Leadership style in the Madrasah in Tulungagung: how principals enhanced teacher performance

Abstract

Purpose — This paper’s purpose is to explore the leadership styles of principals of State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN), specifically how well the principals motivated, mobilized, directed and evaluated teachers’ performance to achieve students’ academic attainment.

Design/Methodology/Approach — A qualitative study with a multi-site case study was conducted at three MAN in Tulungagung, East Java, Indonesia. Principals of MAN were interviewed, as were administrators and teachers to confirm the principals’ performances and the results of their leadership on professional management, school policies, procedures, and on the implementation of the schools’ dynamic and students’ academic attainments.

Findings — This study revealed that MAN principals are the central figures in the Islamic schools. In particular, implementation of leadership styles is specified as: 1) Motivating: intensive communications, incentives, and transparent administrative management; 2) Mobilizing: giving opportunities to study for higher degrees, workshops, internet facilities, rewards; 3) Directing: additional teaching hours, scholarships, briefings, cooperation with other agencies; 4) Evaluating: class visits, personal meetings, encouraging participation, communicating with madrasah committees, collaborating with foreign universities, conducting research to improve learning. Effective leadership styles evidently increase students’ academic attainments.

Research limitations - Limitations are shown in that the sites are in an area of restricted technologies in a developing country.

Originality/value — This study develops its setting and orientation by integrating Islamic and global values in education management. It shows the prominent role of MAN principals, as the specific cases exemplify leadership and management at secondary schools.

Keywords: leadership, madrasah, motivation, performance, Islamic values.

Paper type: case study.
environment that is conducive to teaching and learning is shown in high quality interpersonal relations and high quality work. A conducive culture implies that everyone in the school is committed to improving the teaching and learning processes, and to fulfilling the needs of teachers and students (Carpenter, 2015). The success of a school is determined by the skills and style of the head of the school. As an educational leader, the principal should influence, encourage, govern and guide others to work toward a common goal and to create an environment that encourages teaching and learning, both within and outside the classroom (Langgulung 1991:27; Magee, 2012).

The principal plays a large role in developing qualified teachers, providing encouragement, direction, work motivation, coaching and supervision that will ultimately improve their performance. School productivity is not merely about getting as much work done as possible, but the quality of performance is very important. As the manager, the principal is required to provide motivation for teachers to perform well. In addition to setting a good example, the madrasah head also must be able to empower educators in the madrasah he leads (Bauman and Krskova, 2016; Magee, 2012).

The practices of leadership include setting and communicating academic goals; providing necessary resources; planning, co-coordinating, and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum; participating in and promoting teacher learning; and ensuring a school environment that is safe and supportive for both staff and students (Fevre and Robinson, 2015). In addition, the achievement of qualified teaching work is determined by factors, such as how the head leads the teachers. The leader’s role is very important in any organization; without a leader, an organization is merely an association of people and machines (Bauman and Krskova, 2016; Fevre and Robinson, 2015). Leadership is a person’s ability and readiness to influence, encourage, invite to be monitored and, if necessary, to force others to accept their influence, then to do something that can help achieve a certain purpose and goal (Dirawat, 1983:15; Magee, 2012).

The quality of madrasah leadership is significant as the key to success. Successful leadership is characterized by an extraordinary combination of skills: being full of energy, having a keen intuition, a future outlook and irresistible, persuasive skills (Arikunto, 1990:183). In particular, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1) How do heads of madrasah in Tulungagung motivate teachers’ performance through their leadership style?
2) How do heads of madrasah in Tulungagung mobilize teachers’ performance through their leadership style?
3) How do heads of madrasah in Tulungagung direct teachers’ performance through their leadership style?
4) How do heads of madrasah in Tulungagung evaluate teachers’ performance through their leadership style?

Review of Literature

Leadership Style

Leadership is the ability to motivate and influence people to be willing to act to achieve common goals, by giving them courage to take decisions about the activities undertaken (Nawawi and Murtini, 1988:81). Leadership style describes how a leader supports and encourages their subordinates in decision-making and directs them to pursue organizational goals (Chandan, 1987). According to Harsey and Blanchard (2003:98-99), leadership comprises: (1) activities to encourage people to achieve group goals voluntarily; (2) interpersonal effects directed through a
process of communication to accomplish a particular purpose; (3) efforts to influence people to participate in achieving common goals. In this study, leadership styles are looked at in terms of: the way head teachers involve teachers in decision making, the way they communicate and the way they delegate duties to teachers.

