

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF ISLAMIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN DEVELOPING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed at describing the instructional leadership behaviors of Islamic school principals in developing the teachers' performance. There were four focuses which were (1) promoting the vision and the mission, (2) reforming the teaching and learning, (3) implementing the teaching and learning practice, (4) creating positive learning climate. This study utilized qualitative approach with multi-site research design. The data was collected by using in-depth interview, observation, and documentation. The data analysis was done by using on-site and cross-site data analysis. To check the credibility of the data, triangulation technique, member check and peer discussion were used. Meanwhile, the audibility check was done by the advisor. The research showed that the principals: (1) promoted the vision and the mission by (a) communicating with the society and realizing them into the goals of the Islamic schools, (b) implementing them into the programs and the policies that were especially related to the teaching and learning, (2) reformed the teaching and learning by: (a) organizing the teaching and learning through participative and innovative management, (b) having high expectations in teachers' performance and the students' achievement, (3) improved the teaching and learning practice by (a) diagnosing the teaching and learning problems through class supervision and in-service programs depending on the teachers' needs, (b) used the students' learning outcome to improve and to encourage the teachers to utilize the learning sources optimally, (4) creating positive learning climate: (a) created working mechanism which made formal and informal discussion about teaching and learning, (b) created the reward system for the achievements.

Keywords: instructional leadership behaviors, principals of Islamic schools, teachers' performance

INTRODUCTION

In realizing the quality human resources in the future, education had a very strategic function and important roles because without education humans' characteristics as subjects could not guarantee the realization of the ideals of development (Hariwung, 1989). Also by education, humans could unveil the mystery of life as well as put themselves as the subjects of every social change; that was why education was considered very important in bringing the social change peacefully (Weil, 1978).

Meanwhile, Suryadi and Tilar (1999) stated that to obtain the appropriate humans for the development needs, education played the role of primary means. Education had an intrinsic function to prepare the human resources to become the development agents of every life aspect. In an effort to address the dynamic rhythm of social change in the future, it was important to improve and develop the human resources (human resource development, Nadler, 1982) through education at regular/ Islamic schools and professional leadership of the principals.

To know the instructional leadership behaviors of the Islamic school principals to improve the teachers' performance, it was important to briefly explain the contexts of the leadership dynamic in this study. Leadership was one of the important factors in an organization because most of the success and the failure of an organization depended on its leader.

Instructional leadership was multi-functions which were related to how to organize and coordinate the work life at Islamic schools in the form of teaching and learning experience in order to realize the clear vision and mission in the teaching and learning (Muhaimin, 2009).

Based on the several definitions mentioned above, it could be concluded that instructional leadership was an ability that one had to influence others to be willing to work together in achieving the realization of the vision and the mission, in reforming and improving the teaching and learning as well as in creating positive teaching and learning.

METHODS

The research methods would discuss: (a) the research approach and design; (b) the presence of the researcher; (c) the source of the data; (d) the procedure of collecting the data; (e) the data analysis; (f) the validity of the findings check; and (g) the steps of the study.

The Research Approach and Design

This study focused on the instructional leadership of the principals of Islamic schools in improving the teachers' performance using multi-site study at State Islamic Senior High School Malang I, State Islamic Senior High School Batu, State Islamic Senior High School 3 Malang. To describe the

forementioned focuses, it needed in-depth observation in the natural condition which was known as the qualitative approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) and in the academic field, it was called naturalistic approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The study intended to answer the focused questions such as how and why which was more explanatory and led to the use of case study strategy. Yin (1984: 18) stated that 'How' and 'why' questions were more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, as the preferred research strategies."

The Presence of the Researcher

The presence of the researcher in the qualitative study was absolutely needed because the researcher was the key research instruments; the researcher was everything for the overall study (Guba and Lincoln in Moleong: 1999). Beside the researcher, the research instruments were in the form of helping tools and other documents which were treated as supporting instruments. Therefore, in order to collect the data comprehensively, the presence of the researcher on the site (objects) would be prioritized because collecting the data should be done in the real condition (objectively). As stated by Nasution, the researcher acted as the key or primary instrument in collecting the data (Nasution, 1998).

