

Visionary Leadership In Promoting Islamic Values In Schools: A Phenomenological Study At SDN 1 Durenan Trenggalek

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Abstract.

As a form of responsibility toward transformation in the field of education, schools must have the capacity to realize and develop students' character by strengthening the role of religion in learning activities. Religious activities not only play a crucial role in shaping student character but also foster habits of discipline, responsibility, and the development of good personal values. Discipline, in turn, leads to orderly learning which becomes a motivation for academic achievement. A visionary principal holds a strategic role in encouraging students to develop religious character through various religious activities conducted by the school, including extracurricular, intramural, and co-curricular programs. This study employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological design. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The data analysis technique follows the Miles and Huberman model including data display, data reduction, and data verification (drawing conclusions). Visionary leadership in developing Islamic values at SDN 1 Durenan, Trenggalek, is implemented massively through religious activities. The principal plays a central role as a leader of change, policy-maker, and coordinator in improving students' academic achievement. As agents of change, educators and school staff are responsible for implementing and evaluating religious activities in the school environment. Students, as the primary focus of academic achievement improvement, receive full attention from both the principal and the teaching staff.

Keywords: Religious Role; Character and Academic Achievement.

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, more and more new schools are emerging, offering various facilities and levels of educational quality, accompanied by a wide range of tuition fees. This situation has intensified competition in the educational sector. On the other hand, many long-established schools are facing serious challenges, such as declining student enrollment, reduced public interest, forced school mergers, and in more extreme cases, permanent closures. The powerful and rapid wave of globalization is inevitable. Only schools with strong internal resilience rooted in religious values are capable of surviving in today's disruptive era. Ultimately, schools are expected to meet society's expectations, especially in terms of student academic achievement. Efforts to improve academic achievement cannot rely solely on input and output factors. The most crucial element lies in the process—specifically, time management, the teaching and learning process, and the process of monitoring and evaluation. Among these, the teaching and learning process holds the highest level of importance. If the educational process within an institution is well-managed, educational objectives will be successfully achieved (Nurrahmania, 2019:149). Improving student achievement requires effective student management. This ensures that students receive appropriate services and are able to develop their interests in line with their goals (Fahim, 2016:3). It can be said that students will excel academically and non-academically, gain knowledge, and enhance their personal abilities to achieve their aspirations. Every educational institution has a student management system.

The difference lies in how effectively and efficiently it is implemented to produce students with both academic excellence and good character (Ria Sita, 2015:829). Education plays a fundamental role in the development of the nation, and religious education is an integral part of the national education system. According to Law No. 20 of 2003, Chapter 1 Article 37 (1) on the National Education System, national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in

order to educate the nation's life. It aims to develop students' potential to become individuals who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Mursyidin, 2012:45). Given the current context, the cultivation and habituation of religious values through religious education activities has become an undeniable necessity. The primary task of education is to prepare students to become members of society who understand and are able to practice their religious teachings.

This aligns with the characteristic of the Indonesian nation, which is built upon a religious and national foundation. One strategy for reinforcing religious values is through a school/madrasah culture that encompasses all aspects of education. Religious activities involve habituation and value cultivation to prepare independent generations, through both exemplary leadership and religious instruction within schools. The reinforcement of religious values through a religious school culture is expected to optimize the role of madrasahs as institutions that transmit culture (Abdul Latif, 2005:30). Schools serve as key venues for the internalization of religious values, instilled through routine practices directed at students. Through these practices, it is hoped that students will develop a strong moral shield for building a noble character. The role of religious education in schools is vital and strategic in shaping students' character and personality holistically. Religious education goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge—it serves as a moral and spiritual foundation in students' daily lives. In the context of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, it is stated that education aims to develop the potential of learners to become individuals who are faithful, pious, noble in character, and equipped with life skills. This clearly indicates the central role of religious values in developing generations who are not only intellectually capable, but also spiritually and socially resilient. Amid today's challenges of globalization and information disruption, schools that integrate religious values into the curriculum and daily routines are proven to better protect students from negative external influences.

Strengthening and instilling religious activities integrated with school culture is not a short-term effort—it is a long-term process. The involvement of all school stakeholders is crucial in realizing this goal. Habituation of religious values through activities such as congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an, performing Duha prayer together, reciting Asmaul Husna, religious studies, Hajj simulation, Qurban education, and practices of mutual help and empathy, all form part of a concrete effort to develop students with strong character. Thus, the role of religious education in schools is not merely complementary, but stands as a central pillar in shaping morally upright, responsible students who are ready to take on their roles as good citizens in society and the nation.

II. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, aiming to provide a comprehensive and objective depiction of a phenomenon, while also attempting to uncover the meaning behind the events. Descriptive studies seek to portray situations accurately without manipulating variables, enabling researchers to understand and explain real-world contexts. Moreover, qualitative studies are applied to explore real-life settings, where the researcher serves as the primary instrument for interpretation and data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2013). A qualitative approach was applied in this study. The researcher defined the focus of the research, formulated specific research questions, narrowed the scope of investigation, collected data from participants, and conducted the study objectively. Field research using a case study method was implemented to identify the research subject, which in this case was a public elementary school—SDN 1 Durenan. The collection of facts, information, and evidence was carried out using three techniques: participant interviews, on-site observations, and official document analysis. After gathering the data, analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman method. To ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data, the study incorporated validity checks based on credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