There are three styles of leadership: authoritarian, democratic, and delegative or laissez-faire. The authoritarian or autocratic leadership style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without taking advice from their followers. This style results in group members reacting aggressively and apathetically in the work environment. The authoritarian style should normally only be used on rare occasions (Campbell, Bridges, and Nystrand, 1993).

The participatory or democratic leadership style involves the leader including one or more employees in the decision-making process, in determining what to do and how to do it. However, the leader retains the final decision-making authority. Using this style is not a sign of weakness; rather, it is a sign of strength that the employees will respect (Obama et al., 2015).

Nzuve (1999) stresses that an effective headteacher pays more attention to planning work and special tasks and permits teachers to participate in decision-making processes in an effort to achieve school goals. Using this style is of mutual benefit, allowing teachers to become part of the team and make better decisions. The participatory leadership style produces a sense of unity in pursuit of set goals.

In the delegative or free rein style, the leader allows the employees to make the decisions. This is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it. The laissez-faire style argues that people are innately motivated, naturally like to do work and therefore there should be no rules since everybody has an inborn sense of responsibility. However, this style of leadership may result in indiscipline, due to non-enforcement of rules and regulations in a school, leading to poor performance (Obama et al., 2015).

Bell (1992) notes that effective leadership will provide schools with a vision, explicit philosophies on consultation and team work and lead to success in attaining good results in national examinations. Incompetent headteachers are a big problem for the overall administration and management of education in any country.

**Teacher Performance**

Performance is the achievement or result of a person's actions in carrying out their work. Mangkunegara (2001:67) explains performance as the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee performing their duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to them. Performance is closely related to productivity, because performance indicates the efforts needed to achieve higher levels of productivity within an organization.

Teachers' performance is based on the learning objectives achieved. Their performance stems from their sense of responsibility in carrying out their duties, the mandate of their profession, and a sense of the moral responsibility they should bear. A teacher's performance will be seen in his loyalty and adherence to carrying out his duties in the classroom and his educational duties outside the classroom. The attitude is displayed by preparing teaching equipment before lessons, considering various strategies and methodologies to be used, utilizing educational media, and employing assessment tools to evaluate learning.

Performance can be improved through two mainstream activities: involvement in decision making and communication. Involvement in decision-making refers to both leaders and subordinates getting together to discuss how to run the organization. Involving others in...
decision-making is a typical characteristic of the participatory style of leadership, when subordinates are consulted and their feedback is taken into the decision-making process (Chandan, 1987). Lack of involvement in decision making suggests an autocratic style; a laissez-faire style is shown when leaders are reluctant to be involved in decision-making and prefer to leave it to their subordinates.

Handy (1996) recommends that appraisal of effective performance should be presented directly or indirectly to individuals, to boost their performance. Good counseling and guidance for the individual may come as a result of good and open communication, when errors are identified and corrected. It also helps a teacher to know how well or badly he or she is performing a given task.

Teacher competence is a measure of the requirements necessary for a teacher occupying a functional position, according to the field of tasks, qualifications and levels of education. Teacher competence in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards Article 28 is classified in four kinds:

1) Pedagogic Competence: the ability to understand learners, design and implement learning, evaluate learning outcomes and develop learners to actualize various potentials.

2) Personality Competence: an established personality, stable, mature, wise and authoritative.

3) Professional Competence: the wide and deep mastery of learning materials, that enables a teacher to guide learners to meet the standards of competence set out in the National Education Standards.

4) Social Competence: the ability of educators to communicate and get along effectively with learners, fellow educators, education personnel, parents/guardians, the community and related stakeholders.

Methods
This research is an exploratory, qualitative study that allowed the researcher to obtain results by means of in-depth interviews to explore leadership modality in MAN. The research, which took place in Tulungagung, East Java, Indonesia, studied MAN 1 Tulungagung, MAN 2 Tulungagung, and MAN Rejotangan.

