





The Principal's Strategy In Developing The Leadership Character Of Students at Pondok Pesantren Qur'an And IT Al-Mahir Surakarta

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The principal's strategy in shaping the leadership character of students is very important to prepare a generation of future leaders who are professional and trustworthy. This study aims to determine the planning, describe the implementation of the strategy and determine the evaluation of the principal's strategy to develop the leadership character of students at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta. This writing uses primary data and is qualitative. The data source was obtained from the results of a case study from the PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta educational institution during one leadership period, namely the 2024-2025 academic year. The results of the study revealed that the principal's strategy to develop the leadership character of students at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta is: (1) The principal makes plans by forming programs to develop the leadership character of students (2) in implementing the strategy, the principal optimizes the leadership character development program for students through forum meetings. (3) Evaluation of the principal's strategy for developing student leadership character by means of performance assessments to determine whether the program being implemented can develop the students' leadership character.

Strategi kepala sekolah dalam membentuk karakter Leadership santri sangatlah penting untuk menyiapkan generasi pemimpin masa depan yang profesional dan amanah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui perencanaan, mendeskripsikan pelaksaan strategi dan mengetahui evaluasi strategi kepala sekolah untuk mengembangkan karakter leadership santri di PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta. Penulisan ini menggunakan data primer dan bersifat kualitatif. Sumber data didapatkan dari hasil studi kasus dari lembaga pendidikan PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta selama satu kepemimpinan yaitu *TA* 2024-2025. Hasil mengungkapkan bahwa strategi kepala sekolah untuk mengembangkan karakter leadership santri di PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta adalah: (1) Kepala sekolah membuat perencanaan dengan membentuk program-program pengembangan karakter leadership santri (2) dalam pelaksaan strategi kepala sekolah mengoptimalkan program pengembangan karakter leadership santri melalui rapat forum. (3) Evaluasi strategi Kepala sekolah untuk mengembangangkan karakter leadership siswa dengan cara penilaian kinerja untuk mengetahui apakah program yang dijalankan dapat mengembangan karakter leadership santri.

A. INTRODUCTION

Learners are human individuals who consciously want to develop their potential (physical and spiritual) through the process of teaching and learning activities available at a certain level or level and type of Education. Learners in educational activities is the main object (central object), to which everything related to educational activities is referred (Yeti, 2014).

Pondok Pesantren is a symbol of a typical religious institution with a thick Islamic culture. Pondok pesantren diera is currently experiencing rapid development (Hidayat et al., 2024). Where the concept of pesantren is not only the activity of reciting the Yellow Book and memorizing the Qur'an but has been developed with the concept of digital, entrepreneurship, and others . This certainly has an impact on the existing value shifts, but it is possible that the students will have *soft skill*other soft skills in fields that match their talents and interests. With this shift, pesantren education is expected to be able to adapt to global developments. Where cultural acculturation is certainly a certainty. This is a challenge for the pesantren world to keep preparing superior successor cadres but not eliminate the identity of pesantren which is full of ethics, prioritizing good ideas and other good things (Amaludin, 2020).

Zainal mentioned that in this modern era, there is a demand to improve leadership character education in formal education institutions. These demands arise due to social phenomena such as the lack of a sense of responsibility, confidence, and independence in learners, as well as the difficulty of adapting to the social environment. Therefore, schools are expected to improve the strategy of personality formation of students through leadership character. One of the important aspects in leadership theory is courage and independence in making decisions (Anisa & Pramitha, 2024).

Education is a process to educate the life of the nation by training and growing information, skills, thinking, and character (Haryati & Syahidin, 2023). The purpose of education is to develop the ability and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. Education must create a learning environment and an active learning process, so that learners have spiritual strength, religious, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed in the life of the nation and state (law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, 2013)