Further, Moleong (1999) stated that the researcher's position in qualitative research was complicated because the researcher was also the planner, implementer, data collector, data analyst, data interpreter, and in the end as the reporter of the results of his/ her research. Besides acting as a researcher, he/ she also acted as human instrument who decided the focus of the study, chose the informants as the source of the data, evaluated the quality of the data, analyzed the data, interpreted the data, and reported the findings (Sugiono: 2000).

The Source of the Research Data

In this study, the source of the data was in the form of objects and documents. The data which was collected in the current study could be categorized into two which were the main and supporting source of data. The primary source or the key informants of the study were the principals of the Islamic schools, the vice principals of the Islamic schools, the teachers of State Islamic Senior High School Malang I, State Islamic Senior High School Batu, and State Islamic Senior High School 3 Malang.

Meanwhile, the supporting source of data was the people appointed by the key informants who seemed to understand the problems that would be studied (teachers, the committee and the staffs of the Islamic school, the parents of the students, and respected figures in the society. According to Yatim, the source of the data could be done by using snowball sampling technique that allowed the researcher to dig other sources of data or informants, to compare and to reexamine the trustworthiness

degree of the data which was collected from other sources or different informants (Pudjirahadjo: 1992).

The Technique of Collecting the Data

In order to obtain the integrative data holistically and get data relevancy according to the focus and the aims of the study, the data was collected by using three techniques which were the in-depth interview, participant observation, and documentation study.

Data Analysis

The research design of this study was multi-site. According to Yin (2002: 52-53), multi-site research design analyzed the data in two steps which were: (1) individual case data analysis; and (2) cross case data analysis.

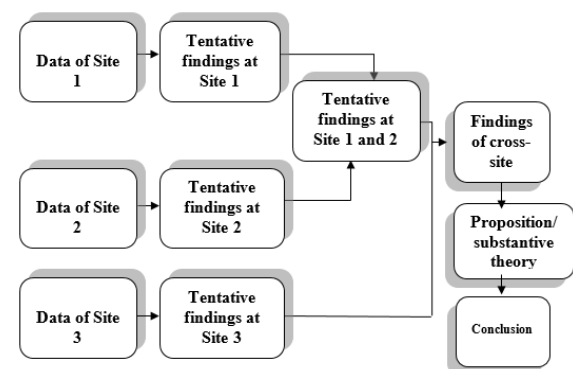


Figure 1 Data Scheme of Cross-Site Analysis

The propositions and substantive theory 1 were then analyzed by comparing them to the propositions and the substantive theory 2 which were the individual finding at site 2 (State Islamic Senior High School Batu) in order to find uniqueness and differences of each site as the theoretical conceptions. The differences between the 2 sites then were considered as tentative findings which later would be organized with the next site. The analysis was also simultaneously done by combining the propositions and the substantive theory at site 1 and site 2, reconstructing, equalizing, and constructing the concept simultaneously about site 1 systematically. Then, cross-site analysis between site 1 and site 3 (State Islamic Senior High School Malang 1 and State Islamic Senior High School 3 Malang) by using the same technique. The analysis was intended to construct the concept systematically based on in results of the data analysis and narrative theoretical interpretation in the form of cross sites propositions which later would be treated as materials to develop the substantive theory.

Moleong classified the model of data analysis of quantitative research into three which were (1) constant comparative method as stated by Glaser and Strauss; (2) data analysis method according to Spradley; and (3) data analysis method according to Miles and Huberman. Among the three methods, the

first method was used the most. Among many, the researchers who used constant comparative method were Bafadal (1994) and Aridin (1998).