This research utilized the Miles and Huberman (1984) analytical framework, which involves a systematic process consisting of data collection, categorization, organization, reduction, display, validation, and conclusion drawing. By applying this framework, the research was able to identify important patterns

and connections within the collected data, thus enabling significant insights into the impact of leadership and management practices in religious-oriented educational institutions at the local school level. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for policymakers, religious institutions (Mohamad Dian Hakim & Winarto, 2025:18), and formal educational institutions in designing and implementing more effective curriculum integration strategies to ensure the sustainability of schools favored by the community.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on Visionary Leadership in Developing Islamic Values in Schools (A Phenomenological Study at SDN 1 Durenan, Trenggalek) align with Role Theory as developed by Biddle and Thomas, who assert that roles are a set of actions or tasks performed by individuals within a particular community or society. Biddle and Thomas categorize the concept of role theory into four classifications: role behavior, role actor, role position, and expectation-related attitudes toward the role (Sarlinto W., 1984:234; Asrof Safi'i, 2016:80). In the context of role behavior, expectations from school members include their active contribution in supporting academic achievement improvement, particularly through participation in and reinforcement of religious activities that foster character building and enhance student motivation to learn. For instance, the school principal holds aspirations for teachers and staff to help achieve the school's religious education vision. Secondly, norms—one form of normative expectation—are shared guidelines or standards (Burhan Bungin, 2007:86). Every school stakeholder is expected to participate in religious activities to realize institutional goals.

This includes addressing various implementation challenges related to religious activities, ensuring that every individual in the educational unit can perform their role in supporting student academic success. Thirdly, attitudinal manifestation refers to the real behavior exhibited by role actors. This behavior may vary from one individual to another (Sarlinto W., 1984:234; Asrof Safi'i, 2016:80). School stakeholders, as role actors in academic achievement improvement, play significant roles even though they carry distinct responsibilities. Fourth, role assessment and sanctions refer to all forms of response oriented toward compliance with applicable norms. These responses may come from external parties or be self-regulated. All school elements, in carrying out activities related to academic achievement, are subject to evaluation and sanctions in accordance with established rules. In this regard, the visionary school principal plays a vital role in overseeing religious activities at school aimed at improving students' academic performance. The principal functions as a leader of change, who possesses a broad vision aligned with the school's mission. They also act as a policy maker, coordinator, and leader who directs improvement efforts across the school. In addition, the visionary principal is also a key developer of Islamic values internalization, implemented through religious activities that are integrated into extracurricular, intramural, and co-curricular programs.

Furthermore, teachers and education personnel serve as agents of change and act as supervisors ensuring the smooth implementation of religious activities. Students, as the core recipients of academic improvement initiatives, receive full attention from the school leadership, teachers, and education staff. This research supports and reinforces Role Theory (Biddle and Thomas) as the guiding theoretical framework. The study identifies the following role-related behaviors:

1. Expectations – School members are expected to play a significant role in improving academic achievement through religious programs, serving as role models, motivators, and supervisors. If these expectations are realized, they will serve as indicators of success in academic achievement. For example, school leaders expect teachers and staff to ensure the success of religious programs.

2. Norms – Normative expectations guide how individuals should perform their roles. School members are expected to be focused and proportionate in addressing issues related to religious behavior. When norms are grounded in strong religious values, the educational process becomes more meaningful. Teachers, as primary role models, should internalize these values in both instruction and daily interaction. Likewise, students—through habits like discipline, honesty, responsibility, and respect—are encouraged to behave positively and are motivated to achieve academically. Norms thus not only shape character but also form a solid foundation for a high-performing and competitive school culture.

3. Concrete Role Behavior – Role enactment takes the form of visible, daily actions. Differences in individual roles become a strength in creating school synergy. The principal, teachers, staff, and even the students play complementary roles. For example, teachers apply creative strategies and humanistic approaches in the classroom, principals provide supportive leadership and promote innovation, while education staff offer structured and friendly services to support the learning environment. Together, these behaviors turn a shared vision into tangible daily practice.

4. Assessment and Sanctions – These reflect public expectations tied to established rules. In schools, assessment can be formal—such as supervision, teacher performance evaluations, or academic reports—or informal, as seen in everyday interactions. Sanctions are not merely punitive but are designed to guide and improve behavior. A teacher who fails to carry out professional responsibilities may receive coaching, while students who violate school rules may receive educational sanctions. A fair, transparent, and constructive system of evaluation and discipline serves as a crucial mechanism of social control to maintain consistency in roles and foster a culture of accountability.

Thus, the religious programs that support student academic achievement involve the active participation of school leaders—who act as leaders of change, developers of Islamic values internalization, and regulators of policy and coordination. Teachers and education personnel serve as agents of change and supervisors, while students are the target group of these initiatives and are supported through structured guidance and monitoring. In addition to the roles of principals, teachers, staff, and students, parents also play a crucial role in supporting the success of religious programs as a means to enhance student academic performance. Parents serve as strategic partners in overseeing and nurturing religious behavior both at school and at home. At home, they can reinforce religious habits developed at school, such as guiding children in prayer, teaching good manners, and setting spiritual examples. Moreover, parents are encouraged to engage in communication with schools through committees or parent forums to support school-led religious programs. A strong partnership between school and parents ensures continuity in religious education, enabling students to grow not only as academically competent individuals but also as morally and spiritually grounded citizens.

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IV. CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic values in the school is carried out by the principal as a visionary leader through religious activities at SDN 1 Durenan Trenggalek. The principal functions as a developer of Islamic values, agent of change, leader, policy maker, and coordinator in efforts to improve students' academic achievement. Next, educators and education staff serve as agents of change and supervisors overseeing the implementation of religious activities at school. Students, as the object of academic improvement, receive full attention from the principal, educators, and education staff. Meanwhile, the support for religious roles is played by school members, including homeroom teachers at each grade level and parents, who act as supervisors of religious activities both at school and at home.

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