(1) Informants
There were 18 informants, consisting of three principals, three vice principals, three heads of administration and nine teachers. The informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques on the basis of their functions in the school. The criteria considered to select informants were: (1) being a principal or vice principal, (2) being the head of a unit or a department, and (3) being a teacher that has been a leader of a program at the school.

(2) Data and Sources of Data
The human data sources included the principals, deputy principals, heads of administration, and teachers at the three schools. The non-human data sources included: curriculum, input and output data of learners, lists of school facilities, lists of educators and education personnel, recordings/pictures/photos containing various matters related to the implementation of education in the madrasah as well as documents on the performance of the madrasah heads and teacher activity, as well as student learning activities, extracurricular activities, and local research related to the focus of the study.
(3) Procedures of Data Collection

The data for this research were collected using: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis. An in-depth interview is a conversation between two people with a specific intention, in this case between the researcher and the informant. The conversation does not simply answer the question or test the hypothesis, but probes into the experience of others and the meaning of the experience. Specific questions were asked in unstructured interviews about the impact of the madrasah head’s leadership style on improving teacher performance, in accordance with the questions that are the focus of this study.

The researchers observed participants’ activities, physical characteristics, social situations and how feelings were sometimes part of the situation. During the observation, the researcher was involved or interacted with the activities performed by the subjects in their environment, and collected data systematically in the form of field notes. In addition, document analysis aimed to obtain further data in the form of archives, notes, agenda of meetings or photos from the three madrasah. These data were used as the secondary data source and as evidence to confirm the information submitted by the informants.

(4) Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed by means of single case analysis and multi-site analysis. A single case data analysis consists of analysis in the field and after the data have been collected. Field analysis was carried out by: (1) making a decision to narrow the study, (2) deciding the form of study to be completed, (3) developing analytical questions, (4) planning the next data collection session based on observation findings, (5) writing 'observer comments' on ideas as they appear, (6) writing a memo about what is learned, (7) experimenting with ideas and themes on the subject, (8) exploring literature in the field, (9) using metaphors, analogies, and concepts, and (10) using visual equipment. The data that had been collected was analyzed to develop a system of codes for predefined categories.

Cross-site data was analyzed by: (1) using a modified, analytic, inductive approach to compare and combine the conceptual findings from each site, (2) using the results as the basis for constructing conceptual or pro-cross-site propositions, (3) evaluating how the propositions conformed to the reference facts, (4) reconstructing the propositions in accordance with the facts of each site, and (5) repeating the process to the extent of saturation. Cross-site data analysis aims to compare and combine the findings obtained from each study. In general, cross-case data analysis includes: (a) trying to disprove the propositions based on the findings from the first site, then repeating with the second and other sites; (b) comparing and combining the findings based on cross-site analysis, as the ultimate findings of the research from all three sites.

Results

(1) Leadership Style to Motivate Teacher Performance

The major methods used to motivate teacher performance found in the study include working in teams, developing cooperation, creating a conducive school culture, and open communication. The schools developed advisory teams for the principals and the principals conducted communications to create a conducive working climate by involving teachers in decision making. The principal of MAN 1 is quoted in excerpt (1).

(1) We have formed a special team to provide input and ideas for consideration to the principal. The team is helpful for me. The team consists of a senior teacher who has good skills, he is...
the Vice Head on curriculum. The team helps teachers, making learning program planning and overall education programs run more effectively.

To encourage poorly motivated teachers, principals conduct dialog to explore the teachers’ aspirations and to manage job satisfaction. The results are implemented in school policy, administration, and school activities to improve the working environment; see excerpt (2).

(2) I always support what teachers do in the classroom, as long as it improves the learning process. The integration of madrasah programs with teaching and learning activities in the classroom is also important. If a teacher is able to achieve this, he can increase productivity. We have been working on it with the support of all madrasah personnel.

This strategy emphasizes responsibility for team work and for each member of the team. Teamwork is a solid foundation for organizational success. Each member has equivalent responsibility and mutual respect. The principals are the facilitators but any decision taken is the result of mutual agreement between members; see quote (3).