In the explanatory cross-site data analysis, the procedure, according to Yin (1984) was in the form of establishing an explanatory. The establishment of explanatory was intended for determining phenomena which meant determining a set of causal relation of the phenomena. The establishment of the explanatory was in the form of narrative which was reflected in the form of propositions.

The cross-site analysis was done by (1) using conceptual inductive approach which was carried out by comparing and combining the conceptual findings of each site; (2) using the results of comparing and combining as the basis to develop the cross-site conceptual statements or propositions; (3) evaluating the suitability of the propositions with the facts; (4) reconstructing the propositions according to the facts on each site; (5) repeating the process if necessary.

Validity of the Data Check

Credibility

The checking of credibility or the degree of data's trustworthiness was needed to prove whether what the researcher observed was what actually happened in the field naturally. The degree of the data's trustworthiness (data validity) in the qualitative study was used to fulfill the criteria (value) of epic truth both for the readers and for the subjects of the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that to obtain the valid data, the technique of checking the data could be done by (1) persistent field observation, (2) triangulation of data sources, methods, other researchers, (3) member check, peer reviewing, (4) referential adequacy check.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research could be achieved by providing the detailed description. For the sake of this purpose, the researcher tried to report the research findings in details. The description was written in such a way that it could reveal specifically everything that the readers needed so they could understand the research findings. The findings were not the part of detailed description but their interpretation was described in details with great responsibilities according to the real events.

Dependability

Dependability was done to anticipate the mistakes in conceptualizing the planning of the research, the collecting of the data, the interpreting of the findings, and the reporting of the results. To do so, the dependent auditor was needed. The advisor or the promoter was the dependent auditor in this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability audit in this study was done together with dependability audit. The difference was that confirmability audit was used to evaluate the results (products) of the research while dependability audit was

used to evaluate the process taking place in the fields. The main question of confirmability was whether the relation among data, information, and interpretation was written in the report organization was supported by the available materials used in the audit trail.

The Steps of the Study

This study involved four steps. First, orientation study by making tentative pre-proposal and proposal and gathering the needed supporting sources. Second, general exploration study by (1) consulting, interviewing, and asking permission to State Islamic Senior High School Malang I, State Islamic Senior High School Batu, State Islamic Senior High School 3 Malang; and (2) conducting proposal seminar to obtain suggestions from peers and from the advisor. Third, focused exploration which was followed by checking the results or the research findings and writing the report of the study results. The focused exploration included (1) gathering the deep and detailed data to find the conceptual thematic on the fields; (2) gathering and analyzing the data simultaneously; and (3) checking the results and the research findings which was done by the auditor. Fourth, drafting the report of the study results to be prepared for the feasibility assessment of the manuscript.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings in this section were in the form of general statements which also acted as the substantive theory of each research focus including:

Instructional leadership behaviors of Islamic school principals in promoting the vision, mission, and goals of the Islamic schools: (a) communicating the vision, mission, and the goals of the Islamic schools, (b) realizing the vision and mission into the goals and the programs of the Islamic schools, (c) implementing the vision and the mission into the substantive policies of the Islamic schools, (d) incorporating the vision and the mission into the teaching and learning processes.

Instructional leadership behaviors of Islamic school principals in reforming the teaching and learning: (a) organizing the teaching and learning activities, (b) using participative management and innovative activities, (c) having high expectations on the learning outcome, (d) setting high academic standard, (e) evaluating the teaching and learning objectively, (f) conducting continuous learning.

Instructional leadership behaviors of Islamic school principals in improving the teachers' performance by conducting teaching and learning practices: (a) diagnosing the teaching and learning problems, (b) observing the classes, (c) organizing in-service programs, (d) using the learning outcome for improvement, (e) encourage the teachers to utilize teaching and learning sources optimally.

Instructional leadership behaviors of Islamic school principals in improving the teachers'

performance by creating positive learning climate: (a) creating a conducive work mechanism, (b) encouraging the discussion between the teachers and the students to happen harmoniously, (c) creating positive teaching and learning, (d) creative reward system, (e) considering the teachers' and the students' achievement as motivation so positive climate could happen.

