

LEADERSHIP STRATEGY OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS IN STUDENT CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The development of technology has become something common and has a major influence on society. The digital era has a real influence on human life, one example of which is in the field of education. As a result, leadership is needed that can adapt and take advantage of this technological development. In the world of education, the principal has a very important and crucial role, because he is the one who sets policies and directs the steps to be followed to achieve school goals. Therefore, a madrasah principal needs to develop a strategy in facing the changes in this digital era. The purpose of this study is to determine what leadership strategies are prepared by madrasah principals in character education in the digital era. This study uses a qualitative method, because the place of this research is Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Bener Meriah. The techniques used to obtain data in this study are interviews, observations, and documentation. The object of the study is the Leadership Strategy of the Madrasah Principal in Character Education in the Digital Era. The subjects of this study were the principal of the madrasah, teachers, and also students. It can be concluded that the principal's leadership strategy in character education in the digital era is through habituation, discipline, and existing programs.

Key words: leadership, principal, character education, digital era

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan teknologi menjadi sesuatu yang umum dan memiliki pengaruh besar pada masyarakat. Era digital memiliki pengaruh yang nyata pada kehidupan manusia salah satu contohnya adalah dalam bidang pendidikan. Akibatnya, dibutuhkan kepemimpinan yang dapat beradaptasi dan memanfaatkan dari perkembangan teknologi ini. Di dalam dunia pendidikan, kepala sekolah memiliki peran yang sangat penting dan krusial, karena ia yang menetapkan kebijakan dan mengarahkan langkah-langkah yang akan diikuti untuk mencapai tujuan sekolah. Oleh itu, seorang kepala madrasah perlu menyusun strategi dalam menghadapi perubahan era digital ini. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui bagaimana strategi kepemimpinan yang disiapkan kepala madrasah dalam pendidikan karakter di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, karena tempat penelitian ini di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Bener Meriah. Teknik yang digunakan untuk mendapatkan data dalam penelitian ini adalah wawancara, pengamatan, dan dokumentasi. Adapun objek penelitian adalah Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah dalam Pendidikan Karakter di Era Digital. Subjek penelitian ini adalah kepala madrasah serta guru, dan juga siswa. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam pendidikan karakter di era digital adalah melalui pembiasaan, kedisiplinan, serta program-program yang ada.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan, Kepala Sekolah, Pendidikan Karakter, Era Digital

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1. INTRODUCTION

Everything changes so quickly along with the development of the times and the influence of globalization that continues to occur. And this will have an impact and influence on various levels of human life, where in the current digital era, all human activities cannot be separated from technology and the internet. This is evidenced by information from the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemenkominfo) which states that internet users in Indonesia currently reach 63 million people. This shows that of this figure, 95% of Indonesian people use the internet to access social networks. The most accessed are Facebook and Twitter. Indonesia is ranked 4th largest Facebook user after the USA, Brazil, and India (Budiyo 2023).

This technological advancement has changed the order of life in society, both in terms of learning, interaction, and others (Slevin 2008). Over time, the development of science accompanied by the development of technology and information has experienced a moral crisis, where the influence of foreign culture has entered through the media or the internet. So the role of the world of education in this case is very important to fortify students so that they do not fall into the negative influence of the use of technology (Bornmann and Mutz 2015). It has become a common awareness that the world of education is a way that has been done by mankind throughout their lives to become a means of transmitting and transforming both values and knowledge. So strategic is the world of education as a means of transmitting and transforming values and knowledge, so in order to instill and develop the character of this nation, it cannot be separated from the role played by the world of education (Malik 2018). Currently, the world is entering an era called the Digital Era, an era of transformation that is occurring throughout the world and has a major impact on human life throughout the world. In this era, it is increasingly clear that the world has turned into a global village. This development is the impact of rapidly developing technology to unite the world, physics and biology to bring about changes that can be seen in the basic way of human life today (Silawati et al. 2023)

In the world of education, technological developments make it easier for students to find learning materials (Martín-Gutiérrez et al. 2017). However, students are also vulnerable to various negative impacts of technology if not utilized properly. Various sites can be accessed via the internet so that the moral quality and character of students will be negatively impacted if not utilized properly (Riza 2022). In a broad sense, the impact of internet technology on students can be seen from two dimensions, namely the positive impact dimension and the negative impact dimension. The positive impact is that the internet is useful as an information medium, communication medium, learning medium, entertainment medium and business or trade medium. The negative impact is that internet technology can cause social traits to decrease, student interaction patterns change and make students aware of criminal acts (Arrasyid & Karwanto, 2021).

