

Pesantren-Based Principal Leadership Symbolic Interactionism Perspective in Schools

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Abstract:

This study aims to discover the symbolic interactionism perspective of teachers or subordinates towards the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid. To achieve the objectives of this study, researchers used a qualitative approach, with a type of phenomenological research. The subjects in this study were teachers and subordinates at Nurul Jadid High School. At the same time, data collection is done through interviews and observation. The study results show that the leadership behaviour of the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid leads to transformational leadership based on intelligent and breakthrough social communication. The process of symbolic interaction between the teacher or subordinates and the principal of a pesantren-based school is mediated by the values used to represent an object. The values that are built include; the value of integrity, the value of simplicity, and the value of dedication. These values occur based on the subordinate's meaning of the principal's behaviour, which creates a symbolic world at Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo High School.

Keywords: *Symbolic Interaction, Local Wisdom Value, Transformational Leadership*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tentang perspektif interaksionisme simbolik para guru atau bawahan terhadap kepala sekolah di SMA Nurul Jadid. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan jenis penelitian fenomenologi. Subyek dalam penelitian ini adalah guru dan bawahan di SMA Nurul Jadid. Sementara pengambilan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku kepemimpinan kepala sekolah di SMA Nurul Jadid mengarah kepada kepemimpinan transformasional berbasis smart and breakthrough social communication. Proses interaksi simbolik antara guru atau bawahan dengan kepala sekolah berbasis pesantren dimediasi oleh nilai-nilai yang digunakan untuk merepresentasikan mengenai suatu obyek. Nilai yang terbangun antara lain; nilai integritas, nilai kesederhanaan, dan nilai pengabdian. Nilai-nilai tersebut terjadi berdasarkan pada pemaknaan bawahan terhadap perilaku kepala sekolah yang menciptakan dunia simbolik di SMA Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo.

Kata Kunci: *Interaksi Simbolik, Nilai Kearifan Lokal, Kepemimpinan Transformasional*

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INTRODUCTION

The dynamics and problems of education faced by almost all educational institutions, including Indonesia, require quality assurance, the quality of graduates, processes, facilities, and so on. This phenomenon also targets educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren. Pesantren, a traditional educational institution unique to Indonesia, could have a better impression in terms of quality (Fadli & Syafi'i, 2021). Pesantren are impressed as they are (taken for granted) responding to societal changes and demands. However, slowly but surely, pesantren are starting to make accommodations and concessions while maintaining the inherent values by making progressive changes. Vision, perception, and position towards the outside world have changed.

Other traditional educational institutions outside the pesantren. Success and superior quality in legal and educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren are heavily influenced by progressive and visionary leaders who combined characteristics, modalities and modern management in a unified governance system. A visionary leader is a leader who has efforts to improve quality and quality that is more focused and able to carry out the goals of the vision of the leader and leadership, namely as a driving force, dynamist, motivator and able to inspire the organization (Pelealu, 2022). Moreover, a vision is essential for organizations that want to create a compelling and competitive organization (Mukti, 2018). Social modality, affective and normative commitment and managerial abilities of school principals are essential in managing prominent educational institutions.

Accommodations and concessions to meet community demands as part of the da'wah path, which is the mission of the pesantren. Leadership factors strongly influence institutional change carried out by educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren. Leaders in pesantren-based educational institutions play an essential role in creating superior educational institutions that maintain the fundamental character of pesantren while carrying out innovations that align with society's needs and demands. The actualization of quality education services in appropriate and accountable governance will increase the quality of the transformation process to produce quality output (Abrori, 2018).

However, educational institutions under the auspices of Islam The ability of the principal to lead educational institutions is one of the functions of the principal in addition to his abilities as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, innovator and motivator. According to Humphhill, as cited by Fiedler and Chammer, leadership is an initial step whose result will be a consistent group interaction pattern that aims to solve several related problems. From this basic knowledge, the leadership approach that school principals often apply is a behavioural approach whose goal is to form an effective school organization without ignoring the interests and needs of subordinates if used optimally (Musaddad, 2020).