In the discussion section, the research findings at three research sites were explained, analyzed, and discussed in a cross-site manner. The cross-site analysis and discussions were done by comparing three sites in order to find the similarities and differences of each site specifically. This section, then, would present:

Instructional Leadership Behaviors of Islamic School Principals in Promoting Vision and Mission

As the leader of teaching and learning, the principals of Islamic schools should have clear vision and mission which were improving the students' achievement. In line with Sinamo (1998) who stated that the vision and the mission of Islamic schools which were clearly outlined would help the principals of the Islamic schools in creating appropriate goals and objectives.

The vision and the mission of the Islamic schools were forming the whole human beings through education which respected the humans' dignity in a warm, discipline, and friendly togetherness without discriminating and orienting to the students' success. In other words, the vision and the mission of Islamic schools were to become an education institution which oriented to the students' success through the quality system organization and the creation of comfortable work climate and high work ethic. In this case, the principals of the Islamic schools succeeded in harmoniously combining the product oriented and human-oriented (concerned with the relation among people) leadership styles.

In other words, the outline of the vision and the mission of the Islamic schools where the study took place which was State Islamic Senior High School Malang 1, State Islamic Senior High School Bath, State Islamic Senior High School 3 Malang were similar although they had different background which was becoming an institution which had high expectations on the improvement of the students' achievement through quality teaching and learning, in terms of intra-curricular or extracurricular. It agreed with Hollinger (1983), Smith and Andrew (1989) who stated that an effective vision and mission of Islamic schools would lead to the improvement of students' achievement.

Besides, in order to make the vision and the mission be internalized by Islamic school residents when doing their duties, the principals promoted them. There were two activities that the principals did in promoting the vision and the mission of the Islamic

schools. First, communicating the vision and the mission to all Islamic school communities formally and informally. In this case, the principals always made the most of the meetings with teachers, staffs, students, and parents to explain the mission of the Islamic schools so that the vision and the mission could be understood and internalized when they carried out their duties and functions. Second, realizing the vision and the mission by setting the aims and the programs of the Islamic schools and making substantive decisions which were especially related to the teaching and learning.

Instructional Leadership Behaviors of Islamic School Principals in Reforming the Teaching and Learning

To obtain an optimal learning outcome, it needed the structure reformation of teaching and learning programs, both intra-curricular and extracurricular, depending on the needs and the condition of the Islamic schools.

According to the data on the fields, the principals of the three Islamic schools were able to implement the principles of management and to outline the typical work structure of teachers and students in improving the students' achievement. There were several differences and similarities among the three Islamic schools in terms of reforming the teaching and learning programs, both intra-curricular and extracurricular, such as in (a) the reforming of the teaching program structure, (b) setting the standards of students' academic and categorizing the students, (c) providing the extracurricular learning programs, (d) reforming the teachers' work structure, (e) setting the reward system, and (f) the reforming of the students' learning development.

The results of the study at the three Islamic schools seemed to be in line with research results conducted by Hecket (1990) that school instructional organization consisted of (1) developing the instructional purpose according to the existing policies, (2) coordinating the instructional programs of the Islamic schools accompanied by offering some help to the teachers, (3) participation of the principals in a discussion related to the teaching and learning affected the students' achievement, (4) encouraging the teachers to implement systematic procedures to monitor their students' development, (5) using the learning outcome to improve the curricular programs, (6) offering some help to teachers in making the most of the available sources to carry out the instructional programs, and (7) evaluating the curricular and intra-curricular programs.

The Instructional Leadership Behaviors of Islamic school principals in Improving the Teachers' Performance by Conducting Teaching and Learning Practice

The principals of the three Islamic schools where the current study took place were cared and had

high expectations for the improvement of the teaching and learning activities at their schools so their existence highly determined the success of the Islamic schools in terms of improving the quality of the students' learning outcome.

