanto, 2020). Thus, to fill the void of previous studies, this study aims to know the impact of principal leadership on improving school quality at MI Al Ikhlas Cikawung, West Bandung. Moreover, this study was conducted to evaluate and measure how much impact is produced significantly on the role of principal leadership with quality education in school.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach at MI Al-Ikhlas Cikawung with survey methods and correlation analysis of the principal leadership variables and educational quality as independent and related variables. The population in this study consisted of teachers at schools and Islamic boarding schools as well as boarding school administrators at MI Al-Ikhlas with a sample of 31 people. The instruments used include questionnaires and interviews with adequate validity and reliability values. Meanwhile, the immersion analysis test was carried out with data normality using Kolmogorov Smirnov using SPSS software.

The method used in this research is to visualize the situation objectively based on the results of statistical tests carried out. Correlation tests are intended to look at the probability of the influence of the independent and dependent variables to see the extent of their impact. So that the relationship between the independent variables and the relationship can be identified as strong, moderate, or not strong in the form of a positive or negative linear correlation. The normality of data in statistical tests is to find out the next step in carrying out statistical tests, such as if it is accepted then proceed with the Pearson test, but if the data is not normally distributed then continue with the Spearman test and there is no need to carry out a regression test to see the regression equation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Data processing of the results of this study was carried out with the help of the SPSS version 26 program, with the test criteria accepting H_0 if the sig value. ≥ 0.05 and reject H_0 if the sig. value < 0.05 .

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variabels	\bar{x}	σ
X	77.7	3.3
Y	79.7	4.3

From the output data above, it can be seen that the averages for variables x and y are 77.7 and 79.7, while the standard deviation values are 3.3 and 4.3

Table 2. Test of Normality

Variabels	Sig.
X	0.2*
Y	0.07

From the output days above, it can be seen that the significance values for variables x and y are $0.2 > 0.05$ and $0.07 > 0.05$. Thus it can be stated that data is normally distributed.

Table 3. Correlations

Variabels	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
X	0.91**	0.00
Y		0.00

From the output data above, it can be seen that the significance value for variables x and y is $0.00 < 0.05$ with a Pearson correlation value of 0.91. So it can be stated that there is a relationship between variables x and y with the strength of the relationship being classified as very strong

Table 4. Model Summary

R	R Square
0.91 ^a	0.81

From the output day above, it can be seen that the R value is 0.91, which represents the relationship between the variables x and y which is classified as very strong. Meanwhile, the R Square value represents the principal's leadership which has an influence of 81% on the quality of education in schools and the other 19% is influenced by factors outside the x and y variables

Table 5. ANOVA^a

	Sig.
Regression	0,00 ^b

Based on Table 5 above, it shows that the value of Sig. Is $0.00 < 0,05$. It can be concluded that the regression equation model is linear or meets the linearity criteria. Therefore, the regression model can be used to predict the school quality.

Table 6. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized B	Sig.
1	(Constant)	18.12	0.00
	Quality Education	0.66	0.00

Based on Table 6 above, it shows that the Unstandardized B value at Constant (a) is 18.12 and the regression coefficient of the quality education in schools is 0.66. The regression equation model $Y = 18.12 + 0.66X$ means that if the school quality increases by 1 unit, the quality education

in the school will increase by 1.66 and if the quality education in the school increases by 1.66, the results of the principal leadership will increase by 1.66.

Discussion

In Islam, a leader has the characteristics of *shiddiq* (truthfulness), *tabligh* (conveying), *amanat* (trustworthiness), and *fathanah* (intelligence) which have the ability to influence a group or individual in order to achieve certain goals in accordance with what is expected. Based on this factor, a leader has implications in (1) His involvement in staffs; (2) Effectiveness in providing satisfaction to staffs; (3) Having responsibility with full integrity in himself and others in constructing what he wants to achieve (Nurafni et al., 2022). An educational institution that is functional in providing formal and non-formal knowledge is school (Santika, 2017). In school, there is a leader called the principal, who gives additional duties to a teacher to be able to manage the school in order to improve quality education. The function of the principal himself is to be a managerial in school who plays a very crucial role in realizing the vision and mission in accordance with the Ministry's regulations where the principal is also a teacher in it who is given additional duties with the dimensions of competence that have been determined, including having a personality, a high social spirit, supervising, being an entrepreneur, and managing teachers and staffs in order to create a productive atmosphere, realize targets, and to realize common ideals in the school quality that he leads.

The criteria for becoming a school principal are (1) Able to manage the institution or school he leads and provide conclusions as expected together; (2) Able and responsive in adjusting to changes, especially in contemporary times which are integrated with technology that is developing exponentially; (3) Able to evaluate and correct any existing weaknesses to be improved together; and (4) Bringing the school to the expected goals in accordance with the shared ideals of the consensus that has been made before (Russamsi et al., 2020). Education provides a transformation concept, namely knowing, doing, and being. These three aspects can be achieved by the principal leadership role in preserving a culture of school quality (Maryati & Siregar, 2022).

