



ENHANCING THE EXCELLENCE OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze how transformative leadership can increase the excellence of Islamic boarding school organizations. The Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo Islamic Boarding School has implemented transformative leadership to increase organizational excellence. This research uses a qualitative case study type approach, data collection techniques in the form of field observations, interviews and document analysis. The researcher's data analysis technique consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, conclusions and verification. The research results show that transformative leadership increases the excellence of Islamic boarding school organizations through transformative leadership steps such as: Creating a clear vision, innovation and creativity, motivating the team, having a role model from a leader, flexibility and adaptability, building a learning culture within the organization. This is very influential on the discipline of female students and the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro

Keywords: *Transformative Leadership, organization*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is crucial in guiding the improvement and development of education. Leadership serves as the driving force behind an institution or organization (L. Hakim, 2021). The quality of leadership determines the direction of success for an institution or organization. The application of transformative leadership can stimulate leadership development among leaders and members of Islamic boarding schools (van Knippenberg, 2020). This is reflected in the enhancement of leadership skills, self-confidence, and commitment to achieving a shared vision. Islamic boarding schools play a role in religious and character education (Mashuri, 2020). Through transformative leadership, Islamic boarding schools can experience improvements in the quality of education, curriculum development, innovative teaching methods, and the reinforcement of Islamic values (Muhtarom, 2020).

The quality of an Islamic boarding school needs to be formulated with a mature quality management concept to produce high-quality outputs (Istikomah et al., 2021). Quality is also determined by the type of quality leadership. According to Riduan, quality is something that distinguishes between good and bad for a product, and a product is considered of high quality if it satisfies the customers (Riduan, 2021). Garnika et al. explain in their research that strategies or methods are needed to improve quality to become part of the change (Garnika et al., 2021).

One of the largest Islamic boarding schools in East Java is Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, founded by the late KH. Zaini Mun'im. Thanks to his guidance to the community regarding the importance of learning religious knowledge needed in daily life, Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School has gained recognition not only from the island

but also from abroad (Fathony et al., 2021). With the advancement of time, a transformative leadership model is needed, which, in the context of Islamic boarding schools, refers to a leadership style focused on individual and organizational transformation with the aim of achieving higher goals (S. Hakim, 2023).

The phenomenon that occurs at Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in the Fathimatuzzahro' region of Diniyah Takmiliah is related to the declining discipline within the organization. Not bringing textbooks and being late for learning activities has become a common occurrence for female students of Fathimatuzzahro' Takmiliah Madrasah. This is due to a lack of control and awareness of responsibility within the organization, leading to ineffective learning activities in Fathimatuzzahro' Takmiliah Madrasah.

With transformative leadership, there has been a change in the image of Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in the eyes of the public, from a traditional religious institution to a progressive and inclusive educational center. The development of leadership skills among students prepares them to be responsible and ethical leaders. Transformative leadership facilitates more effective collaboration between leaders and other members, creating synergy to achieve common goals (Purwanto & Hasim, 2023). There is an increase in student participation in educational, religious, and social activities in the boarding school, encouraging the formation of a more actively engaged generation of students (Nasrullah, 2021).

Nahak et al.'s research explains that a leader must be able to motivate people in the organization to achieve the predetermined targets in the planning (Nahak & Ellitan, 2023). Rosalina et al. explain that the ability to influence is determined by the leadership style applied by the leader according to the situation faced in the activities (Rosalina & Wati, 2020). Leadership styles can increase the organization's movement to become dynamic in following the progress that all members of the organization want to achieve. Not fearing change, but rather planning it, so that the organization can compete with global changes (Purwanto & Hasim, 2023).

Moh Rifad et al.'s research with the title "Transformative Leadership of the School Principal in Improving the Digital Literacy Skills of Educators in SD Alkhairaat 1 Palu" explains that the school principal provides general policies such as participating in workshops, training, seminars, and benchmarking visits to schools that are advanced in digitization (Rifad et al., 2023). Furthermore, research by Savira Maharani with the title "The Influence of Transformational Leadership of the School Principal Based on Self-Efficacy in Improving the Performance of Teachers at MIN 12 Medan" explains that transformational leadership of the school principal based on self-efficacy is stated to be very high with an average score of 4.48. Each dimension has a very high average score, with the highest score in the inspirational motivation dimension (4.50) and the lowest score in the initiative dimension (4.40) (Maharani, 2023). Regarding how transformative leadership can improve organizational excellence, it has not been researched yet. One uniqueness of this study is that transformative leadership can improve the discipline of Islamic boarding school organizations. Based on this, the author's goal is to explore how transformative leadership can enhance the excellence of Islamic boarding school organizations.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a qualitative approach. The goal of qualitative research is to describe and analyze a phenomenon or event, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, social activities, and thoughts of individuals or groups.