There were four primary activities that the principals had done to improve the teaching and learning practices. First, they were able to have close contact with the implementation of the teaching and learning in order to improve the teaching and learning practices in the classroom by visiting the classrooms regularly and systematically to observe the practices of teaching and learning in the classroom. Also, they had the private conversation with the teachers to discuss the problems which were closely related to the teaching and learning in the classrooms.

Second, the principals of the Islamic schools were able to encourage and motivate the teachers to always improve their knowledge and teaching skills by participating in seminar and workshop held by the schools or by other institutions outside the schools. Besides, the principals of the Islamic schools also gave books related to teaching and learning as rewards so the teachers could widen their knowledge leading to the improvement of their performance.

Third, the principals of the Islamic schools were able to make subject teacher forum effective, both internal forum at schools and external ones with other schools. It was considered as teacher training place by assigning the teachers to become the subject coordinator, providing the needed facilities, and integrating the schedule of subject teacher forum meetings into the schedule of the subjects at schools. In this case, the principals of the Islamic schools realized the functions of subject teacher forum as collegial teacher training place, the good management of this forum could give great contribution in helping the teachers solve the teaching and learning problems that they faced in the classroom.

Fourth, the principals of the three state Islamic schools where the study took place, were able to foster an open attitude to the teachers towards the innovations available at other educational institutions through school visitation which was considered as a successful comparative study.

The roles of the principals of Islamic schools in improving the teaching and learning practices at the three state Islamic schools were in line with the result of research conducted by Sergiovanni (1995) stating that as the instructional leaders, especially as instructional resources, the principals of Islamic schools actively involved in the efforts to improve the teaching and learning in the classroom. Through the dialog with the teachers, the principals encouraged the teachers to reach the optimal learning outcome.

The efforts done by the principals of Islamic schools in improving the teaching and learning practices at the three state Islamic schools were in line with the criteria stated by Smith and Andrews (1989) which were that as the instructional leaders, especially as the instructional

resources, the principals of the Islamic schools should be able to: (a) understand the aims of each instructional program well, (b) evaluate and give reinforcement to the use of appropriate and effective teaching and learning strategies, (c) supervise the school staffs by using strategies that were oriented to the improvement of the teaching and learning, (d) use the information about the students' learning outcome to solve the teaching and learning problems, and (e) implement the policies related to the students' evaluation.

The Instructional Leadership Behaviors of Islamic School Principals in Creating Positive Teaching and Learning Climate

Positive teaching and learning climate was needed to improve the effectiveness of Islamic schools, especially the effectiveness of the teaching and learning activities. The positive teaching and learning climate did not only cover social aspects such as interpersonal relations among the school residents but also covered the physical aspects such as the arrangement of the classroom.

The research data found at the three Islamic schools where the study took place showed that one of supporting factors in achieving high learning outcome was the healthy teaching and learning climate. The indicators showing that the three Islamic schools had positive teaching and learning climate could be seen from: the friendly attitude of the principals and his willingness to use most of his time to communicate with the teachers and the students; the harmonious relation among teachers and students; the students get good service so they were satisfied with and proud of the Islamic schools; the clear rules and be accepted by all the elements of the Islamic schools; the ability of the principals of the Islamic schools in implementing the strategy of practical conflict management and could be accepted by all parties; also the comfortable and joyful environment of the Islamic schools.

The healthy teaching and learning at the three state Islamic schools basically were supported by the cultural factors of the students. In general, the students of the three state Islamic schools had the high obsession to get the high achievement so they demanded high attention from the teachers and the principals of the Islamic schools especially related to the quality of the teaching and learning. The students of the three state Islamic schools highly respected the teachers who were disciplined and objective as well as had good performance. This condition encouraged the principals and the teachers of the Islamic schools to always improve their performance because by providing good service and appropriate with the students' needs, a healthy and productive teaching and learning climate could be created.

