ISLAMIC EDUCATION LEARNING IMPROVEMENT THROUGH LEARNING LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to describe the improvement of learning through learning leadership so that the function of principals to improve the quality of inputs through preparing professional educators as a way increasing the quality of Islamic education because if they have professional educators they will do the same. The effective learning process produces outstanding outcomes. The provision of education personnel in decision-making institutions is determined by the education office or school committee. Meanwhile, to improve the professionalism of education personnel, principals bring coaching through supervision activities. Coaching teachers in schools and with other schools to develop the communication, knowledge, and experience of educators by involving teachers in training and workshops. The quality of Islamic education will be achieved with the participation of the community, and for that, the principal also increases promotions to perfect the student recruitment strategy to improve learning, especially in Islamic education learning.

Keywords: religious education learning, leadership on learning

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the competencies that must be possessed by a school principal. Many leadership models can be adopted and applied in various organizations/institutions, both for-profit and nonprofit, but the leadership model that is considered suitable to be applied in schools is instructional leadership or leadership for improved learning. As a learning leader, the principal is expected to focus his leadership on producing better student achievement. Learning leadership is very suitable to be applied in schools because the main mission of the school is to educate all students and provide opportunities for them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults in facing an unknown and challenging future that is very turbulent. This mission then demands that schools as organizations that must focus on learning (learning-focused schools), which includes curriculum, teaching and learning processes, and assessment of learning outcomes.

Although there have been many formulations about the meaning of learning leadership, the focus and sharpness are still different. For example, Daresh and Playco (1995) define learning leadership as an effort to lead teachers to teach better, which in turn can improve student achievement (John C, 1995). This definition is less comprehensive because it only focuses on the teacher. Another expert, Petterson (Cecil H. Patterson & William W, 1993), defines effective learning leadership as follows: 1) The principal formulates, socializes, and discovers the content and meaning of the school’s vision through sharing opinions or deliberation with the school community and making the school’s vision and mission alive. fertile in its implementation; 2) principals involve stakeholders in school management (participatory management); 3) the principal provides learning support; 4) the principal monitors the teaching and learning process to understand more deeply and realize what is going on in the school; 5) the principal acts as a
facilitator so that in various ways he can find out learning difficulties and can assist teachers in overcoming these learning difficulties.

A leadership development organization can enhance employee development. According to Peter Senge, a learning organization is an organization in which its members continuously expand their abilities to get the results they expect, as a place for developing new and widespread patterns of thinking, a place to express group aspirations freely, and a place where members learn on an ongoing basis seeing together as a whole. The definition of a learning organization according to Senge places the organization as a place for a continuous learning process to occur. Seeing organizations as more than just dead entities. Organizations are like living and developing organisms. He can learn and grow like a living being. The five disciplines of learning organization discussed in Peter Senge's book are 1) building a shared vision, 2) mental models, 3) learning teams, 4) personal mastery, and 5) Systems thinking (Peter M, 2000).

Learning has two levels: the organization itself and the employee. Employees need to learn from experience and incorporate learning as feedback into their job assignments. Organizations need to adopt the concept of organizational learning to learn continuously and to survive. By implementing these ideas, organizations can better grow their human capital and increase their profit margins. A learning organization is seen as one that can integrate people and structures to move the organization toward continuous learning and change. The learning organization concept is that successful organizations must continually adapt and learn to respond to environmental changes and grow. Complementing the definitions above, the following is the meaning of learning leadership. Learning leadership or instructional leadership is leadership that focuses/ emphasizes learning whose components include curriculum, teaching and learning processes, assessment (assessment of learning outcomes), teacher assessment and development, excellent service in learning, and building learning communities in schools.

**METHOD**

This research is field research. Field research is research with the characteristics of problems related to the background and current conditions of the subject under study and its interaction with the environment (Etta Mamang Sangadjii & S, 2010), and this research is qualitative, to be clearer Lexy J. Moleong in his book Qualitative Research Methodology cites the explanation given by Bogdan and Taylor “Qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behavior. observable” (Lexy J, 2007).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The Importance of Leadership in Islamic Education Learning**

Learning leadership is very important to be applied in schools because learning leadership contributes very significantly to improving student achievement. Learning leadership can provide encouragement and direction to school residents to improve student achievement. Learning leadership is also able to focus the activities of its citizens on achieving the school’s vision, mission, and goals. Learning leadership is important to be applied in schools because of its ability to build a learning community for its citizens and even being able to make the school a learning school.

