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Implementation of Islamic Leadership Values by School Principals in Enhancing Teacher Competence in Public Junior High Schools in Indramayu

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of Islamic leadership values by school principals in improving teacher competence at public junior high schools in Indramayu Regency. Moral and spiritual values such as amanah (trustworthiness), adil (justice), musyawarah (consultation), and uswah hasanah (exemplary conduct) are the main focus in shaping effective educational leadership. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis at SMPN 1 Kandanghaur and SMPN 1 Anjatan.The findings reveal that the consistent application of Islamic leadership values by principals significantly contributes to the enhancement of teacher competencies in pedagogical, professional, personal, and social aspects. Principals who internalize Islamic values are able to foster a conducive school culture, encourage reflective practices, enforce discipline and fairness, and strengthen interpersonal relationships among teachers. As a result, teacher motivation increases, professional development becomes more focused, and instructional quality improves. this study recommends the development of structured leadership training program based on Islamic values and active collaboration among stakeholders to institutionalize this leadership model in order to improve the quality of education in public schools.

Keywords: Islamic leadership, teacher competence

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in the progress of a nation and serves as a means to interpret constitutional messages and build national character. An intelligent society fosters an enlightened way of life and progressively develops self-reliance. Such a society is a valuable investment in overcoming crises and facing global challenges. General secondary education is organized to continue and expand basic education while preparing students to become members of society capable of interacting with their natural, social, and cultural environment. It also enables them to further develop their skills in the workforce or pursue higher education. As a reflection of the government's commitment to education, this is evident in the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, Chapter II, Article 3, which states: "National education aims to develop the potential of learners to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens."

Considering these national education goals, it is essential to establish ethical educational institutions with high-quality human resources. Furthermore, Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards states in Article 91 that every educational institution, both formal and non-formal, is required to ensure the quality of education. This regulation provides clear guidelines for delivering quality education to improve national education standards. Education administrators or managers at the basic education level, equivalent to junior high schools, must understand and master national education service standards to provide high-quality education and accommodate various multidimensional demands. Sukmadinata et al. (2006:8,14) suggest that to implement a quality education program, the following steps should be taken:

"A leadership approach that prioritizes quality is essential. Some key foundations for a quality program include a leader's determination to initiate change. In addition to having a clear understanding of existing conditions and a vision for the future based on the established goals, a team must be able to formulate a clear plan as a guide for implementing the quality program."

One of the key components in improving the quality of education and establishing an ethical educational institution within a school environment is the principal. The role and function of school leadership, based on Islamic values, play a significant part in enhancing education quality. The principal serves as the pillar that ensures the continuity and assurance of quality education within the school. A principal must be innovative in improving education quality in their institution. The Ministry of National Education (Depdiknas) states that one of the effective leadership standards based on Islamic values for school principals is the ability to develop professionalism and manage human resources (Basri, 2014:64). Professionalism in Islamic values should first be developed within the principal, followed by teachers, so that it can be implemented and serve as a role model for students. Human resource management must be carried out continuously to produce a professional school community, including all stakeholders. Today, the education sector requires strong leadership more than just management. Likewise, a school needs a leader more than just a manager.

A leader who effectively implements Islamic values in their leadership role and function will undoubtedly improve their school and even cultivate professional teachers who work in their field based on Islamic principles. Leadership is an inherent trait of a leader. Every leader possesses leadership qualities as a foundation to bear the great responsibility of achieving a predetermined vision and mission. Leadership is the effort and ability of a person in a leadership position to influence others to execute established plans effectively and efficiently to achieve goals (Basri, 2014:11). Meanwhile, Islamic values play a significant role in shaping leadership models. Given the heavy burden carried by educational institutions and schools, they must be managed professionally to ensure educational goals are met as expected. Therefore, a leader is needed who can anticipate changes occurring in the education sector.

The school principal is an educational leader with a crucial role in developing educational institutions, serving as the key decision-maker within the institution. As the top manager, the principal significantly determines the progress or decline of a school, the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, and the provision of proper guidance, direction, and services to all school personnel to create a comfortable and harmonious environment. According to a recent study by the National Commission on Human Rights, four critical issues in Indonesia's education system were identified, one of which is the low quality of teachers and an unconducive learning environment in schools (Nadlir, 2018). This low teacher quality is evident from several indicators observed in schools, particularly in teacher development, where many challenges are faced. One of the major issues is a lack of work discipline, with frequent violations such as teachers arriving late for class, leaving early, being absent without notifying their superiors, failing to use lesson plans (RPP) during teaching, conducting evaluations without proper assessment guidelines, and refusing to participate in training, workshops, and similar professional development programs. In such conditions, the principal's ability to manage the educational institution is crucial. As the top leader, the principal must demonstrate optimal competence to ensure the school operates effectively and maintains high educational standards.