This study employs a case study design, with the research object being Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in Paiton, Probolinggo. The research is a case study type with data collection techniques consisting of field observations in Fathimatuzzahro' Dhalem Selatan (DALSEL) of Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in Paiton, Probolinggo. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with relevant parties, namely the Madrasah Principal, the student affairs section of the Madrasah, the head of the organization, the head of the wustho class, and one of the female students of

Fathimatuzzahro' Takmiliah Madrasah. Document analysis was also performed to understand the experiences and perspectives of various parties involved in the transformation process.

The researcher's data analysis technique follows B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman's three-stage analysis: (1) data reduction, field data will be summarized and clarified according to the researcher's needs. (2) data presentation, presented in the form of a narrative description to illustrate the data in detail and systematically. (3) conclusion and verification, at this stage, the analyzed data is drawn to produce conclusions and verifications supported by valid evidence, capable of addressing the formulated research focus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformative leadership can be defined as a leader's ability to work through others to optimally transform organizational resources in order to achieve goals in line with the predetermined targets (Iqbal, 2021). It is believed that this style will lead to superior performance in organizations facing demands for renewal and change. Transformative leaders can have a strong influence on the quality strategic plans that implement the direction of continuous improvement goals (Cahya et al., 2023).

In general, a leader is someone who can guide, control, and influence the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of others (Agus Dwi Cahya et al., 2021). From this definition, it can be understood that a leader is someone who causes individuals or groups to move toward specific goals, and thus, they have the responsibility to ensure that those they lead can achieve the intended objectives.

After conducting research at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro', the steps of transformative leadership in enhancing organizational excellence are as follows: Establishing a Clear Vision, To enhance the organizational excellence of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro', a clear vision related to discipline is created. This stems from the innovation of a leader. Subsequently, the leader conducts discussions with organizational members to gain their agreement on the vision. In implementing the new vision, challenges are inevitable, but the organization's spirit ensures that the vision continues to progress toward its goals. Organizational awareness is crucial, as the absence of organizational consciousness in the leader's soul can hinder the achievement of the vision.

Formulating Organizational Goals: Formulating organizational goals is a fundamental requirement for defining the organization itself. Organizational goals are essentially formulations of various shared hopes and desires (Harianto, 2020). Vision represents the grand idea of goals, and goals are the interpretation or operational derivatives of the vision. Sometimes, vision and organizational goals are essentially the same. Internalizing the vision is essential for individuals performing leadership functions, as the vision is a central component in executing the main tasks and functions to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. Vision comprises a series of words containing dreams, aspirations, or core values of an institution or organization. It becomes the future goal of an organization (Afifah et al., 2022).

To actualize the vision within the organization, members must be prepared and understand the meaning and steps of its achievement. Organizational members must also be able to integrate indicators of vision and mission achievement into the organization's activity implementation plan (Negara et al., 2022). Research results conveyed by the student affairs department indicate that with a clear formulation of the vision related to discipline at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro', its implementation has been optimal. This awareness makes students conscious and enthusiastic because they have clear goals. The training of student discipline contributes to achieving the madrasah's motto: "politeness is of higher value than intelligence," highlighting the significance of vision in the organization.

These transformative leadership practices at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' illustrate the importance of visionary leadership in shaping and

advancing an organization.

The organizational structure of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' includes a division for talents and interests. This division is one of the organization's efforts to enhance innovation and creativity among female students. The implementation of the talents and interests division involves conducting class meetings for the madrasah institution, such as organizing competitions on plastic recycling, creating wall magazines, making caricatures, and presenting them. This serves as a platform for female students to explore their hidden potentials. In the field of education, it is not just about learning material; practical application is crucial to sharpen understanding.

Creativity is an individual's ability to discover and create something new, new ways, new models that are useful for oneself and society (Fajar et al., 2020). New things may not always be something entirely unprecedented; their elements may have existed before, but individuals find new combinations, new constructs that differ in quality from the previous state. Therefore, innovation characterizes something as new (Soegiarto, 2022). Creativity plays a crucial role in human life and development. While creativity is often based on intellectual abilities such as talent and learning outcomes, it is also supported by affective and psychomotor factors. According to Dubina, creativity is the ability to create results that are new, innovative, previously nonexistent, interesting, strange, and useful to society (Nugraha et al., 2023).

Research findings from one of the students at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' emphasize the importance of innovative and creative thinking. Students are encouraged not only to monotonously learn inside the classroom by listening and taking notes from the teacher but also to have the opportunity to think, express opinions, and implement their ideas. This approach fosters a more advanced and progressive change within the organization.

