

Research/Review

The Integration of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture in Enhancing the Quality of Teachers' Human Resources at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Abstract: The improvement of Islamic elementary education quality largely depends on the competence of teachers as the primary agents of learning. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), the challenges of globalization and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum demand teachers to develop professionally, innovatively, and with strong Islamic values. This study aims to analyze the integration of transformational leadership and organizational culture in enhancing the quality of teachers' human resources in MI. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed at three Islamic elementary schools in Central Java. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model with source and method triangulation for validation. The findings reveal that transformational leadership practiced by school principals plays a crucial role in building teachers' motivation, commitment, and change orientation through exemplary behavior, inspiration, and empowerment. Meanwhile, an organizational culture rooted in Islamic values strengthens collaboration, professionalism, and shared responsibility among teachers. The integration of these two elements creates a synergistic effect that enhances teachers' pedagogical, professional, and spiritual competencies. It can be concluded that transformational leadership combined with a strong organizational culture serves as an effective strategy to sustainably improve teacher quality in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah..

Keywords: Human Resource Quality; Islamic Elementary Education; Organizational Culture; Teacher Development; Transformational Leadership.

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1. Introduction

The improvement of Islamic elementary education quality largely depends on the competence of teachers as the main agents of the learning process. Teachers do not only serve as instructors but also as mentors, role models, and drivers of change within the educational ecosystem. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), which represents Islamic-based elementary education, teachers bear a dual responsibility: to develop students' intellectual capacity while instilling moral and spiritual Islamic values. Therefore, the quality of teachers' human resources becomes a key indicator of the success of educational implementation in MI (Nur- yana, 2022).

In today's era of globalization and technological disruption, the education system faces increasingly complex demands. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires MI teachers to continually develop professionally, be innovative, adaptive to change, and uphold Islamic character. Teachers are expected to create contextual and engaging learning that fosters students' independence and creativity (Mulyasa, 2022). However, in reality, not all teachers possess the readiness and motivation needed to face these changes (Suwandi & Pramono, 2023). This condition highlights the strategic role of madrasah principals in building a work culture that supports continuous teacher development (Arifin, 2021).

As educational leaders, madrasah principals hold a strategic position in shaping the vision, direction, and organizational culture conducive to fostering teacher professionalism. One relevant leadership approach to address these challenges is transformational leadership. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership focuses on positive change by providing inspiration, motivation, and exemplary behavior to followers. In the madrasah context, principals who practice transformational leadership are able to inspire teachers to innovate, commit to the school's vision, and continuously enhance their competencies. This leadership style emphasizes moral integrity, individual empowerment, and encouragement to achieve performance beyond established expectations.

In addition to leadership, organizational culture plays an equally important role in improving the quality of teachers' human resources. A strong organizational culture is characterized by shared values of togetherness, responsibility, cooperation, and commitment to educational quality. In the madrasah environment, this culture is not only built upon formal regulations but also rooted in Islamic values such as honesty (*šidq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*). When a positive organizational culture is well established, teachers develop a strong sense of belonging, become more motivated to deliver optimal performance, and remain open to innovation. Thus, the integration of transformational leadership and a strong organizational culture can create synergy that supports sustainable improvement in teacher quality.

However, various studies and field observations indicate that many madrasahs still face challenges in realizing this synergy. Some of these include weak collaborative work culture, low teacher motivation for professional growth, and suboptimal leadership support in instructional development. These challenges have resulted in stagnant professional progress and declining educational service quality. Therefore, a model that integrates leadership strengthening and organizational culture development is needed to support continuous improvement of teachers' human resources in MI.

Based on this background, this study focuses on understanding how the integration of transformational leadership and organizational culture can enhance the quality of teachers' human resources in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic educational leadership concepts and provide practical implications for madrasah principals in managing and empowering teachers more effectively. In this way, madrasahs can evolve into excellent, character-based, and adaptive educational institutions that remain firmly rooted in their Islamic identity.

2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how the integration between transformational leadership and organizational culture contributes to improving the quality of teachers' human resources in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of exploring the meanings, perceptions, and practices of leadership and organizational culture within the context of Islamic elementary education.