Law No. 23 of 2002 stipulates that children are the future assets of the country and the ideals of the nation's next generation, and every child has the right to live, grow and develop (Junaidi, 2021). Therefore, as educators, teachers are obliged to educate and shape the character of students so that they have knowledge, attitudes, morals and ethics. In today's era, there are many demands to increase the intensity and quality of character education implemented by formal educational institutions. In this context, schools as formal educational institutions and official forums must increase their role in shaping the character of students by increasing the intensity and quality of character education.

Schools in improving character education also face many challenges, including at MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah. Based on the results of an interview with one of the class teachers, he said that there are students who often use cellphones to play social media, especially the TikTok application. Meanwhile, according to Santi and Zahra, grade III students, they said that the TikTok application really entertained them, there are lots of videos of various shapes and types. This is of course something that is very worrying for the future of children, besides being used as a means of entertainment, there are many uploads that damage children's morals and behavior because the TikTok application is not a video that is selected first to be played and uploaded. The content on this application is feared that children will accentuate negative content so that it has a bad impact on children. Character education given to students in schools seems to ignore morals, ethics and good character.

The principal (Madrasah) is a leader who plays a central role in character education (Jalaludin, 2022). The principal needs to play a role in the various impacts of technological developments in the digital era that threaten students' character. With all the strategies and innovations owned by the principal (madrasah) as a leader, he can determine how student character education is implemented in the school environment (Khairani, 2022). School leaders (madrasahs) are challenged to be able to use technology so that the teaching and learning process in the 21st century improves, because they become role models in its use so that there is an increase in work practices in schools (madrasahs).

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character education is implemented in the school environment (Arrasyid & Karwanto, 2021) . School leaders (madrasahs) are challenged to be able to use technology so that the teaching and learning process in the 21st century improves, because they become role models in its use so that there is an increase in work practices in schools (madrasahs). The principal (madrasah) needs a series of leadership strategies to deal with it. What is expected from the strategy to be used can bring about better changes. According to the description above, researchers are interested in knowing the strategies of school principals (madrasahs) in dealing with this digitalization change. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study entitled "Leadership strategies of madrasah principals in character education of students in the digital era. Where the researcher refers to the description above, the formulation of the problem that is the focus of this researcher is "How is the leadership strategy of the madrasah principal in character education of students in the digital era? ". Based on the questions asked, the researcher sets the research objectives and describes the leadership strategy of the madrasah principal in character education of students in the digital era, this leadership strategy is expected to provide a reference for the madrasah principal in character education in this digital era. The theoretical contribution of this study is expected to enrich the practical or theoretical analysis of the implementation strategy of character education in the digital era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership Concept

Leadership is the science and art of influencing people or groups to act on what the leader wants to achieve group/organizational goals effectively and efficiently (Jalaludin, 2022) Leadership is also a process of influencing that is manifested in the behaviors and interactions between leaders and their subordinates, which are established in a certain context to achieve common goals and ideals, Therefore, the success of a leader is determined by several factors, including: intelligent nature and maturity in leading an organization which is shown through broad behavior, having broad social relationships, being able to get along with anyone , having a strong motivation to produce an achievement, showing a dynamic social relationship attitude.

The success of an educational institution is highly dependent on the leadership of the madrasah principal. The madrasah principal as an educator, administrator, leader, and supervisor, is expected to be able to manage the educational institution towards better development and can promise a future. Because he is a leader in his institution, he must be able to lead his institution towards achieving the goals that have been set, he must be able to see changes and be able to see a better future in global life. The madrasah principal must be responsible for the smooth running and success of all matters of the arrangement and management of the madrasah formally to his superiors or informally to the community who have entrusted their students. (Arrasyid and Karwanto 2021)

2.2 Madrasah Principal Leadership Strategy

The leadership of the madrasah principal has a very important role in creating an effective and productive educational environment. Here are some leadership strategies that can be applied by the madrasah principal to achieve these goals: (Kurniawan et al. 2023)

1. Clear Vision and Mission:

Developing and Communicating a Vision: The principal must have a clear vision for the future of the school and be able to communicate it to all stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents. Establishing a Measurable Mission: The vision must be followed by a measurable mission that can be implemented in daily practice.

2. Professional Development:

Training and Development: Provide opportunities for teachers and staff to participate in training and professional development so that they are always up-to-date with the latest developments in education.

3. Mentoring and Coaching:

Provide mentoring and coaching for staff to help them overcome challenges and develop their skills.

4. Resource Management:

Budget Planning and Management: Managing budgets wisely to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

5. Utilization of Facilities and Infrastructure:

Ensuring that madrasa facilities, such as laboratories and libraries, are used optimally to support the learning process.