According to Yatminiwati, strategic management is defined as a process or series of decision-making activities that are fundamental and thorough along with

their technical implementation that are made to achieve an organizational goal. The purpose of strategy according to Pahlevi is to describe a clear direction for the organization in achieving its goals. The objectives of the strategy should provide a more specific and accountable measure. There are 3 steps / stages to realize the goals of the strategy, namely 1) Strategy formulation stage (strategy Formulation), namely the formulation of the basic steps of a solid strategy such as vision and mission, SWOT analysis (advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats), formulating long-term goals, creating alternative strategies, and choosing strategies that will used, 2) strategy implementation phase (Strategy Implementation) is the implementation of strategies with leadership policies (leadership competencies), motivation and adequate resources, 3) strategy evaluation phase (Strategy Evaluation) is an important activity to do is to review the implementation of strategies(internal and external factors), measure achievement, and improvement for the next activity. The principle of evaluation is to see the suitability between the implementation and strategic planning (Riyuzen Praja Tuala, 2024).

In this study the authors took a discussion related to the strategy of the principal in the development of character Leadership students in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta. PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta is a boarding school that not only teaches the Yellow Book and memorizing the Qur'an, but provides skills to students related to IT. On the other hand, students must also have leadership skills Leadership as a support to have a share in the community for the future. This study emphasizes on 3 aspects of management functions, namely: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Referring to previous research related to the research that researchers take, there is still little research that discusses the principal's strategy for student leadership character development. The results of Triana and Devi's research (2024) show that the principal's strategy to develop student leadership character at Alam Mutiara Umat Junior High School in Tulungagung Regency is: (1) the principal makes plans by forming student leadership character development programs (2) in implementing the principal's strategy to optimize student leadership character development programs through forum meetings. (3) evaluation of the principal's strategy to develop the character of student leadership by way of performance appraisal to determine whether the program run can develop the character of Student leadership. The similarity of Triana and Devi's research with the author's research is the subject of research, and the difference lies in the object of research.

Research results by Muslimah (2020) the principal's strategy is to improve the quality of human resources in the field of ICT in terms of facilities and infrastructure, openness with developments to face things that will happen in the digital era 4.0, reactions that will be carried out quickly about changes in the 4.0 era, oriented to processes and results, mastering formula 4C, namely: critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration. The similarity of Muslimah research with the author's research is on the subject of research, and the difference lies in the object of research.

The results of Ahmad (2015) showed that the principal's strategy in shaping the character of students with philosophical leadership, exemplary, discipline, instructional leadership, quality leadership, and empowerment of teachers and educational personnel. The teacher's strategy is exemplary, habituation, and a touch of the heart. The strategy of parents and society is effective communication and effective partnership. The similarity of Ahmad's research with the author's research is on the object of research, and the difference lies in the character of the students in question more specifically.

The article entitled "principal strategy in the development of leadership character students in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta" aims to determine the planning, describe the implementation of the strategy and know the principal strategy evaluation to develop leadership character students in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta. This study is expected to provide insight and more in-depth information about the principal's strategy in developing the character of santri leadership. The results of this study can be the basis for other educational institutions in the development of quality and integrity of santri leadership, so as to create a superior next generation and be able to overcome various problems in the future.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This type of research is Field Research (field research) is research yang conducted to dig and examine the data by plunging directly into the field. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach, meaning that the data collected is not in the form of numbers, but the data comes from interview scripts, notes, documents and other official documents. This study is a descriptive Phenomenological Research using qualitative approach, researchers use data collection techniques with observation techniques, interviews and documentation about the principal's strategy in the development of character leadheship students at Pondok Pesantren Qur'an and IT Al-

Mahir Surakarta. The subjects of the study were principals, teachers and students. The types of data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model are data reduction, data display, and data conclusion drawing/verification.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The leader or principal is synonymous with influence, especially theinfluence that inspires subordinates. Vision and mission it is important to allow others to feel as though theirwork has purpose and meaning beyond the tasks they perform each day communicating thebig picture on a regular basis will help strengthen the reasonfor the organization's or foundation's existence. In this case, it becomes a support in the success of the strategy carried out by the leadership of Islamic boarding schools to achieve the goals desired (inom Nasution, 2022). According to Syalsa, the strategy used by the principal must be appropriate and effective so that the program compiled by dapat runs well (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024).