(3) I hold regular meetings with teachers, at least once a month, to evaluate previous learning and the next lesson plans. The chairmanship of the meeting is usually taken in turns but the person in charge of the meeting remains me. The decisions made depend on the consensus among members attending the meeting. However, when problems need to be resolved immediately, I must decide without consulting the teachers.

Proper administration of madrasah in a careful and well-regulated manner reflects a regulated working climate. Teachers are satisfied and their morale is high, because the principals provide support services to meet the needs of teachers in doing their work. The principals ensure that materials, media and learning facilities are always available whenever teachers need them. Principals also invite evaluation from the teachers and staff for service improvement.

(2) Leadership Style to Mobilize Teacher Performance
Mobilizing teacher performance aims to improve teachers’ creativity, responsibility, teaching materials and teaching services. Principals persuade teachers to have discipline and self-responsibility. Teachers’ competency and qualifications on teaching materials, curriculum, and teaching methods is improved through a variety of training, seminars, workshops, refreshment, and IT, involving universities and professional agencies. For a particular need, training may be conducted at the school’s request. To make sure that each teacher receives training, principals implement a rotation technique, and a special budget is allotted for the program.

Policies to support teachers’ creativity include: providing IT access through hot spot areas and the school website, facilities for teachers taking a master’s or doctor’s degree. Madrasah cannot help financially but they can make it easier for teachers to study. Each teacher is encouraged to get involved in the regular meetings of the Teacher Association. Training to improve English proficiency is provided by inviting volunteers, e.g. American volunteers tutoring English, to teach the teachers; see quotes (4) and (5).

(4) We always drive teachers to master their subjects, so that teaching materials are easily understood by students and teaching methods are appropriate to the teaching materials and the learners’ level of achievement. Discipline and adherence are emphasized.
Discipline in the learning process and presence of the teachers is controlled. Maybe it is a strategy that we can formulate. Praise to Allah. This year 100% of the students of MAN 1 passed the national leaving exam.

(5) To increase teacher professionalism, the madrasah has a program to develop teacher competence. To this end, I assign and encourage teachers to participate in various in-service training, such as seminars, workshops, refreshment. Teachers are assigned in turn. With the school-based management project, teachers get more opportunities to follow their professional development activities. We also invite American volunteers to teach English proficiency to English teachers and other teachers.

(3) Leadership Style to Direct Teacher Performance

Direction means delegation of authority or power from the principals to their subordinates. Direction is delegated, as in giving teachers innovative activities to increase students’ academic attainment. Programs to direct teachers’ performance include: workshops, enhancing teachers’ competences, scholarships for students, additional teaching hours to improve the lessons, inviting university lecturers to refresh teachers’ competence, inviting motivators, inviting volunteers to teach English, sending students to universities for field study, and improving students’ attainment in the national leaving exam. Excerpt (6) indicates alignment of leadership style to direct teacher performance in MAN 1.

(6) All teachers are good teachers, diligent, disciplined, reliable as educators. But there are still some who do not work optimally. Especially when teaching in the first hour early in the morning, some are still late to enter the classroom, but they are all ready to make the changes.

Teachers are highly regarded and principals improve the quality of teachers through strategies, such as effective execution of their duties, inclusion in provincial workshops and training, involving teachers in the programs of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and providing guidance for education; excerpt (7) clarifies:

(7) Our strategy to realize qualified teachers includes: providing awareness for the teachers to work well, holding workshops in our own school, assigning teachers for workshops and training at the provincial level, and involving teachers in the academic meetings in the national Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Student achievement is attained by directing teachers to pay attention to the teaching and learning process; excerpt (8) describes the strategies.

(8) Achievement of good learners’ attainment is indispensable to the performance of all elements of the madrasah. To excel, we must dare to make an innovative breakthrough. Our strategy is that we provide scholarships for students and give additional hours to deepen lessons. We invite motivators to drive learners' motivation, and send students to universities for field study. We enhance teachers’ knowledge by inviting university lecturers to speak on teaching materials, curriculum or teaching methods. We are proud that this year 100% of our students successfully passed the national leaving exam.
Teachers respond in a positive way, showing awareness of what they have learned in their work. Success is the responsibility of all elements of the madrasah, including the teachers. The testimony of one of the teachers is given in excerpt (9).