6. Engagement and Communication:

Stakeholder Engagement: Building good relationships with students, parents, and the surrounding community to gain their support and involvement in madrasah activities. Open Communication: Implementing an open and transparent communication system to address issues and receive input from various parties.

7. Improving the Quality of Education:

Evaluation and Feedback: Conducting regular evaluations of the curriculum and learning process and using feedback for improvement. Innovation in Learning: Encouraging the use of innovative learning methods and educational technology to improve the quality of teaching.

8. Culture and Work Ethics

Creating a Positive Environment: Building a positive and supportive work culture to enhance teacher and student motivation and performance. Enforcing Ethics: Ensuring that all madrasah policies and practices are in accordance with ethical and professional standards.

9. Transformational Leadership

Initiative and Change: Lead by example and drive positive change within the organization to achieve long-term goals. Inspiration and Motivation: Inspire and motivate staff and students to reach their full potential and face challenges with enthusiasm.

By implementing these strategies, the principal can create an educational environment that is conducive to learning and development, while ensuring that the principal achieves its goals effectively.

2.3 Character building

Character education is a systematic process that aims to shape and develop students' characters to become ethical, responsible, and integrity individuals. The main focus of character education is on the development of moral values, ethics, and positive behaviors that support the formation of a good personality. (Budiyono, 2023) Effective character education is a continuous process and involves all parties in the educational community. The goal is to form individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have integrity and good attitudes in everyday life.

Character education is a learning process that aims to form and develop moral and ethical values in individuals, so that they can become good and responsible people. This education includes teaching about norms, values, and habits that are considered important in society. Character education is an important aspect in forming students' personalities who are not only academically intelligent but also have good moral values. By implementing effective methods and involving all parties, including parents and the community, character education can have a significant positive impact on students' lives. Facing existing challenges with the right solutions will ensure that character education can be implemented optimally, thus producing a superior and integrity generation.

Character is a distinctive feature of an object or person. These traits are genuine and rooted in the personality of the subject or individual and are the engine that drives how a person acts, behaves, speaks and reacts. Character is something that is owned by an individual, which is a characteristic of a person's personality and is different from others in the form of attitudes, thoughts and actions. The characteristics of each individual are useful for life and working together in the family, society, nation and state. Character education is a tool shown to students to carry out something that is considered good so that it can have a positive impact on the environment.

The purpose of character education is to form individuals with character which is achieved through optimal development of various aspects including physical, social, emotional, creative, intellectual, and spiritual. More specifically, the purpose of character education is to provide opportunities for students to develop character, especially those that meet graduate competency standards (Effendi, 2022). In the context of schools, the purpose of education is to strengthen and develop values that are considered important and needed so that students develop authentic personalities in accordance with the values developed.

2.4 Digital Era

The Digital Era is a phase of societal development characterized by the dominance of digital technology, including computers, the internet, mobile devices, and digital communication systems. This era replaces the Information Era, which was previously dominated by print media and television, and creates an environment where data and information can be accessed, shared, and processed quickly and efficiently. (Arrasyid & Karwanto, 2021). The digital era brings new challenges and opportunities in character education. While technology can support character education by providing access to valuable resources and interactive platforms, there are risks that need to be managed, such as exposure to negative content and technology addiction. By implementing the right strategies and involving all parties, including parents and the community, character education can remain relevant and effective amidst technological changes. It is important to balance technology use with social activities and support students in developing good character.

The digital era has brought about major changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Advances in information and communication technology have not only changed the way we access information, but have also influenced the way we learn and interact. Amidst all these advances, character education remains an important priority in shaping students' personalities. New challenges arising from digital influences require the right approach to ensure that character education remains relevant and effective.

3. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research methods are research methods used to examine the natural conditions of objects, where the researcher is the key tool. The data collection technique used is one of the special steps when obtaining research data. Research data collection was carried out directly by

researchers using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. To find out clearer data about the condition of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah, the researcher explored data, information, and the descriptive framework of the research subjects through interviews. The interview method used is a guided free interview, namely the questions asked are not tied to interview guidelines, but can be deepened or developed in line with the situation and conditions in the field. The data obtained will continue to be analyzed and interpreted from the beginning of the research to the end of the research. The data analysis used consists of 3 simultaneous processes, namely: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions or verification.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through interviews with the researcher and the resource person, the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah, findings were obtained regarding the leadership strategies used in character education for students in the digital era, namely:

Through interviews with the researcher and the resource person, the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah, findings were obtained regarding the leadership strategies used in character education for students in the digital era, namely:

1. Leadership Characteristics of the Principal of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah

The leadership of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah has a leadership philosophy that is nuanced in religious aspects. According to him, this is a form of worship to try to make people try to become a generation that is wise and rational. Therefore, school/madrasah principals always work sincerely and selflessly. This also seems to have implications for educators and education personnel in the school/madrasah environment. The principal of the school/madrasah said that in order to be respected, obeyed and followed by others, the only word that must not be violated is honesty.