Motivating the Team, In carrying out responsibilities, motivating subordinates is essential. Transformative leadership in Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' involves monthly evaluation meetings. These meetings not only discuss work programs but also provide input and motivation to subordinates, making them aware that their positions are not just privileges but responsibilities. When issues arise, a leader conducts discussions with the team to collectively solve problems.

Motivation comes from the word "motove," or in Latin, "movere," which means "to direct" (Hendra, 2020). According to Robbins and Judge, motivation is an activity conducted to mobilize individuals so that their actions are directed toward achieving predetermined goals. Indicators used to measure the level of motivation include the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation (Hayati et al., 2020). Motivation is the overall process of providing encouragement or stimuli to create a voluntary willingness to perform tasks and duties to achieve goals.

Interview results from the organizational discipline division at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' indicate that during the teaching and learning process, the discipline division plays a crucial role in maintaining order among female students. Extra vigilance from the discipline division may lead to a sense of monotony in fulfilling their responsibilities. In this organization, leaders do not immediately reprimand them but inquire in a polite manner, followed by providing feedback and guidance. Over time, this approach has led to the students fulfilling their responsibilities with a sense of responsibility in line with the madrasah's vision.

Setting an Example as a Leader, Setting an example as a leader is crucial for subordinates to willingly execute planned work programs. The leadership in Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' doesn't merely give orders to subordinates but also provides examples and actively participates in every activity. For instance, leaders arrive on time during the teaching and learning process, dress neatly and politely, and accompany divisions during kitab (religious book) checks.

Research findings from a student at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' emphasize that organizational leaders don't just give orders to subordinates; they lead by example before giving instructions. During teaching and

learning activities, leaders control and accompany the discipline division in monitoring students.

The exemplary nature of a leader plays a significant role in shaping organizational culture. A leader who demonstrates positive qualities and high work ethics can be a source of inspiration for subordinates, as the behavior of a leader is most observed by their team members (Rahmi, 2019). If a leader demonstrates integrity, dedication, and responsibility in their work, subordinates are likely to follow suit. The exemplary nature of a leader has a significant impact on productivity, job satisfaction, and the overall success of the organization (Amari, 2023). Therefore, leaders who focus on setting a good example can play a key role in creating a healthy and high-performing work environment.

Ki Hajar Dewantara, a figure instrumental in advancing education in Indonesia, was active in the Boedi Oetomo and Sarikat Islam organizations. His leadership philosophy is encapsulated in the Javanese phrase "Ing Ngarso Sun Tulodo, Ing Madyo Mbangun Karso, Tut Wuri Handayani." The meaning of Ing Ngarso Sun Tulodo is that a leader must be able to set an example for subordinates or followers (Amari, 2023). Therefore, a leader must adhere firmly to the principle of setting a good example. As a leader or commander, one must have good attitudes and behavior in every step and action to serve as a role model for subordinates. Similarly, Ing Madyo Mbangun Karso, where Madyo means in the middle, Mbangun means awakening or arousing, and Karso is interpreted as a form of will or intention. Therefore, a leader must also be able to introduce innovations in their work environment by creating a more conducive work atmosphere for safety and comfort. Thus, Tut Wuri Handayani means that a commander or leader must provide moral encouragement and work spirit from behind (Sasmita & Prastini, 2023)

Flexibility and Adaptability, The ability to be flexible and adaptive is a valuable asset for both individuals and organizations (Kurniawan, 2023). The leadership of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Fathimatuzzahro' demonstrates the capability to adapt to changes or new situations easily without causing excessive discomfort. Examples include the establishment of the discipline vision within the organization and the development of the organization division's work program. While the initial implementation may not have been easy, the high organizational awareness has allowed the discipline vision to reach the planned goals.

Flexibility involves a readiness for change, while adaptability involves the ability to cope with and grow from these changes. These two traits complement each other to help individuals and organizations remain relevant and successful in dynamic environments. Organizational change is a process in which an organization moves from its current state toward a desired future state to enhance its effectiveness (Masturi et al., 2021).

Research findings presented by the class leader suggest that Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Fathimatuzzahro' has successfully adapted to changes, bringing positive transformations to the organization. The implementation of the discipline vision has resulted in improvements for both the organization and the female students of Madrasah Diniyah, effectively addressing the decline in discipline.

Building a Learning Culture within the Organization, Building a learning culture is crucial for creating resilient team members and enhancing productivity. The leadership of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Fathimatuzzahro' implements various activities, such as hajj mental preparation tutorials, poster design, recycling initiatives, etc. When learning is maximized, competitions are organized within the madrasah to broaden the knowledge of the female students.