(9) Our strategy to improve the academic achievement of learners is to assign teachers to carry out instruction as well as possible. We also provide additional hours, scholarships, invite volunteers to teach English and give assignments to teach in classes. The academic achievement was successful because 100% of our students passed the national leaving exam.

(4) **Leadership Style to Evaluate Teacher Performance**
Teacher performance is evaluated to check the quality of teaching when teachers prepare and teach in the classroom. Performance includes: competency when teaching, teaching materials, curriculum, assessment, and administration of employment. The evaluation is done through classroom visits, regular meetings and supervision. Classroom visits are carried out in MAN, as seen in excerpt (10).

(10) Once a month on Monday, after the ceremony is over, I always go to classes to see the ongoing learning activities. I insist that my regular visits or are not to control or look for teachers' faults, but to help when there is a problem in learning.

The principals use classroom observation as a form of supervision. Class visits are preceded by an agreement between the principal and teachers. The class visits are either unscheduled or not; see excerpt (11).

(11) I usually have my classroom visits on Mondays. This is because on Monday we are still fresh. I make the visits on the basis of agreement with the teacher. Some are not scheduled but still based on an agreement with the teachers. Yes ... an unscheduled visit is like an inspection, but remains in the frame to help teachers with problems.

Although the time is not that long, the principal can assess a teacher's performance in the classroom, and help teachers overcome the learning problems they face; see script (12).

(12) I schedule a class visit at least once a month for one class, regularly on a Tuesday. I make unscheduled visits at any time I am free, based on an agreement with the teacher. All teachers are aware that the visits’ aim is not to seek teachers’ weaknesses but to help teachers do their jobs smoothly.

**Discussion**

**(1) Leadership of Madrasah Heads to Motivate Teacher Performance**
To improve teachers' motivation, the principals implemented strategies to develop teamwork. The teams provided input to the principals about teaching practice, helped solve learning problems and observed factors causing low teacher morale. The principals and teachers were open with each other in evaluating their respective roles regarding morale. Teacher performance and effectiveness were closely linked to school management and administration. Teachers who were more motivated performed better. When teachers were involved in decision making, head teachers interacted directly with the teachers, or involved them in decision making for the day.
to day administration of the school, the teachers felt important, thus motivating them to perform activities to achieve the school goals. Assigning such duties will make teachers perform against the odds and school challenges because of the esteem derived from good working relations (Emmanouil et al., 2014).

Previous studies have shown that the development of teamwork and harmonious communication among school personnel can motivate teachers and improve teacher morale (Baumann and Krskova, 2015). The establishment of an advisory team of senior teachers to provide input to the principal can streamline decision-making, and joint decisions among personnel can improve the effectiveness of task implementation (Shulhan, 2012).

(2) Leadership of Madrasah Heads to Mobilize Teacher Performance
The madrasah heads holding educational qualifications adhered to the pillars of quality, admitting that, if problems were damaging quality, the school would resolve them soon. Pillars of quality include: customer satisfaction with education services; involvement of all elements of education in the madrasah/school; measurements for targets to be achieved or detecting problems that arise; and the commitment of all elements to change to their best. Therefore, the pillars of quality have a predominant role (Hardman, 2011). The main actors in managing qualified education in the madrasah were the teachers, who were at the forefront of realizing the progress-oriented education program. The big responsibilities will be implemented by teachers, if they have clear competence to perform the task as well as possible.

Improving the quality of madrasah staff and teachers is essential. This study discovered that the principals’ strategies to improve the quality of teachers are manifested through: supporting teachers studying for a master’s degree; workshops or training; involving teachers in association meetings at national and local level; giving rewards for excellence; provision of internet facilities; and cooperation with universities or international organizations on education (Shulhan, 2012).

(3) Leadership of Madrasah Heads to Direct Teacher Performance
Okumu (2006) states that effective delegation has positive effects on the management of secondary schools in terms of motivation, commitment, satisfaction, discipline and general improvement in teacher performance and management of schools. Mumbe (1995) identified that delegation of authority can only be successful when the subordinates have ability, information, and knowledge to perform the tasks and are willing to make decisions.