The principal or school merupak the highest leadership in the school (Yunita et al., 2025). His leadership pattern will be very influential and even very decisive for the progress of the school. Therefore, in modern education, the leadership of the principal needs to be taken seriously. The success of an educational institution largely depends on the leadership of the school principal (Istikomah, 2018).

1. Principal strategy planning for leadership character development of students in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta

Planning is the earliest function of all management functions, experts also agree on this. Planning is the process of activities to systematically present all the activities that will be carried out to achieve certain goals. Planning can be defined as setting goals, *budgets*, *pilicy*, procedures, and programs of an organization. With planning, the management function is useful for setting goals to be achieved, setting costs, establishing all regulations and guidelines that must be implemented. Planning includes several aspects, including what will be done, who will do, when it will be done, where it will be done, how to do it, what is needed to achieve the goal with a maximum(Hasan Hariri, 2016).

According to Indriyo Gito Sudarman and Agus Mulyono on the basis of the breadth of the scope of the problem and the range contained in a planning, the planning can be distinguished in three forms, namely (1) global Plan which is the determination of overall long-term goals, (2) strategic plan is a plan prepared to determine the goals

of activities or tasks long-term dimensions, and (3) Operational Plans which are short-term activities to support the achievement of long-term goals, both in global planning and strategic (Hasan Hariri, 2016).

In terms of institution management led by the principal, at least the principal has a role in the realm of planning lembanganya. According to Syalsa, the strategy used by the principal must be appropriate and effective so that the program prepared can run well (Anisa & Pramitha, 2024). The principal of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta conducts planning with the aim of achieving the vision of the Islamic boarding school that has been set, and in the planning activities, the vision is used as a guide for the development of strategies and concrete steps in achieving these goals. The principal's leadership in responding to various developments and innovations in learning is very active and always strives to obtain information about these changes (Aslamiah, 2015)

The principal of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta has an important responsibility in drawing up a student leadership character development program to achieve the school's vision. Strategic planning has recently become very important in line with the rapid development of the environment and is very difficult to predict, such as the rapid development of technology, increasingly complex managerial work, and the acceleration of changes in the external environment (Hasan Hariri, 2016). Strategies used include annual program meetings and semester meetings as a forum to develop student leadership character development programs. Implementation of hands-on learning programs through projects is also undertaken to develop students 'leadership skills. Programs such as himsa organization management (Himpunan Santri Al-Mahir), Rihlah Tarbawi, special learning soft skills Leadership, Social Service, internship, santri Khidmah and others are run to achieve the goal of developing student leadership character.

As a leader, the principal of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta shows an open attitude towards criticism and opinions of others, adaptive, and innovative. In Sulistyorini's opinion, which states that the principal should not have an anti-critical attitude because it can hinder the progress of the school (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024). In preparing the santri character development program, he always considers the input of the foundation staff, homers and teachers. Principals are accustomed to a pattern of safe and transparent environment where all parties are allowed to express their opinions honestly. This open attitude allows good cooperation in drawing up programs, so that these programs become more qualified and relevant to the goals of

the school. Nurhamilah argues that by accepting criticism and suggestions, principals can improve school policies and improve the quality of education in schools (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024).

The principal at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta has an important strategy in developing student leadership character development programs to achieve the school's vision and mission. The strategy is implemented through strategic planning meetings (Resntra), annual program meetings (Prota) and semester program meetings (Promes) designed to facilitate student leadership development through organizational programs HIMSA(Himpunan Santri Al-Mahir), Rihlah Tarbawi, special learning soft skills Leadership, MPLP Workshop (Introduction period Pesantren environment), Baksos, internship, Santri Khidmah and Enterpreneur. In addition to the principal actively involved in the process of preparing the leadership character development program as mentioned above, the principal also participates in monthly and daily programs with different project learning themes each semester, such as MPLP workshops, delivery of UML analytical materials, and guidance on portfolio and final project (TA) programs.

Thus, students are expected to form a professional leadership character, have competence, and are ready to plunge into society and the world of work. In planning this program, the principal showed an open and responsive attitude to criticism and suggestions from the foundation staff, homeroom teachers, and teachers. The involvement of all parties in the deliberations ensures that decisions are taken together and the responsibility for drawing up such programs becomes a shared responsibility. With a mature strategy and implementation of well-planned programs, PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta is committed to achieving the vision and mission of the school in developing the character of student leadership on an ongoing basis.