Culture is something inherent in human life, and our daily behaviors reflect the meaning of culture itself (Apandie & Ar, 2019). Various conditions faced by individuals are influenced by culture, whether it's the culture at school, in the family, or within an organization. Learning culture is something that each organization needs to strive to develop (Nurhayati, 2019). Transforming the culture within an organization into one that

supports learning is not something that happens quickly, but steps can be taken to move in the right direction. The following are ways to develop a learning culture within an organization (Syaparuddin et al., 2020):

Make the learning process a core value in the organization: Successful development of a learning culture requires every member to feel that leaders support the learning process. One way to do this is by making learning a clear core value. These core values will be used for decision-making and guiding the actions taken by the organization. Committing to learning also means committing to providing the necessary resources to support the Learning and Development of each member.

Develop personalized learning plans: Specific personal learning plans make learning more relevant for each member within the organization. By setting strategic learning goals, each member becomes more engaged in the learning process. It is no longer just about completing courses, but about providing an overview and supporting members to achieve their desired goals.

Lead by example: Leaders at all levels within the organization have an influential role in a learning culture. If leaders are engaged and dedicated to learning, it strengthens the learning culture. Some ways leaders can do this include setting their learning goals, discussing the training they have undertaken, and being open to correction, reflecting on mistakes made.

Choose the right learning environment: There are many learning platform options available. The learning environment used by the organization should facilitate and support learning, providing opportunities for knowledge sharing and interaction among members.

Create programs for knowledge sharing: Knowledge sharing is a significant part of creating a learning culture. Informal learning and social learning are integral parts of the learning process. When members are encouraged and rewarded for sharing knowledge, they become more involved in the learning process.

Develop meaningful training program : Members of the organization need to feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves. When they are engaged at a higher level, it supports efforts to build a learning culture.

Interview results shared by the head of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' indicate that transformative leadership within the organization significantly contributes to achieving the planned performance of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'. In addition to the discipline they apply, transformative leadership also fosters innovation, allowing learning activities within the organization to sharpen the mental faculties of the female students. Therefore, transformative leadership can influence and have a positive impact on developing organizational productivity.

Research findings presented by the student affairs department indicate that discipline at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' is beyond doubt. With transformative leadership and a spirit of organization, the guidance becomes easy, creating trust when assigning new responsibilities.

Observation results and the interpretation of interview findings suggest that transformative leadership within the organization significantly contributes to achieving the planned performance of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'. In addition to the discipline they apply, transformative leadership fosters innovation, introducing new performance that can sharpen the mental faculties of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro' female students.

The reason why transformative leadership style should be applied to an organization includes improving organizational performance, instilling organizational commitment, fostering innovation, responsibility, and setting an example (M. N. Hakim & Jamal, 2021). In this case, it is crucial for the younger generations who will continue the nation's struggle to understand the qualities of a good leader and bring about positive changes within an organization. The importance of setting an example by a leader aligns with the advice of our mentor KH.Zaini that "if those in leadership only know how to command, the subordinates will revolt." Fundamentally, a position is not a privilege but a duty. As per the guidance of the founder of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, the

establishment of Nurul Jadid aims not only to produce religious scholars and teachers but also envisions the students being useful to society, including the political arena. He would not be pleased if the students of Nurul Jadid did not contribute to society.

Theories on leadership continue to evolve with the changing times, and currently, there are four phases of approaches. First, an approach based on the general personality traits possessed by a leader. Second, an approach based on the leader's behaviors. Third, a situational approach. Fourth, an approach that reverts to the characteristics or qualities of a leader that serve as a reference for others (Baharudin, 2017).

Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid in Paiton, Probolinggo, within the Fathimatuzzahro' region, has implemented transformative leadership within the organization of Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'. Transformative leadership significantly influences the discipline of female students and the effectiveness of the learning activities (KBM) at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'. Due to transformative leadership, the habit of female students being late for KBM activities has become rare or even nonexistent. In this regard, monitoring and punishment activities are strongly applied by the organization to mitigate risks. Learning from the moral character of the guardian Ny. Hj Aisyah Zaini, who turns and arranges sandals (nata sandel ajer nata ate sabber), is also implemented at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'.

CONCLUSION

Pondok pesantren has now become an educational institution widely spread in society, where it serves as a place for in-depth teaching and learning, particularly for the Islamic community. With transformative leadership, female students can be trained to understand that being a leader requires being a good leader. Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid has implemented transformative leadership within the organization of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'. Transformative leadership enhances the excellence of the pesantren organization, significantly influencing the discipline of female students and the effectiveness of the KBM activities at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Fathimatuzzahro'.

The steps of transformative leadership in enhancing the excellence of the organization are as follows: (1) creating a clear vision, (2) fostering innovation and creativity, (3) motivating the team, (4) setting an example by the leader, (5) promoting flexibility and adaptability, and (6) building a learning culture within the organization.

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