3. Results and Discussion

Transformational Leadership as a Driver of Teacher Human Resource Development

The findings reveal that the principals in all three research sites demonstrated a strong transformational leadership style. They did not merely function as administrators but also as inspirational figures and moral exemplars for their teachers. The principals successfully cultivated a shared vision emphasizing the importance of teacher professionalism and the quality of learning (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

The dimension of idealized influence was reflected in the principals' exemplary conduct in discipline, integrity, and responsibility. Meanwhile, inspirational motivation was evident in their ability to communicate persuasively, motivating teachers to innovate in classroom practices. Principals also encouraged intellectual stimulation by providing opportunities for teachers to experiment with new teaching methods. Furthermore, individualized consideration was demonstrated through personalized attention to each teacher's developmental needs, including mentoring and individual coaching (Muyia & Kacirek, 2009).

These findings align with Bass's (1999) theory, which asserts that transformational leadership enhances performance and job satisfaction through empowerment and inspiration. In the context of madrasah, leadership infused with spiritual and Islamic values strengthens the

moral and emotional bonds between principals and teachers, creating a holistic framework for professional growth (Stern et al., 1999).

Organizational Culture as a Collective Pillar for Teacher Quality Enhancement

The organizational culture within the observed madrasahs reflected strong values of togetherness (*ukhuwah*), responsibility, and dedication to the mission of Islamic education. The principals successfully fostered a collaborative work culture through regular meetings (*musyawarah*), ongoing professional development activities, and the establishment of teacher learning communities (Lasrado & Kassem, 2021).

This organizational culture served as a value system that united all members of the madrasah, creating a positive work environment and strengthening teachers' motivation to enhance their competencies. Teachers reported feeling appreciated, trusted, and included in decision-making processes. This supports Schein's (2010) assertion that a strong organizational culture functions as a social glue and a behavioral guide within educational institutions (Narayana, 2017).

In the MI context, an organizational culture rooted in Islamic values strengthens teachers' moral integrity and character as educators. This distinct cultural identity differentiates madrasahs from general schools, shaping a religiously grounded institutional ethos that prioritizes both academic excellence and moral development (Dyck et al., 2019).

Integration of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture in Enhancing Teacher Human Resources

The integration between transformational leadership and organizational culture created a synergistic dynamic that significantly contributed to improving teacher quality. The madrasah principals acted as agents of change, instilling Islamic work ethics, fostering a collaborative atmosphere, and providing continuous motivation to teachers (Jacques et al., 2024).

This integration led to tangible improvements in teachers' professional competencies, including the ability to design project-based learning, utilize digital media, and implement authentic assessment. Teachers also demonstrated increased work discipline, teaching innovation, and commitment to the madrasah's vision.

These findings reinforce Yukl's (2013) perspective that transformational leadership, when combined with a healthy organizational culture, enhances performance through value internalization and collective learning. In the context of MI, such integration not only elevates teacher professionalism but also strengthens their spiritual and moral dimensions as Islamic educators (Yukl et al., 2013).

Research Implications

The findings of this study present several important implications for madrasah management (Rutter, 2013).

First, madrasah principals should strengthen their transformational leadership capacities through leadership training grounded in Islamic values and reflective learning practices.

Second, organizational culture reinforcement should be carried out through routine collaborative activities that promote teamwork, communication, and shared reflection among school members (Ardinata et al., 2022).

Third, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and madrasah supervisors can utilize these findings to design contextual human resource development policies aligned with the unique characteristics of Islamic educational institutions (Rosyadi et al., 2023).

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the integration between transformational leadership and organizational culture has a significant influence on improving the quality of teachers' human resources in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Transformational leadership practiced by madrasah principals functions as the driving force of change through inspiration, moral example, and teacher empowerment. Principals with a transformational vision are able to foster intrinsic motivation, build a sense of responsibility, and encourage teachers to innovate in their teaching practices.

Meanwhile, the organizational culture of madrasahs—rooted in Islamic values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), responsibility, cooperation, and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*)—has been shown to strengthen both social and professional bonds among school members. A strong culture provides a solid foundation for creating a harmonious, participatory, and quality-oriented work environment.

The integration of these two elements produces a positive synergy that not only enhances teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies but also reinforces their spiritual character and Islamic work ethics.

Therefore, improving the quality of teacher human resources cannot be separated from the presence of transformational leadership and a healthy organizational culture. Both serve as essential prerequisites for developing excellent madrasahs that are adaptive to change while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic and humanitarian values..

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