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Principal Leadership Management in Building a Positive Culture for Students and Teachers

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the leadership management of madrasah principals, the positive cultural conditions of students and teachers, the strategies of madrasah principals in building a positive culture, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. Research informants included madrasah principals, teachers, and students of MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively to describe the conditions and implementation of madrasah principal leadership in building a positive culture. The results of the study indicate that madrasah principals have an important role in building a positive culture through providing direction, role models, good communication, and involvement with teachers in carrying out various madrasah activities. The developing positive culture is seen from the habit of praying and reciting short verses before learning, discipline, maintaining cleanliness, cooperation, weekly hiziban activities, monthly religious studies, and religious activities with the community. The strategies implemented by madrasah principals are implemented through habituation, direction, role models, and cooperation with teachers and the community. Supporting factors include support from the principal and teachers, a close-knit madrasa environment, and the availability of supporting facilities. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include lateness of teachers on duty, distance from home, and suboptimal community participation and parental support. Based on these research findings, it can be concluded that the leadership management of the madrasa principal plays a role in building a positive culture for students and teachers through role models, habituation, communication, and ongoing collaboration.

Keywords Leadership Management; Madrasah Principal; Positive Culture; Students; Teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial process in developing quality human resources that are not only intellectually superior but also possess strong character. In the context of national education,

strengthening character education is a primary focus, given the increasingly complex moral and social challenges of the modern era. Therefore, schools and Islamic schools (madrasah) have a responsibility not only to transfer knowledge but also to instill character values in students through positive habits and a positive school culture.

According to (Dewantara, 2004) education is a process of guiding all the natural powers that exist in children so that they as humans and members of society can achieve the highest safety and happiness.1 This statement emphasizes that education is not only oriented towards academic aspects, but also towards the formation of character and personality of students.

A positive school culture is a crucial factor in creating a conducive educational environment. A positive culture reflects positive values consistently applied in daily life, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and mutual respect. Deal & Peterson (2009) defines school culture as a pattern of values, beliefs, and traditions that develop within a school and influence the way everyone in the school thinks and acts. Therefore, a positive school culture directly impacts student behavior and teacher performance.

In building a positive school culture, the principal plays a strategic role as an educational leader. The principal serves not only as an administrator but also as a leader capable of directing, guiding, and motivating the entire school community. Mulyasa stated that the principal is the driving force behind improving the quality of education in schools (Mulyasa, 2014). This demonstrates that a school's success is largely determined by the quality of the principal's leadership.

However, in practice, various challenges remain in building a positive culture in schools. One frequently encountered issue is low student discipline, demonstrated by a lack of adherence to rules and responsibilities as students. Furthermore, a suboptimal school culture poses a challenge, with positive values not yet fully internalized in daily life. Another issue is the suboptimal role of teachers in shaping student character, both in terms of role modeling and in integrating character values into the learning process.

This situation also became a focus in the context of research at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI North West Longserang, West Lombok. This madrasah, established decades ago, has contributed to the development of generations. Its founding stemmed from the initiative and concern of community leaders and parents who desired an educational institution for their children.

During its development, the madrasa faced various significant challenges, such as limited teaching staff, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and limited classroom space, which at the time was still using the home of a community leader for teaching and learning activities. However, over time and with the commitment and cooperation of various parties, the madrasa experienced significant growth. This is evident in the improving educational facilities, the addition of more teaching staff, and the availability of more adequate supporting facilities, similar to those of a typical school.

Nevertheless, the challenge of building a positive culture within the madrasah environment remains a matter that requires serious attention. This is particularly relevant to

how the principal's leadership is able to manage and direct all school components in creating a character-based and conducive educational environment.

Although various studies have examined principal leadership and school culture, most of these studies are general in nature and have not specifically examined how principal leadership management fosters a positive culture for students and teachers, particularly in community-based madrasahs. Furthermore, studies integrating principal leadership strategies, teacher roles, and student character building into a single analysis are still limited. Therefore, this study is important to address this gap by in-depth examining the practices of principal leadership management in fostering a positive culture at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI, North West Longserang, West Lombok.