The principal's leadership behaviour and the influence on subordinates result from interpreting subordinates to their leader's behaviour. Loyalty, obedience, and obedience to the pesantren-based school community arise from

the principal's leadership and the harmonious interaction of the principal with the district. The indication of harmonious interaction between the principal and the community is that the principal always shows integrity, honesty, concern and communicativeness.

Interaction and communication through symbols are signs with a particular (understandable meaning) meaning that appear in other individuals with the same idea. Communication that occurs does not only involve verbal messages such as words, phrases, or sentences; the communication process also involves exchanging non-verbal symbols in the form of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, and touch so that the actor himself is involved in the process and can read it (Umiarso & Elbandiansyah, 2014; Alfajari, 2016).

Symbolic interactionism refers to the distinctive nature of human interactions. Humans in symbolic interaction mutually interpret and define their actions. Interaction between individuals is marked by the use of symbols, interpretation or by the mutual understanding of the intent of each other's actions. In other words, symbolic interaction does not see humans acting as a stimulus-response but based on the meaning given to that action. Symbolic interaction does not see human acts as stimulus-response but based on the meaning given to such action (Sukidin, 2002; Wiwitan, 2021).

Symbolic interactionism as a perspective through four essential ideas. First, symbolic interactionism focuses more on social interaction, where social activities occur between individuals. By focusing on interaction as a study, this perspective has created a more active image of humans and rejects the passive idea of humans as determined organisms. Second, human action is caused by social interaction and influenced by interactions within the individual. In other words, actors are influenced by interactions with other individuals while trying to share meaning with society (Huda & Muhsin, 2022). Third, this perspective focuses on all forms of action carried out at present, not in the past. Fourth, humans are seen as more challenging to predict and more active, meaning that humans tend to direct themselves according to the choices they make.

Many other researchers, both the kyai leadership or principals or madrasas under the auspices of the pesantren, have researched leadership. Among the several studies conducted by Mundiri (2016), The principal's leadership behaviour includes task orientation, relationship orientation, and spiritual values orientation. Second, the principal's leadership in building a pesantren-based work culture impacts affective commitment, normative commitment, job satisfaction and lack of turnover intention, and physical, emotional, and cognitive work involvement. Muali et al. (2021) Sufism-based principals' leadership is essential in fostering students' character. Fajarudin(2022), Pesantren-based leadership requires a figure with the criteria of Pesantren-style leadership, such as being adaptive, selective, independent, robust and adhering to Islamic teachings to create an ideal education system. However, these studies only examine leadership behaviour without using social theory perspectives such as symbolic interactionism or dramaturgy. These studies resulted in findings on the behaviour or characteristics of leaders that are

in line with the orientation or focus of the research, as was the result of Mundry's research which resulted in the finding that the leadership behaviour of Pesantren-based principals to improve work culture, a leader has effective leadership behaviour which has the following characteristics; (1) task orientation; orientation that prioritizes the completion of work, (2) relationship orientation (relationship-oriented). This study aims to determine the symbolic interactionism perspective of teachers or subordinates towards the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research on the leadership of Islamic boarding school heads with a symbolic interactionism perspective at Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo Senior High School is a study that can be categorized as qualitative research. In its implementation, this research was conducted using a phenomenological approach. In this phenomenological approach, researchers also involve their perspective on symbolic interaction. Symbolic interaction (interactionism) is one of the main perspectives in the social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and communication. However, recently other fields such as education, politics, and other social fields have begun to use this perspective in studying their study topics. So that in this case, the researcher tries to understand the subject of his research from the point of view of the subject by paying attention to making observations and creating contextual schemes.

This type of phenomenological research aims to understand phenomena or events regarding the management of pesantren-based principals from the perspective of symbolic interactionism in schools. Phenomenology is used in this study to reveal the meaning behind the phenomenon (women) and the meaning of the research focus. The researcher in this study was the critical instrument in charge of collecting data, analyzing themes, and preparing research reports.