2. Implementation of the Principal Strategy for the Development of Leadership Character Students PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta

Actuating is an effort to direct or move Labor or man power and utilize available facilities to carry out work simultaneously. This function motivates subordinates or workers to work hard so that the goals of the organization can be achieved effectively. This function is essential for the realization of organizational goals (Hasan Hariri, 2016). The implementation of leadership is carried out in such a way as to achieve the direction and objectives that have been determined by providing the direction of the

activities of its scope. Leadership if carried out optimally will support the achievement of expectations from the organizers of the LED process (Aris D, 2023).

The principal of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta has a strategic contribution in achieving educational goals by optimizing themselves and cooperating with stakeholders in implementing educational programs. Hendri believes that the optimization of school principals can be done by increasing leadership competence, strengthening cooperative relationships with teachers and school staff, and utilizing technology and facilities in school management (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024).

Leaders motivate people in a variety of ways or strategies. First, the leader always articulates the vision of the organization by emphasizing the value of the intended audience. This will bring up awareness of the importance of the work that the individual does. Second, leaders involve individuals in decision-making on how to achieve the organization's vision. This will arouse individual concern. The third is to support staff's efforts to realize the vision by providing training, feedback, and role modeling, thus helping staff's professional growth and improving their self-esteem. Finally, good leaders recognize and value success in a way that not only builds awareness of achievement, but also creates sense of belonging and organizational need. Thus, the work done will be able to motivate individuals intrinsically (Andiriani, 2011).

Leaders do not lead by issuing orders. Leaders communicate well and often, and they listen to others. Hearing does not mean stopping supervising or stopping managing something for which he is responsible or failing to play the role of leader. To hear means to cooperate with the ideas and talents of others and to give energy into the creation of vision (Hasan Hariri, 2016).

Through increasing the competence of leadership, collaboration with teachers and school staff, as well as the use of technology and facilities and infrastructure, principals have made a significant contribution to achieving educational goals. Program organisasi HIMSA (Himpunan Santri Al-Mahir), Rihlah Tarbawi, pembelajaran khusus Soft Skill Leadership, Workshop MPLP (Masa Pengenalan Lingkungan Pesantren), Baksos, Magang, Santri Khidmah dan Enterpreneur., has been running well and actively followed by the students. The principal also involves various parties, including parents of students, coaches, supervisors, foundations, and agencies, in the process of evaluating the success of the program, showing an open attitude to input from various parties for program optimization. By providing leadership training

materials and assessing the development of students, the principal provides meaningful support for students to develop leadership character. The overall efforts of the principal and support from various parties have succeeded in achieving the vision of the school in printing the Qur'ani generation, with good character, professional, and competitive.

Today increasingly felt the importance of educational facilities in achieving educational goals. Educational facilities are seen to help the success of the educational process. In addition, educational facilities facilitate the educational process (Afifudin, 2014). The facilities at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta are sufficient to support student leadership character development programs. According to Ahmad, adequate facilities are very important in supporting the optimization of the implementation of educational programs (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024). Physical facilities such as LED, LCD projectors, folding tables, WiFi, and non-physical facilities such as official licensing and operational permits (IJOP) Pondok pesantren have been provided to create a conducive learning environment. Putri mentioned that facilities and infrastructure in educational institutions show that adequate facilities and infrastructure are very important for the success of student learning in achieving educational goals (Triana May Latul Anisa, 2024). With adequate facilities and infrastructure, the implementation of santri leadership character development programs can run optimally at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta.

Leaders must have the skills to influence, encourage, direct, guide, and mobilize others involved in the implementation and development of educational instruction in the digital age (Silawati, 2023). The principal has optimally implemented the santri leadership character development program through various activities that involve the active participation of the students. In this effort, HIMSA also plays a role in strengtheningthe character of santri leadership. Measuring the success of the program is carried out by involving various related parties, such as parents, the community in the school environment, supervisors, foundations, and agencies. Input from various parties is appreciated and used as a reference to continue to improve the santri leadership character development program santri.