The more school members understand and believe in the values and norms that apply to each different school culture, the more significant the level of awareness for school members in existentializing and preserving the school in external audiences (Diana et al., 2021). Thus, if there are newcomers who want to become school members, they should be required to carry out various acculturation processes, although in its implementation there must be assertiveness in a leader, in this case the principal. In general, there are several methods that can be used to maintain and preserve culture in school quality, namely in a formal way where the entry of new students is carried out debriefing and training in introducing the culture contained in the school, and an informal way which is to introduce the existing culture by socializing in the manifestation of behavior and manners that are exemplified to make it easier for students to realize it (Susanto & Mattalatta, 2018).

Selection in schools that runs transparently can lead an individual to have both IQ and EQ knowledge that can provide jobs achievement in school to succeed optimally. Selectivity is applied to provide information to applicants to get to know the school, to minimize conflict, and hinder the common goal of achieving school quality in accordance with the values and norms that apply in it. Therefore, theselection process will maintain the school culture.

The quality of education in school is an absolute value to ensure the school quality. It is necessary to always preserve and maintain the quality value. Some points in the quality education are (1) Transcendental Approach; (2) Product Based Approach; (3) Use Based Approach; (4) Manufacturing Based Approach; and (5) Value Based Approach. These points explain the quality that is felt but difficult to define, the quality of specifications that can be measured quantitatively, and the quality that depends on the point of view so that the most satisfying and highest education service is related to different needs and desires for someone. To determine this quality, it must be in accordance with the standardization in viewing the quality of education which is meaningful (Pancawardana et al., 2023). As a result of the study conducted, it was found that the leadership and quality of education that occurred at MI Al-

Ikhlas Cikawung, West Bandung showed a positive correlation and a very strong relationship. As previous study states that it is parallel and equivalent to the quality and managerial leadership that can be accepted and carried out cooperatively without any destructive competition (Astuti et al., 2020; Damayani et al., 2020; Juniarti et al., 2020; Romadhon & Zulela, 2021; Wartono et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2021).

A value system shared by members that provides differentiation between one school and another is called a culture of quality in education (Bahri & Arafah, 2020; Efendi & Sholeh, 2023; E. K. Ningsih et al., 2020; Rokhman et al., 2023; Sintasari & Lailiyah, 2024). Quality culture in school is an internalization of value factors and beliefs for each member in the school to serve as ethical guidelines for behavior concerning ethics and etiquette in it. Besides that, the axiological aspects are useful in problem-solving on internal and external problems faced (Ulpah et al., 2023). On the other hand, internal factors are related to the values embedded in humans that are passed down from generation to generation. Then, external factors are related to the influence of the environment that has the potential to change the value system in which it has been embedded in internal factors (Bukhori & Al Ayyubi, 2023).

Culture in the quality of education has various benefits, including (1) Creating an explicit differentiation of school quality culture with other cultures, in this case outside the school; (2) Bringing identity to school members; (3) Facilitating the emergence of commitment to something more macro than just personal interests, so that this can answer that the quality of education must prioritize the common interest and the many, rather than subjective interests; and (4) Improving social systems that can be said to be inter-connected. The implication of all that is in shaping the character of the school as a primary identity in school quality in order to produce quality outcomes and have differences. Therefore, the principal plays a very supremacist role in the management of the school he leads and manages, in an effort to maintain integrity and quality culture as the identity of his school, and to realize good things that are mutually agreed upon in accordance with different cultural values, externally and internally (Djuardi et al., 2019).

Table 8. The 7S Theory

No.	System Tools	Interpretation
1	Strategy	Actions that are coherent with the school goals to maintain competitiveness on a continuous basis.
2	Structure	Being responsible as well as partial and integral tasks in school.
3	System	An iterative process that is carried out continuously in showing the flow or understanding that applies in school.
4	Share Values	Premises that can be said not to be goals but values that are imbued with and understood as organizational values.
5	Staff	It has nothing to do with personality but rather with the composition of people's involvement in school.
6	Skill	The holistic ability of individuals in their capabilities in school.
7	Style	It is not only the managerial that is considered as crucial thing but the actual behavior that is considered crucial in school.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from this research that the principal's leadership and the quality of education at MI Al-Ikhlas Cikawung, West Bandung have a very strong relationship with a correlation coefficient value of 0.907. This research also found that the principal's leadership influences the quality of education. 81.2% of the quality of education in schools and the remaining 18.8% is influenced by external factors with a regression equation model $Y = 18.12 + 0.66X$. This can be seen through the average of the leadership and school quality variables which show values

of 77.68 and 79.65. Meanwhile, the standard values and standard deviation values are 3.248 and 4.311. So it can be said that the leadership of the principal of MI Al Ikhlas Cikawung, West Bandung can provide a positive correlation and a strong relationship to the quality of education based on the results of respondents who include school teachers, Islamic boarding school teachers, and administrators of Islamic boarding schools at MI and Al Ikhlas Cikawung Islamic Boarding School. West Bandung. Thus, further study can be carried out to know differences, correlations, and interactions that occur in student learning outcomes at MI Al Ikhlas Cikawung, West Bandung based on the cognitive stage and gender of students to be compared with other schools. In other words, inferential statistics with the two-way ANOVA test can be used as a research method.

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