In carrying out this research, before conducting interviews, the researchers determined the people the researchers determined as informants, including Akhmad Holel, the key informant in this study, who is the Head of Administration for SMA Nurul Jadid. Furthermore, the researcher took informants from the Curriculum Deputy Head and several teachers. Researchers used observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation in this study. After collecting the data, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis based on Spradley's framework. This analysis included domain analysis, which provided an overview of the social situation under study; taxonomic analysis, which involved collecting and documenting the data; component analysis, which involved triangulating data collection through observation, follow-up interviews, or selected documentation to identify specific dimensions for each element. Once the researcher found similar characteristics or patterns from the taxonomic analysis, they conducted more profound observations to reveal descriptions or patterns in the data. Lastly, the researcher analyzed a cultural theme, identifying common threads from the domain, taxonomy, and component analysis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The leadership of the SMA Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo from the symbolic interactionism perspective at SMA Nurul Jadid arises from the principal's leadership behaviour. Researchers explored information through several informants at Nurul Jadid High School, such as the Curriculum Deputy, Curriculum Development Section, and Head of Administration at Nurul Jadid High School, to find out about leadership behaviour and interactions built through symbols in the leadership process of Nurul Jadid High School, both in organization and integrity.

Discipline

The disciplinary behaviour of the principal in the leadership process from the perspective of symbolic interactionism at Nurul Jadid High School is a meaning that arises from the understanding of the teaching and educational staff at the school. The disciplinary behaviour of the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid based on the perceptions of the teaching and academic staff arises from the principal's behaviour, who always arrives on time. This behaviour is shown consistently, both inside and outside the school, related to the development of educational institutions.

The results of the speech from the Head of Administration at Nurul Jadid High School showed that some of the disciplinary behaviour of Mr Didik P. Wicaksono as the head of Nurul Jadid High School, he always emphasizes work programs and controls or supervises programs that have become an agreement. Mr Didik's efforts in carrying out supervision are to hold performance meetings structurally and with all work units (work units) every month. This significantly influenced the discipline and work ethic of the teachers and staff at Nurul Jadid High School.

Hasibuan argues that discipline is a person's awareness and willingness to comply with all company regulations and applicable social norms (Isvandiar & Idris, 2018). Work discipline is an attitude of respect for company rules and regulations that exist in employees, which causes them to adapt voluntarily to company rules and regulations (Maniku et al., 2019). It is easier for corporate organizations to achieve optimal results with good employee discipline (Arianto & Setiyowati, 2020). A leader with discipline is also a factor in directing disciplined employees to work to achieve organizational goals because the quality of leadership in an organization plays a dominant role in organizational success. So discipline is an absolute thing to be followed by all employees (Arif, 2020).

Integrity

The behaviour in upholding the integrity of the Nurul Jadid High School based on the perceptions of the teaching and educational staff arises because the principal's behaviour is always obedient and very responsible in the organization. This behaviour is shown consistently during meetings and other activities related to the development of educational institutions.

"...All of that was faced by him. One of the examples that he did in reflecting integrity was delegating tasks according to their duties and

responsibilities. Moreover, outside the forum, he is like a friend, mingling with everyone, very open, and caring for everyone. However, when he is already in the organization, he must place himself according to his position as the principal responsible for an institution's running."

As explained above, the Deputy Head of the Nurul Jadid High School curriculum put forward the character or behaviour of a leader who upholds integrity, such as Mr Didik P. Wicaksono, the head of Nurul Jadid High School, as follows: 1) Honest, he has an honest and trustworthy personality. 2) open (being transparent), being transparent about opinions and decisions to be agreed upon. 3) Obey in carrying out the rules and ethics in the organization. 4) be responsible (obediently organized) in carrying out duties and mandates. 5) Capable of taking risks (able to take risks), he has high courage in taking risks to develop the educational institutions he leads. 6) Have care (caretaker), have a mentality of serving (serviceability) in all circles, both for teachers and students, and keep a low profile (low profile).

The term integrity comes from the English "integrity", which means comprehensive, complete or everything. The Oxford Dictionary relates the meaning of integrity to one's personality, namely being honest and whole. (Sukarna, 2018). Someone with solid integrity can influence other people around him with his principles. If a leader with low integrity also has little influence on others (Arifin & Takrim, 2021). There are three principles of integrity contained in Proverbs 31:1-9: first, be consistent in every word and action. Both are honest in doing everything. Third, make decisions reasonably (Sualang et al., 2022). Some interpret integrity as moral superiority and equate integrity with "identity". Integrity is also defined as actions that are consistent with the values and code of ethics adhered to.