Besides as instructional leaders, the Islamic school principals were able to present themselves as a not scary figure in front of their teachers and students because they did not show any arbitrary

attitude but preferred to use the informal approach in solving problems faced by the teachers and the students. The principals of the Islamic schools, for example, often visited teachers in the teachers' room and the students on school's yard during the recess to communicate about the teaching and learning processes. During the conventions, the principals often received inputs in the form of critics and suggestions related to the improvement of teaching and learning from the students and the teachers.

The Islamic school principals also succeeded in making the most of the cultural and religious values to create the healthy climate at the Islamic schools. The religious values encouraged the school residents to keep in high spirit, be discipline, and be friendly without discriminating. These religious values also acted as effective media for the principals to create a teaching and learning climate which could make healthy and joyful competition among students to happen.

The working atmosphere of the three state Islamic schools indicated that they had healthy organizational climate which was like stated in Climate Theory by Miles (in Carver and Sergiovanni, 1969) that the characteristics indicating whether an organization healthy or not were goal oriented, feasible communication, optimally distributed authority, the utilization of resources, solidarity, autonomy, adaptation, work ethic, innovation, and feasible problem solving. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Letwin and Stringer (in Steers, 1997) showed that family like climate with achievement would lead to the high job satisfaction, solidarity, and motivation to perform well.

CONCLUSION

According to the focus of the research, data description and research findings as well as data analysis and cross-site discussion, the results of the study could be stated as follows. At First, as the instructional leaders, in promoting the vision and the mission, the Islamic school principals: (a) communicated to the school residents and the society and realized them into the goals of the Islamic schools, (b) implemented them into the Islamic school programs and policies related to the teaching and learning.

Second, related to the teaching and learning reformation, the Islamic school principals: organized the teaching and learning activities through participative management and innovative activities related to the teaching and learning so the processes and the learning outcome could improve, and (b) had high expectations on the teachers' performance and students' achievement through the reformation of the high academic standard for the students and the objective and continuous evaluation for the students.

Third, the behaviors related to the improvement of teaching and learning practices, the Islamic school principals: (a) diagnosed the teaching and learning problems through supervision by visiting the

classrooms (on the job), organized and/ or included teachers to in-service programs (off the job) as needed, and (b) used the students' learning outcome to improve the teachers' teaching and learning and to encouraged them to utilized the teaching and learning sources optimally in order to improve the processes of the teaching and learning as well as the learning outcome at the Islamic schools. Fourth, in terms of creating the positive teaching and learning climate, the Islamic school principals: (a) created the reward system for achievement so it could create a teaching and learning climate that could give satisfaction to the teachers and the students who had done their duties well. By considering the implications of the research that had been presented, several suggestions followed, such as in order to improve the quality of the Islamic schools, the principals should implement the principles of educational management found in this study which was four dimensional Islamic school internal that should be considered by the principals to improve the teachers' performance such as promoting the vision and the mission of the schools, reforming the teaching and learning, improving the teaching and learning practices, and creating healthy teaching and learning climate. For the committee of the Islamic schools, the results of the study could be used as consideration to develop the schools to realize the professional education and could be communicated with the parents to actively participate in the education development. For teachers, the results could be used as references in improving their professional competence according to the available abilities and opportunities to improve their performance. Fourth, for the Department of Islamic Schools of East Java Regional Office of Ministry of Religion and Islamic School Section of Ministry of Religion in Malang city and Batu city, the results of this study could be used as references to cultivate Islamic schools under their jurisdiction in order to improve the quality of the Islamic schools. For the next researchers, the results of this study could be used as references to further review the research about improving the quality of education with different or similar topics and focus or similar subjects but the different focus of problems. For the development of education management study, the findings of this research were expected to develop research about strategies for improving the education quality of regular/ Islamic schools conceptually, operationally, and empirically and would enrich the knowledge in developing educational management.

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