Based on this description, it is clear that the principal's leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a positive culture for students and teachers at the school. Therefore, this study is crucial to conduct in-depth studies on how the principal's leadership develops a positive culture, the strategies implemented, and the factors that support and hinder this process at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI, North West Longserang, West Lombok.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objective, namely to describe and analyze in depth the leadership management of the principal in building a positive culture of students and teachers. This research was conducted at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara West Lombok, which was chosen because it has characteristics that are in accordance with the focus of the research, namely the effort to build a positive culture of students and teachers through the leadership of the principal. The subjects in this study included the Principal, Teachers, and Students who were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

In this study, the data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing the activities and conditions of the school environment to obtain an overview of the implementation of a positive culture and the role of the principal in daily activities. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and students to gather information regarding strategies for implementing a positive culture, the habituation program being implemented, the role of teachers in shaping student character, and obstacles encountered in its implementation. The instruments used included interview guidelines, recording devices, and notebooks. Documentation was used to obtain supporting data through various documents, archives, and evidence of activities related to the research focus (Abdussamad, 2021). Documentation data included the school profile, work program, regulations, habituation activity documents, and photographs of school activities relevant to the implementation of a positive culture.

Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification, which were carried out continuously throughout the research process (Miles et al., 2014). To ensure

data validity, four main techniques were used: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Leadership Management of Madrasah Principals in Building a Positive Culture

Based on an interview with Mr. Akmaludin, the principal, he stated that the principal's leadership in building a positive culture is achieved through role models, guidance, and the instilling of good behavior in the madrasa community. Among the attitudes emphasized are smiling, greeting, being polite, and being courteous in daily life within the madrasa.

In addition to leading by example, the principal strives to create a comfortable atmosphere by establishing good communication and fostering mutual respect. This communication is necessary so that teachers can understand the principal's directions and participate in the implementation of school activities.

This statement is supported by an interview with Mrs. Fitriana Ulva, a teacher. She stated that the principal is a leader who provides direction and input to teachers. The direction is delivered in a manner that is easy to understand, relaxed, yet firm. The principal also provides opportunities for teachers to discuss and ask questions.

Based on the interview results, the madrasah principal's leadership management is evident through exemplary behavior, providing direction, open communication, and teacher involvement. These practices are part of efforts to build a madrasah environment that supports the development of a positive culture among students and teachers.

Positive Cultural Conditions for Students and Teachers

The positive culture at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara is seen in the religious culture, discipline, cleanliness, responsibility, cooperation, and social relations within the madrasah and community environment.

a. Religious Culture

Based on the results of interviews with students, before learning begins, students are accustomed to reading short verses and Selawat Nahdlatain with the teacher's direction.

Azka, a fifth-grade student, explained that every Friday, students take turns delivering sermons and reciting short verses. This activity provides students with the opportunity to practice speaking in front of others while also increasing their involvement in religious activities.

Based on an interview with Sulhadi, S.Pd., a teacher, he explained that religious activities are also carried out through weekly hiziban (religious gatherings) held every Monday night in rotation at students' homes. For certain activities, students are invited by the community to participate. In addition, there are monthly religious study groups open to the community, as well as tahlilan (communal prayer gatherings) or communal prayers when a member passes away.

These activities demonstrate that religious practices in madrasas take place not only in the classroom but also in the community's social life. Students' involvement in these activities provides an opportunity for them to learn to participate in the religious life of their surroundings.

b. Student Discipline

Based on an interview with Azka, he explained that he tried to leave early because his father reminded him not to be late. This statement suggests that developing student discipline is also related to habits and family supervision at home.