Shulhan (2012) suggests principals’ leadership is the determining factor in teacher empowerment and improving the process, quality and product of learning. Madrasah culture and learning culture are built by the leadership style of the principals in interacting with their community. It is the principal’s responsibility to coordinate, direct and support matters relating to highly complex tasks, that include formulating goals and objectives, evaluating the performance of teachers and staff, organizing and providing various sources of organization, establishing and creating a psychological climate, establishing good inter-community relationships, planning with the madrasah community to support madrasah operations.

(4) Leadership of Madrasah Heads to Evaluate Teacher Performance
The supervision techniques undertaken by the heads of the three madrasah to improve teacher performance included: class visits, private meetings, regular meetings, inter-madrasah visits.
of the characteristics of strong teaching leadership is classroom visits, with the aim of improving learning and evaluating teachers in a supportive and constructive manner (Shulhan, 2012). The successful principals: (1) have a strong vision and encourage the whole school, (2) have high expectations of student achievement and staff performance, (3) observe teachers in the classroom and provide positive and constructive feedback with the aim of solving problems and improving learning, (4) use material and personnel resources creatively, and (5) monitor student achievements individually and collectively and use information to guide learning planning (Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2013).

Supervision in the madrasah was usually performed on an unscheduled basis, in accordance with an agreement with the teachers. Personal meetings were effective as a supervisory technique, because the teachers disclosed their learning problems freely and openly in an informal and relaxed environment. This technique can also help teachers to master teaching skills, make learning plans, implement learning evaluations, apply classroom management and understand student behavior (Carpenter, 2014).

Regular meetings between principals and teachers improved the learning program as well as learning evaluation. Regular meetings between madrasah personnel and school committees assisted the principals in developing educational programs, increasing parental participation and support for the madrasah’s success by involving all madrasah personnel in any decision-making (Shulhan, 2012). Inter-madrasah visits or comparative studies aimed to improve teachers’ understanding and refreshment of learning practices and innovations introduced in other madrasah. Carpenter (2015) has also shown that inter-school visits are useful in improving the effectiveness of teacher learning practices.

Establishing and empowering teacher work groups gave teachers the freedom to discuss learning issues, syllabi and lesson planning. Teachers worked together to improve their professionalism, through work groups or teams of teachers in solving learning problems or planning and implementing new learning methods (Kuloba, 2010).

Increasing professionalism of teachers through teacher competency development programs and teacher qualifications is crucial. According to Carpenter (2015), principals can plan and monitor teachers’ development opportunities as well as obtain teachers’ feedback on the content. The principals actively and supportively helped the teachers learn to use new learning approaches and set expectations for curriculum quality. Shulhan (2012) affirms that the involvement of senior teachers in solving teacher learning problems can improve the effectiveness of supervision, because there is no psychological barrier for teachers. Jay (2014) asserts that peer supervision should be informal, relaxed, requiring no set procedures or prepared forms. If it is voluntary, with no intervention to protect teachers' rights, it is more effective and efficient; teachers are free to experiment and supervisors should have empathy and high credibility.

**Conclusion**

This study aims to explore the leadership style of madrasah heads in motivating, mobilizing, directing and evaluating teacher performance. The major finding is that madrasah heads’ leadership styles have strong effects on improving teachers’ performance. In particular, the heads use four strategies. **First**, the heads of madrasah motivate teachers through intensive communication, incentives, transparent administrative management, and facilitate teachers to take a master’s degree or doctorate. **Second**, to mobilize teacher performance, the heads provide opportunities to study for master’s degrees, workshops, internet facilities, rewards, collaboration with universities or international organizations. **Third**, to direct teacher performance the heads provide additional teaching hours, scholarships, briefings to encourage the teachers, cooperation
with other agencies. Fourth, to evaluate teacher performance, the heads use class visits, personal meetings with teachers, encouraging high participation, communicating with madrasah committees, collaborating with domestic and foreign universities to improve teacher professionalism, and conduct research to improve learning.

References