Humble

The humble or humble behaviour of the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid based on the perceptions of the teaching and educational staff arises because of the principal who always mingles and gets along with all walks of life. This behaviour is shown consistently inside and outside the academic institution forum.

"There is no gap in life. There is no gap, meaning there is no jaim-jaim. The headmaster mingled with everyone. However, still, the leadership hierarchy is running, but in communication and getting along, the principal is very humble. Welcome to anyone, not only to teachers and education staff but also to students."

The results of the above statement are the perceptions of the Deputy Head of Curriculum at Nurul Jadid High School that the leaders at Nurul Jadid High School do not discriminate between their subordinates and are friendly to all levels of society, such as teachers and students. Moreover, from the speech of Mrs Arum, as part of the school curriculum development and one of the teachers at Nurul Jadid High School said that the humble leadership of the principal has a very positive effect on the innovative behaviour of teachers and subordinates and can generate an urge or motivation to learn from experience continually others.

In an educational institution environment, the humility of a leader is the key to good relations, both with members of the organization and with parties

outside the organization. According to Owens & Hekman (2012), the character of a role model is shown by leaders who show simplicity and friendliness, namely being able to admit mistakes and self-limitations. The nature of a humble leader is to pay attention to one's strengths and weaknesses and understand these to develop self-competencies (knowledge, abilities, and attitudes). Leaders do not hesitate to admit their own mistakes and be honest about mistakes made. (Arifin, 2021). Embracing and encouraging the spirit of service is a humble leader, as we can provide the best service for the products/services we offer (Arifin & Haryanto, 2020). One example of a humble leader is close to his people (Wahid, 2020). Appreciation for subordinate contributions expressed by humble leaders can help subordinates realize the importance of their contributions to the organization and facilitate subordinates' perception of meaning in their work (Sholikhah, 2021).

Authoritative

Based on the perceptions of educators and educational staff, the authoritative attitude of the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid arises because the principal's behaviour is very charismatic. This behaviour is shown in almost all activities related to the development of educational institutions.

As a teacher at Nurul Jadid High School explained, behind the attitude of the principal, who is humble and friendly to all people, both subordinates and students, he still maintains his authority, has high charisma, can be a rebuke and has a spirit of decency (*karakul karma*) as a leader who does not forget ethics in *pesantren*.

One of the essential components of power that a leader must consider is authority, which includes popularity, the rational capacity to solve socio-economic, political, intellectual or intellectual problems, and characteristics that are by the ideals and beliefs of the majority of citizens public (Deeng & Mawara, 2018). Highly authoritative about having a determined nature to be able to control and influence. In addition, leaders with high authority must have attitudes and behaviours that reflect the ideal leader, namely, carrying out leadership with complete seriousness so that they can be obeyed and respected by their subordinates or those they lead (Muhsyanur & Verlin, 2020). By acting like that, a leader will become authoritative in the sense of being liked and loved by his subordinates (Aryatnaya Giri, 2021). Leaders must be authoritative but not scary so that a compassionate attitude arises and evenly distributes sustenance to the people (Perdana & Sobri, 2021).

Able to Support

The behaviour of supporting the principal at SMA Nurul Jadid based on the perceptions of the teaching and educational staff arises from the principal's behaviour, who always encourages or motivates every school activity. This behaviour is shown consistently in all activities related to the development of educational institutions.

"The principal encourages everyone, both teachers and students. If there are moments or competitions or whatever, he is very supportive as long as it does not contradict the rules of the *pesantren*. The current examples are the GCC and

SMA AWARD organized by the East Java Education Office, and he supports them. Support in terms of enthusiasm than the facilities needed by all teachers to help."

The result of the above statement is the perception of the Head of Curriculum for SMA Nurul Jadid that the headmaster of SMA Nurul Jadid is a leader who supports every event/moment at school, he does not hesitate to serve the needs of every group, both teachers and students so that it can produce generations and educational institutions that can compete both formally, non-formally, nationally and internationally to improve the quality of educational institutions.