Learning schools have the following behaviors: empowering school residents as optimally as possible, facilitating school residents to continue learning and relearning, encouraging the independence of each school member, giving authority and responsibility to school residents, and
encouraging school residents to be accountable for the process, and the results of their work, encourage teamwork (compact, intelligent, dynamic, harmonious, and agile/quick responsive to the main customers, namely students), invites the school community to focus on student service, invites the school community to be ready and familiar with changes, invites the school community to think systems, invites the school community to commit to quality excellence, and invites the school community to make continuous improvements.

Principals have many roles that must be played together, including managers, administrators, supervisors, motivators, and entrepreneurs and leaders (Sudarwan Danim & H, 2015). The principal is busy with routine administrative work, meetings, and other non-academic activities so the time to study curriculum renewal/innovation, teaching and learning processes, and assessment of student learning outcomes is getting less attention.

Influence Factors Towards Learning Organization

According to Marquardt (2002), several power factors influence changes in learning organizations, namely: 1) globalization and the global economy, 2) technology, 3) radical transformation in the world of work, 4) the effect of increasing users, 5) the emergence of knowledge and learning as key organizational assets, 6) changing roles and expectations of workers, 7) workplace diversity and mobility, and 8) rapidly increasing change and chaos (Michael J, 2002).

1. **Structure**: Marquardt says that learning will prevent the rapid flow of time and knowledge-based competition. Changes in the environment and organic structure are variables that affect the increase in organizational effectiveness.

2. **Environment**: current environment variables will not allow organizations to traditionally manage the impact of competitors’ skills, capabilities, and technology. Marquardt believes that the competitive world of organizations that adapt to changes in the surrounding environment and access to competitive advantage has the opportunity to be durable.

3. **Technology**: Information systems can affect learning organizations. Technology not only continues to generate new flows of information but also shifts the principal’s center of gravity.

4. **Organizational culture**: Organizational culture defines the identity of learning and the methods by which it is realized. Schein argues that learning in a bureaucratic culture is at a minimum. Learning organizational culture that facilitates and encourages organizational learning fosters to enhance organizational learning.

5. **Strategy**: In Marquardt’s ideas, assuming mindful policies and strategies, learning will become conscious. This should be stated in the strategy and vision of the organization and strategies related to learning.

6. **Leadership**: The beliefs, ideas, opinions, and behavior of leaders are markers of a learning culture that must be carried out in a school environment. Senge (Peter M, 2000), states that a leader facilitates and encourages an atmosphere for freedom of action. Morgan says that, by encouraging group discussion, leaders must find multiple points of view for each question and by seeking creative answers demonstrate generator learning skills for staff.

Leadership in organizations must change with the development and maturation of the organization. Early on, in creating the organization, the leaders themselves had to serve more as animators. To maintain the organization they need to become more Sustainers of organizational culture, and what is needed they must become Agents of Change.

In general, the term principal is intended to apply to all managers of educational institutions which include principals, madrasah principals, academic directors, high school heads, institute or
university rectors, kyai in pesantren (Islamic Boarding School), and so on. They are educational leaders or more concretely leaders of educational institutions, regardless of type or style (Qomar, 2007). Furthermore, the notion of the principal can also be defined as a teacher who can lead all existing resources in a school so that they can be utilized optimally to achieve common goals (Basri Hasan, 2014).

**The Important Points of Learning Leadership**

The important points of the principal as a learning leader can be written as follows:

1. Understanding the role of the principal that needs to be developed:
   a. managing is part of leadership,
   b. implementing the school leadership role is more likely to be a servant than a leader/boss, and
   c. developing a flexible leadership style and a comfortable speaking style, and avoiding rigid leadership styles.

2. Doing responsibilities accountably:
   a. building learning communities in schools for student success,
   b. encouraging the responsibility of all partners or stakeholders,
   c. mobilizing community resources for the benefit of students,
   d. helping students to be successful in their studies, and
   e. avoiding looking for scapegoats for failure, thinking, and behaving positively to move forward.

3. Doing things professionally:
   a. always reading yourself and doing reflection,
   b. looking for ways to develop yourself, guide others, and contribute to others based on the profession you have,
   c. embracing change as a friend, he will keep you active, introspective, and developing,
   d. becoming the number one model for lifelong learning by building a learning community in schools,
   e. always honing your role as a learning leader,
   f. making time to diligently visit the classroom,
   g. communicating your strong desire to succeed to teachers and students in the form of words and actions,
   h. translating the school’s vision into daily activities, and
   i. facilitating group work based on learning leadership.

4. Always trying to maintain:
   a. being a guide towards achieving school goals,
   b. being a clear supporter,
   c. seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn, and
   d. having fun at work.