Thus, student discipline is influenced not only by madrasa regulations but also by family support. Consistently practicing these habits at the madrasa and at home can help students understand the importance of punctuality and responsibility.

c. Cleanliness and Responsibility

Cleanliness and responsibility are implemented through class duty and group assignments. An interview with Alika explained that students are on duty to clean the classroom and are given group assignments to work on together at school. Students who fail to comply will be reprimanded by the teacher.

Based on this information, cleanliness and responsibility are cultivated through simple daily activities. This practice can indirectly foster discipline, responsibility, and cooperation in daily school life.

d. Role Model and Social Relations

Based on an interview with Mrs. Fitriana Ulva, a teacher, she stated that teachers strive to model honesty, cooperation, and mutual respect for students. These values are instilled through teacher behavior and daily activities at the madrasah. From the students' perspective, Alika explained that the madrasah principal frequently communicates with students and provides motivational stories based on her life experiences. Alika also described the madrasah principal as someone who doesn't get angry easily when students talk to her. This statement indicates that the relationship between the madrasah principal and students is built through communication and motivation. This attitude can support the creation of a comfortable atmosphere for students to interact with the madrasah principal.

Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Building a Positive Culture

Based on the results of interviews with the madrasah principal, teachers, and students, the strategy for building a positive culture is seen through role models, habituating religious activities, guiding discipline, as well as communication and cooperation with the madrasah community.

a. Providing an Example

The principal strives to set a good example for teachers and students. Smiling, greeting, being polite, and being courteous are values emphasized in daily interactions within the school. Teachers also reinforce this role model by instilling honesty, cooperation, and mutual

respect. Thus, positive values are conveyed not only through instruction but also through the behavior displayed by educators.

This role model strategy aligns with efforts to build a positive culture through habits applied in daily life. However, its implementation still requires consistency from the madrasah principal and teachers so that these values can be understood and emulated by students.

b. Implementing Religious Habits

Religious habituation is carried out through reading short verses and Selawat Nahdlatain before learning, weekly hiziban, monthly recitations, as well as lectures and reading short verses by students.

Based on an interview with Mr. Sulhadi, a teacher, he stated that these activities were discussed with the teachers, taking into account the conditions of the madrasah and the community. The madrasah principal provided direction, participated in, and monitored the implementation of the activities.

This habituation demonstrates the collaboration between the madrasah principal and teachers in supporting religious activities. Activities involving the community can broaden students' learning opportunities, particularly in fostering habits of participation and interaction with their surroundings.

c. Cultivating Discipline and Responsibility

Discipline is instilled through instruction to arrive on time, wear uniforms according to schedule, and complete assignments. Students are taught responsibility through cleaning duties, group assignments, and the obligation to maintain a clean environment.

The teacher gives a warning or direction if students do not follow the rules. Based on information from Alika, students who violate the rules can be asked to read short verses and receive a warning from the teacher.

These findings indicate that guidance and reprimands are part of how madrasas guide student behavior. However, discipline must be implemented consistently and accompanied by an explanation of why a rule must be followed.

d. Building Communication and Cooperation

The principal provides guidance to teachers and facilitates discussion regarding the implementation of school activities. Teachers are involved in discussions about activities that are appropriate to student needs and the environment.

Collaboration is also evident in religious activities involving students, teachers, and the community. Hiziban activities in students' homes and participation in community socio-religious activities demonstrate the relationship between the madrasah and its surrounding community.

Thus, the madrasah principal's strategy for building a positive culture relies not only on instruction but also involves role modeling, habituation, communication, and collaboration. Its implementation requires the involvement of the madrasah principal, teachers, students, families, and the community.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Building a Positive Culture

a. Supporting Factors

Based on the results of interviews with the principal and teachers, there are several factors that support the formation of a positive culture at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara.

First, the madrasa's proximity to the community. The madrasa's proximity to residential areas makes it easier for students to participate in community social and religious activities, such as hiziban (Islamic gatherings) and communal prayers when a resident dies.

Second, the involvement of the madrasah principal and teachers. The principal's guidance and teacher participation in implementing activities are crucial for building positive habits within the madrasah environment.