In addition to optimizing program activities, the principal also ensures theavailability of facilities and infrastructure that support the development of santri leadership character. Physical and non-physical facilities and infrastructure have been provided well, including tools and Learning media, folding tables and chairs, as well as

formal legal licensing for activities outside the school. The concept of Nature School has also been well utilized as a laboratory and learning place for project and leadership activities. With a holistic approach and involving all parties, PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta has succeeded in creating a conducive environment for the development of santri leadership character. The hope is that the students in this school will become competent, professional leaders of the future. percayaconfident, and have a strong leadership ethics to answer the needs of the community.

3. Principal strategy evaluation for student leadership character development in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta

Oteng Sutrisna defines assessment as a set of activities that can determine whether or not an organization's programs or activities are being carried out to achieve the goals specified (Afifudin, 2014). Is an important element in the student leadership character development program at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta. According To Dudung A. Dasuqi and Setyo Sumantri, principles of evaluation in the management of education, namely:

- a. Comprehensive: the evaluation covers the whole element.
- b. Cooperative: involves everything related.
- c. Economical: no waste.

In the dimension of managerial competence, the principal has carried out an evaluation of school activity programs with appropriate procedures to ensure an increasein the development of santri leadership characters. Some of the activities carried out by the principal in this evaluation include conducting periodic assessments of the performance of teachers. The principal monitors the teachers while teaching to ensure that the teaching delivered also includes strengthening the character of the students. In addition, the principal is also active in assisting in every activity at school and noting efforts related to developing the character of santri leadership.

Evaluation is a specific rather than global process, which looks for specific ways to progress rather than just looking for clues about where your school is on the spectrum of good and bad. Although global conclusions can be sought and made. Evaluation is most productive when it becomes a part of looking ahead and moving forward. While there are many aspects of evaluation, many issues are potentially complex to consider and many levels of experience to learn. However, the basic purpose of the evaluation is still to prepare for effective and smooth progress. In this

case the most important assets are human skills, motivation, and attitudes (Husni, 2015).

The evaluation objectives of this strategy include various stages, from initial planning to program implementation. Evaluation is carried out after the program is completed and periodically at the beginning of each year to discuss the design of the program for the next year. This evaluation includes an assessment of previous learning programs to identify deficiencies and provide recommendations for improvement. Evaluation meeting after the implementation of activities involving students and students. The principal submits the results of the evaluation and provides recommendations so that further activities can be improved. The main target of evaluation is the students, where they are given an assessment of their leadership character. If deficiencies are found, the principal provides personal input to the students to help them improve aspects of leadership. Integrated evaluation in this process ensures continuous improvement and provides direction for the development of beneficial santri characters in the community. The results are expected to produce future leaders who are professional, trustworthy, confident, and have strong leadership ethics in the future.

D. CONCLUSION

The principal's strategy in developing *the leadership character* of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta students is very planned and involves active participation from various parties. Planning leadership character development programs *leadership* is one of the principal's main focuses in developing *kepemimpinan*student leadership character. The principal is always open to criticism and suggestions from homeroom teachers, teachers, and staff, thus allowing for improvement and development of a more optimal program.

Implementation of the strategy, the principal tries to maximize the leadership programs that have been established as a means of developing the character *leadership* santri leadership. This effort is supported by the availability of physical and non-physical facilities and infrastructure at PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta, this is intended to make the process of learning and teaching activities more conducive and support the development of santri leadership character.

Evaluation of the principal's strategy is carried out periodically by involving an assessment of the performance of teachers and mentoring of each activity in the school.

The evaluation assists principals in assessing program achievement and formulating further development plans. The main evaluation target is the students of PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta, which is the main focus in improving *leadership character development* in PPQIT Al-Mahir Surakarta.

This study can be the direction of education policy in the present in terms of providing soft skills in the form of planting character Leadership learners, especially at the high school level. Likewise, this study can be material for the next researcher to dig deeper related to the role or strategy of the principal in developing other soft skills, not limited to leadership skills.

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