Measurement of the success rate of learning leadership vision is very necessary. Key indicators of principal effectiveness in establishing and implementing learning objectives are as follows:

1. Communicating with staff regarding the achievement of standards and improvement of school goals.
2. Referring to the content standards set by the central and local governments to implement teaching programs in schools.
3. Ensuring that individual and school class activities are always consistent with the standards set by the central and local governments.
4. Using a variety of data sources both qualitative and quantitative to evaluate progress and plan for further improvement.

Learning and achievement of student success should always be analyzed on an ongoing basis and reflected and developed continuously as part of school life. This kind of activity should be cultivated in schools. Based on research conducted by Glatthorn (Allan A, 1993), found five things that are considered important in shaping a school culture that can train students to achieve learning success and also a healthy school climate. The five highlights include:

1. Schools as collaborative communities and learning communities,
2. There is a shared belief in achieving goals,
3. School improvement is achieved through a problem-solving process,
4. All school members, whether principals, teachers, and students, are convinced that they can achieve them, and
5. Learning is a top priority.

Concerning the function of school climate, the following principal behaviors were most often identified by teachers from schools with high academic achievement:

1. communicating to staff about high expectations of student achievement,
2. preventing schools from being pressured unnecessarily, and making learning the main focus of school activities,
3. getting to know personally about the level of professionalism of each teacher as a basis for achieving the main goals of the school,
4. assessing the morale and commitment of the school community, and
5. building a safe, orderly, and disciplined school environment.

The Learning Leadership Contribution Towards Islamic Education Learning Outcomes

In 1995, through his research, the North West USA educational laboratory updated the effectiveness of the implementation of learning in schools which eventually became a broad reference for the results of the research. The research resulted in a list of the best principal behaviors in directing and guiding learning programs in schools. According to the synthesis of research conducted, the results show that the behavior of school principals (learning leaders), teachers, and staff makes a very significant contribution to increasing the effectiveness of learning in schools, which includes the following:

1. Firmly believing that all students can learn and that schools make the difference between success and failure.
2. Emphasizing learning as the primary reason for one’s being in school, including emphasizing the importance and value of high achievement in speaking and writing.
3. Having a clear understanding of the school’s vision and mission and being able to say it directly, in concrete expressions, build and focus learning as a source of unifying thoughts, attitudes, and actions of school residents.
4. Finding, recruiting, and paying staff members who support the school’s vision and mission and contribute to its effectiveness.
5. Knowing and being able to apply the principles of good learning.
6. Disseminating effective teaching and learning process practices to other teachers.
7. Knowing about educational research, emphasize the importance of research for school improvement, and deliberation, and apply them in problem-solving.
8. Looking for innovative programs, observing, and involving staff to participate in adopting and adapting the program.
9. Setting expectations or targets for curriculum quality through the use of standards and guidelines provided check regularly conformity, curriculum with learning and assessment, setting priority curriculum activities, and monitoring curriculum implementation.
10. Checking student progress regularly based on available performance data, and publishing to teachers so they can see gaps between established standards and performance achieved by students.
11. Having high expectations of all teachers to carry out learning with high standards through model agreements made jointly by the teacher, conduct class visits to observe learning, focus on supervision activities to improve learning, prepare and monitor teacher development activities, and
12. Communicating your expectation that agreed to learn programs according to plans, systematic improvement strategies, clear priority activities, and new approaches should be implemented properly.

The process and the results of quality education are interconnected. However, so that a good process is not misguided, quality in terms of results must be formulated and the targets to be achieved must be clear every year. As for the criteria for good quality education, schools are expected to have several indicators that indicate that the school is considered to be of good quality. The indicators are a safe and orderly school environment, choosing quality goals and targets to be achieved, having strong leadership, continuous development of school staff following the demands of science and technology, and continuous evaluation of various academic and administrative aspects as well as utilization of the results. to improve or improve the quality of Islamic education (Mulyasa, 2005).

The Learning Leadership Standards

Given the importance of the principal’s role as a learning leader in improving learning outcomes, it is necessary to identify criteria or standards for learning leadership based on research results and the results of agreements between academics and learning leadership practitioners. The following are the standards for school principals as learning leaders, which include:

Standard A: Continuous improvement is taking a systematic and coherent approach towards continuous improvement in the academic achievement of all students.

Standard B: Learning Culture is to create a progressive/conducive learning culture in schools so that student learning outcomes can be increased as high as possible.