A leader carries out a task but can inspire members to feel moved and proactively pursue various actions to achieve success in a company or organization (Angelia & Astiti, 2020). Colquitt, LePine, and Wesson (2009) argue that transformational leadership inspires all its members to commit to achieving a shared vision that gives meaning to developing their potential and some problems from a new perspective (Sunardi et al., 2019). The best achievement of transformational leaders is a play by providing opportunities for followers to develop skills to bring up internal motivation and a committed attitude towards work for followers due to a support system, namely a leader who inspires his followers (Nuryanti et al., 2020).



Figure 1. Leadership Behaviour

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that in the leadership of Pesantren-based principals, the behaviour displayed by the figure of the school principal who in his administration has succeeded in creating meaning as a leader in the form of behaviour and becomes a role model for educators and education staff in schools. In this case, the educators and education at Nurul Jadid High School imitate what the principal does and try to apply it to themselves. Thus, the principal is a figure who acts as a role model for educators and education in these schools so that they feel they have a real example of the virtues they must adhere to.

Thus, to lead his subordinates, the principal uses various behaviours such as controlling the attendance of assistants by arriving on time, helping associates

by providing training and facilities, complying with rules with full responsibility, and being humble to all people. The leadership of the pesantren-based principal of SMA Nurul Jadid is not something that happens, but unique and diverse efforts are reflected in this effort. Phenomena that arise in educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren, such as SMA Nurul Jadid, originate from subordinates' perceptions, which then give rise to ideas, assumptions, and behaviours that reflect the leadership of the Pesantren-based principal.

The principal's leadership behaviour reconstructs the theory of symbolic interactionism, which combines task orientation in leadership behaviour and relationships. In this case, the leadership of the pesantren-based principal will be developed if the principal's leadership behaviour combines it with the task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and leadership behaviour oriented towards transformative leadership based on intelligent and breakthrough social communication.

Transformative leadership emphasizes that leaders must motivate subordinates to carry out their responsibilities more than expected (Nengsih et al., 2020). Transformative leadership is also called the style of a leader's ability to work with other people to optimally transform organizational resources to achieve goals according to predetermined achievement targets. Transformational leadership is often defined through its impact on how leaders strengthen cooperation and trust. Collective self-efficacy and team learning. Here transformational leaders make followers more aware of the interests and values of employees and persuade followers not to put personal interests ahead of organizational interests (Yulk, 2010; Tjiptono & Syakhroza, 1999). The process of engaging the commitment of employees to radical change in the context of shared value and shared vision" (Hawkins, 2011). This quote shows that transformational leadership as a process involves employee commitment to change as a whole in the context of shared values and vision (Maidin, 2021). Meanwhile, intelligent and breakthrough social communication is the ability of a leader with insight into the future to encourage breakthroughs or significant social changes in how individuals communicate. By the information above, the leadership behaviour of Pesantren-based principals has led to breakthroughs and changes in the social world with educators and education staff, such as encouraging subordinate behaviour for discipline, integrity, humility, authority, and the ability to support the progress of educational institutions, which he led through the perspective of symbolic interactionism.

CONCLUSION

The leadership of the principal of a pesantren-based school from the perspective of symbolic interactionism at Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo Senior High School is carried out by observing phenomena or events regarding the perceptions of subordinates that emerge from the school principal. Within the organization, educators and education staff or associates interpret the principal's behaviour to create perceptions that the senses receive. The forms of discipline, integrity, humility, authority and the ability to support are the results of the interactions between the principal and the teaching and educational staff towards

the symbols of the principal in social interaction. Thus, educators and education staff in schools as message recipients take action due to the exchange of subordinates with the school principal. Educators and educational staff create a social world which then gives birth to forms of task orientation, relationship orientation, and transformative values based on intelligent and breakthrough social communication at Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo High School, such as: building awareness of supervision, motivating educators, inviting subordinates to think effectively, efficiently, creative and critical in finding and solving problems, and giving attention or care to individuals, as well as building values based on Pesantren values, building togetherness values, simplicity values, and devotion values. These values are based on the subordinate's meaning of the principal's behaviour, creating a symbolic world at Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo High School.

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