In addition, the most prominent leadership traits are honesty, justice, kindness, wisdom, discipline, firmness, and piety. The principal of a madrasah in the complexity of the role of the principal of a school/madrasah is summarized into EMASLIM (educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator) to run the school/madrasah as a leading school. Therefore, according to the researcher's view, his approach to religious leadership is applied based on the issues faced. Therefore, he can patiently lead his subordinates and students who have different personalities.

2. Principal/Madrasah Leadership Strategy in Implementing Character Education in the Digital Era

Realizing the responsibility and function of schools/madrasahs as formal educational institutions, of course the role of the principal is very much needed in terms of developing student character. the role of the principal in relation to the development and implementation of the concept of character education is as a leader who tightens in relation to building, maintaining and introducing good character for all components of the school. In line with the results of the study, schools/madrasahs, as formal educational institutions, certainly need the role of the principal in developing the character of students. In this millennial era, it is not surprising that students' personalities change according to the opportunities and learning environment created. Character education can be successful if all aspects of education receive proper character development, and do so consistently and collectively.

The role of transformational leadership of the principal in optimizing the implementation and evaluation of character education improvement programs is to encourage development and change through shared vision, mission and goals, providing excellent opportunities to develop initiatives, creativity and innovation to find new opportunities and solutions to old problems. The management and development of a school is highly dependent on the leadership of the principal, one of which is the strategy of the principal. As a school leader, the principal has such a heavy task that it is necessary to have school principal management that is truly on target based on a unique strategy. As the highest leader in a school, the principal/head of school has a profound influence on the success of the school, they must have leadership skills, commitment to work and a will to succeed.

Good principal leadership must be able to improve the abilities of teachers through programs that help improve their abilities. Therefore, the principal must have the nature or character, ability and knowledge to lead his school.

3. Obstacles in Implementing Character Education in the Digital Era

According to what the researcher wrote, one of the biggest problems in creating character schools in madrasahs is human capacity. Which human capacity has different resources, different parenting patterns, and different living environments.

Leaders must have the skills to influence, encourage, direct, guide, and mobilize others involved in the implementation and development of educational instruction in the digital era. The principal of MTs Negeri 1 Bener Meriah has religious leadership characteristics. This, in addition to his religious leadership, is seen in the ability of the madrasah principal to position himself with objectivity, democracy, discipline, honesty, assertiveness, and emotional control towards staff, teachers, and students.

From the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the strategies used to build student character by the principal are through habits, self-discipline and through existing programs. The obstacle faced in implementing character education in madrasahs is human resources. From the findings of this study, it is suggested to further

develop character education values for schools and improve students and teachers in schools. And can produce students with better character, so that they are beneficial for the family and community environment. Teachers also need to teach more characters that are related to this learning, so that students can regain better characters than before. For students, it is hoped that through activities organized by the school, more character values will be instilled, thus making them useful students who are willing to practice character in the student environment.

5. CONCLUSION

This rapid technological development has a real impact on society. Moreover, with the era of digitalization, society is experiencing changes in the field of education. In the digital era marked by the increasing development of technology, the negative and positive impacts of technology on personality have a direct impact on the quality of character that affects students as the future of the nation. Character education is very important to do because it is part of an effort to create offspring that have a good influence on the community that is to be formed. Therefore, the world of education needs leaders who can adapt to these changes. Ideal leadership is a leader who follows the demands of the digital era. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that First, in today's digital era where there has been increasingly rapid technological development, so that various impacts that arise, both positive and negative, will have a major impact on the quality of a person's character, especially students as the next generation of the nation. Education and character building are very important as an effort to form the next generation of the nation who are moral because basically, they are one of the reflections of whether a nation is good or not. Second, the principal plays an important role in the context of character education for students and it is highly expected that they can embrace all elements in their schools, starting from teachers, students, education personnel, parents, to the surrounding community, which is a form of the principal's role and responsibility in instilling character education for students in their schools. Third, the principal's leadership role in instilling character education can be demonstrated through the instillation and habituation of several character education in daily activities at school in addition to providing exemplary behavior and personality that is evident from his attitude, knowledge, skills and experiences as a leader and school manager to become a role model for all school residents, especially students in realizing and succeeding character education in today's digital era.

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