Third, the availability of supporting facilities for religious activities. Sulhadi stated that hizib books are one of the tools supporting religious activities. These tools help students follow the readings during hiziban activities.

Fourth, family support for student discipline. Azka's statement about leaving school early after being reminded by his father shows that families can play a role in helping students develop the habit of punctuality.

These factors show that a positive culture is easier to develop if supported by cooperation between the madrasah principal, teachers, families, and the community environment.

b. Inhibiting Factors

Apart from supporting factors, there are several obstacles in implementing a positive culture.

First, the discipline of some madrasah members still needs improvement. According to teachers, lateness of the teacher on duty can cause morning prayer to be delayed. This situation indicates that the punctuality of educators also affects the smooth running of student habituation activities.

Second, distance from where they live and the time of the activity. Hiziban activities, which take place at night on a rotating basis, can be challenging for students who live far from the activity location.

Third, community participation in monthly religious study groups is suboptimal. According to madrasah principals and teachers, the number of people attending monthly religious study groups is still limited. Busy work, business, and daily living are thought to be among the contributing factors.

Fourth, parental support is uneven. According to teachers, family support for student activities and habits varies. This can impact the continuity of habits implemented at the madrasah and at home.

Based on these findings, the formation of a positive culture is influenced not only by the leadership of the madrasah principal, but also by the discipline of educators, students' living

conditions, family support, and community participation. Therefore, collaboration and ongoing efforts are needed to ensure the smooth running of habituation activities.

Discussion

Leadership Management of Madrasah Principals in Building a Positive Culture

The research results show that madrasah principals exercise their leadership through exemplary behavior, providing direction, open communication, and collaboration with teachers. Madrasah principals not only play a role in organizing activities but also strive to build positive relationships with the madrasah community.

These findings can be linked to Mulyasa's (2020) thinking regarding the principal's management functions, which include planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. In the context of this research, the principal's involvement in providing direction and monitoring activities demonstrates a management role in program implementation. However, the available data are insufficient to explain in detail how all these management functions are formulated in written plans and formally evaluated.

This finding can also be understood through the perspective of (Wahjosumidjo, 2021), who emphasized the principal's ability to influence, direct, and motivate the school community to achieve educational goals. Teachers' statements regarding open communication and providing direction indicate that the principal strives to involve teachers in school activities.

Thus, the leadership of the madrasah principal in this study can be understood as an effort to motivate the madrasah community through exemplary behavior, guidance, communication, and cooperation. However, this discussion is limited to practices supported by the interview results and is not intended to draw conclusions about formal management aspects for which there is no supporting evidence.

Positive Cultural Conditions for Students and Teachers

Research results show that positive culture in madrasas is evident through the inculcation of religious practices, discipline, cleanliness, responsibility, cooperation, and mutual respect. The practice of reciting short verses and the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) prayer before lessons demonstrates an effort to instill religious values through routine activities.

Classroom cleaning activities demonstrate that the values of cleanliness and responsibility are instilled through everyday actions. Meanwhile, group assignments provide opportunities for students to learn to work together and fulfill shared responsibilities.

These findings align with the concept of school culture as described by (Deal & Peterson, 2009), namely the pattern of values, beliefs, and habits that develop in a school and influence the behavior of the school community. In this study, repeated habits are part of the effort to shape student behavior and relationships among members of the madrasa community.

Students' accounts of their families' role in helping them arrive on time also demonstrate that developing a positive culture requires continuity between the madrasah and home

environments. Therefore, the success of habituation depends not only on madrasah rules but also on consistent implementation in daily life.

Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Building a Positive Culture

The strategies identified in the research included role models, fostering religious activities, fostering discipline, and communication and collaboration. These strategies were implemented through the involvement of madrasah principals and teachers, while some activities also connected students with the community.