Standard C: Learning Leadership and Assessment of Learning Outcomes is to facilitate improving the quality of learning in schools based on evaluation results and carried out continuously to improve student learning outcomes as optimally as possible.

Standard D: Continuous Teacher Professionalism Development is to carry out professional development of the school community, especially teachers, which is carried out continuously to improve student learning outcomes as optimally as possible.
Standard E: School Management is to facilitate school members (teachers, students, employees) to become good learners and develop effective learning through the use of various available learning resources and those that need to be provided if they are not already there.

Standard F: Ethics is to facilitate continuous improvement in increasing student learning success through a learning process that is following the highest ethical standards and encourages assistance in the form of political action if necessary.

Standard G: Difference is to facilitate tolerance for differences in students’ backgrounds, whether from ethnicity, religion, race, gender, and origin.

**Learning Leader Competencies**

If the school is considered a system, then school leadership is one of its components, and learning leadership is one of the sub-components of school leadership. Although learning leadership is one of the sub-components of school leadership, learning leadership has the highest level of importance, while other sub-leaders have a level of importance one level lower and even two, three, and four levels lower than learning leadership. Why is that? The answer is clear because the main activity in schools is learning and other activities are only as support. For that, we need a principal who has the competence of a learning leader.

Competence is the ability to do something whose dimensions include knowledge, attitudes, and skills. A set of competencies that must be possessed by school principals as learning leaders are as follows.

1. Formulating and articulating learning objectives.
2. Directing and guiding curriculum development.
3. Guiding the development and improvement of teaching and learning processes (PBM).
5. Building a learning community.
6. Implementing visionary and situational leadership.
7. Serving students with excellence.
8. Making continuous improvement.
9. Applying the characteristics of effective principals.
10. Building School Citizens to be Pro-Change.
11. Building cohesive teamwork.
12. Setting an example and inspiring school members.

In general, ways to implement learning leadership in schools can be divided into 11 points as follows.

1. Facilitating the preparation of learning objectives and learning standards.
2. Disseminating learning objectives and learning standards.
3. Facilitating the formation of teacher working groups.
4. Implementing high expectations.
5. Evaluating teacher performance and following up on its development.
7. Building learning person and learning school.
8. Providing most of the time for learning and always having time for teachers and students.
9. Serving excellently to teachers, students, and parents of students.
10. Coordinating with teachers, students, and parents.
11. Monitoring and evaluating the success of learning due to the application of learning leadership.
Organizations that are ready, able, and willing to change are more transformational than transactional in terms of the new paradigm of leadership. The use of transformational leadership to increase organizational satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness, as well as increase understanding of the dynamics of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders increase the awareness of their constituents about what is important, raising concerns for achievement, self-actualization, and ideals. Transactional leaders serve the self-interest of their constituents by utilizing contingent reinforcement, positive in the case of constructive rewards, praise, and promises for the success of the constituents in fulfilling commitments to the leader and/or organization (Bernard M, 2000).

The three factors of transformational leadership are: 1) charismatic and inspirational leadership (the leader envisions a valued future, articulates how to achieve it, sets high standards, and sets himself or herself as an example who identifies with followers and wants to emulate), (2) stimulation intellectual (leaders encourage followers to question assumptions and look at old problems in new ways that allow followers to be more innovative and creative), and 3) individual consideration (leaders treat each follower individually with different needs for support and development).

Effective principals must implement several standards that have been presented previously. In addition, the principal as a learning leader must also be able to build the togetherness of the school community and convince them that this togetherness will bring the school success, namely achieving the expected learning outcomes. An effective principal is also able to convince the school community that the programs, activities, rules of the game, etc. which are focused on students and learning will be able to raise student learning outcomes, both academic and non-academic.

CONCLUSION

Improved learning through learning leadership so that the principal’s function is to improve the quality of inputs through preparing professional educators as one way to improve the quality of Islamic education because if they have professional educators they will carry out the learning process effectively and produce outstanding graduates. The provision of education personnel in decision-making institutions is determined by the education office or school committee. Meanwhile, to improve the professionalism of education personnel, principals carry out coaching through supervision activities. Coaching teachers in schools and with other schools to develop the communication, knowledge, and experience of educators by involving teachers in training, education, and training workshops. The Islamic education quality will be achieved with the participation of the community, and for that, the principal also increases promotions to perfect the student recruitment strategy because in terms of the quantity of student input it is still low. The school principal schedules a program of meetings with the guardians of students or parents of students at the beginning of each semester. In institutions with the input resources that include teachers, there have been efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education, either through coaching, meetings, or discussions, participating in training, workshops, and others.

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