Role modeling serves to provide examples of expected behavior. Habitualization allows students to repeat positive behavior in their daily activities. Directions and reprimands are used to remind students when their behavior does not comply with the rules. Meanwhile, open communication helps build relationships between the principal, teachers, and students.

This strategy can be linked to the concept of leadership management, which emphasizes the principal's role in guiding and motivating the school community (Wahjosumidjo, 2021). In its implementation, the principal cannot work alone, as establishing a positive culture also requires the role of teachers as educators who interact directly with students.

Hiziban activities, religious study groups, and participation in socio-religious activities demonstrate that the formation of a positive culture extends beyond classroom activities. The community environment also serves as a space for cultivating religious values and social awareness.

According to teachers, some activities were discussed together and developed according to the conditions of the madrasah and the community. Therefore, the role of the madrasah principal in this finding is described as providing direction, support, participation, and monitoring of activities, as supported by the interview results.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Building a Positive Culture

Factors supporting the development of a positive culture include the involvement of the madrasah principal and teachers, the madrasah's close relationship with the community, the availability of hizib books, and family support in fostering discipline. These factors facilitate the implementation of routine activities and extend positive habits to students' social environments.

Conversely, late arrivals from teachers, distance from students' homes, busy communities, and uneven parental support pose challenges. These obstacles demonstrate that implementing a positive culture is related to the conditions of the madrasah community and the environment outside the madrasah.

These findings align with the theoretical framework in the proposal, which explains that the formation of a positive culture is influenced by internal factors, such as teacher leadership and commitment, as well as external factors, such as family support, the community environment, and the availability of infrastructure (Mulyasa, 2020). In this study, these factors were identified through the experiences and statements of informants regarding the implementation of activities at the madrasah.

Thus, efforts to build a positive culture require consistency from the principal and teachers, as well as communication with families and the community. Activities must also take into account the conditions of students and the surrounding community to ensure sustainable habits.

Overall, the research results indicate that madrasah principals play a role in fostering a positive culture through role models, guidance, communication, and involvement in madrasah activities. The positive culture identified encompasses aspects of religiousness, discipline, cleanliness, responsibility, cooperation, and social relations. Its implementation still faces several obstacles, requiring ongoing strengthening and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the Principal's Leadership Management in Building a Positive Culture of Students and Teachers at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara West Lombok, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) The leadership of the madrasah principal at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI Longserang Barat Utara is implemented through direction, guidance, role modeling, and good communication with teachers and students. The madrasah principal strives to create a comfortable, open, disciplined, and respectful madrasah environment. In exercising his leadership, the madrasah principal also involves teachers in planning and implementing various madrasah activities. 2) The positive cultural conditions among students and teachers demonstrate the existence of good habits implemented in daily life at the madrasa. This is evident through prayer and reciting short verses before lessons, discipline, maintaining a clean environment, cooperation in completing assignments, and mutual respect. Furthermore, there are religious activities such as weekly hiziban (Islamic gatherings), monthly religious study groups, and community religious activities. 3) The principal's strategy for building a positive culture involves promoting religious activities, modeling good behavior, providing guidance to teachers and students, and building partnerships with the madrasa community and the surrounding community. The principal also provides opportunities for teachers to participate in activities, ensuring that a positive culture is not solely the principal's responsibility but a shared responsibility. 4) Several factors contribute to and hinder the development of a positive culture. Supporting factors include the support of the principal and teachers, a school environment close to the community, ease of student guidance, and the availability of facilities to support religious activities. Inhibiting factors include teachers being late to morning prayer, the distance between teachers and students, and suboptimal community participation and parental support in some school activities.

Thus, the leadership management of the madrasah principal plays a crucial role in fostering a positive culture for students and teachers at MI Al Mujahidin NWDI North West Longserang. This effort is carried out through exemplary behavior, habituation, communication, guidance, and ongoing collaboration. The positive culture that has developed

needs to be continuously maintained and enhanced to become an ingrained habit in the lives of all members of the madrasah.

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