A professional school principal will undoubtedly translate their vision and mission into concrete actions, one of which is by introducing innovative new paradigms in their leadership management. A professional principal, within the framework of a new paradigm in educational management, will bring about positive impacts and fundamental changes in the renewal of the school education system, particularly in improving the quality of education (Basri, 2014; Mulyasa, 2005). Based on this, the quality of education in a school depends on how effectively and efficiently the principal manages the institution. One of the key efforts a principal can undertake to enhance education quality is improving teacher competence. The principal must take responsibility for the success of enhancing teacher competence. Unfortunately, real-world conditions show that one of the major obstacles to professional school leadership in improving education quality is the low productivity of teachers (Mulyasa, 2005:72).

A teacher's primary duty is to educate students. As an instructor, a teacher conveys knowledge and skills to students using specific methods so that the knowledge or skills become part of the students' own learning. As an educator, a teacher serves as an active intermediary in instilling high moral values and ethical norms as preparation for societal life. In fulfilling this role, teachers are required to strive for continuous improvement in their work quality. Teaching

is a professional occupation that requires specialized expertise. In carrying out their responsibilities at school, teachers interact not only with students but also with the principal. In other words, a teacher's work behavior or performance is closely linked to the leadership of the school principal as the head of the educational institution. A school principal, as an educational leader, has the ability to influence all members of the school community, including teachers, to optimize their duties and functions in achieving better performance. The discipline, creativity, responsibility, and exemplary behavior of a leader have a significant impact on teacher performance.

School leadership involves the ability to mobilize, influence, motivate, invite, direct, advise, guide, instruct, command, prohibit, and even discipline (if necessary), all while fostering professional development. A school principal must lead with Islamic values, as well as with discipline, creativity, and responsibility. These leadership qualities significantly affect teacher performance, especially when the principal sets a good example (Mulyasa, 2007:108).

The leadership of a school principal reflects the responsibility to mobilize all available resources within the school, fostering a strong work ethic, creativity, and high productivity in achieving educational goals. The role and function of leadership are crucial, as they determine the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. Therefore, the quality of a leader significantly impacts the success of an institution. A successful leader must be able to manage the organization effectively, influence others constructively, and provide a clear path toward collective achievement. However, teacher performance remains suboptimal, as evidenced by their weak mastery of various responsibilities within their profession, including pedagogical, personal, social, and professional aspects. The performance of middle school teachers is still not at an optimal level in providing effective services to students, which results in fewer graduates from middle schools being accepted into top-tier senior high schools or vocational schools.

Additionally, many teachers have yet to fully understand Ministerial Regulation (Permendiknas) No. 22 of 2006 on Content Standards and Permendiknas No. 41 of 2007 on Process Standards. Field observations reveal that many teachers focus solely on delivering lessons but pay little attention to lesson preparation. This lack of preparation is partly due to insufficient guidance and supervision from school principals in directing and fostering teachers to improve their performance. Teacher competence is regulated under Government Regulation (PP) No. 19 of 2005, Article 28, Paragraph 3, and Law No. 14 of 2005, Article 10, which define the competencies required of educators as learning facilitators in primary and secondary education, as well as early childhood education. These competencies include: Pedagogical competence, Personal competence, Professional competence, Social competence.

First, what is pedagogical competence: To gain a broader understanding, we can refer to the explanation of Slamet PH (in Sagala), which states that: Pedagogical competence consists of the following sub-competencies: 1} Contributing to the development of the school-based curriculum (KTSP) related to the subject being taught. 2} Developing subject syllabi based on competency standards (SK) and basic competencies (KD). 3} Designing lesson plans (RPP) based on the developed syllabi. 4} Planning learning management and classroom management. 5} Implementing transformative learning methods that are active, creative, innovative, experimental, effective, and engaging. 6} Conducting authentic assessments of student learning

outcomes. 7} Guiding students in various aspects, such as academics, personality, talents, interests, and career development. 8} Continuously developing professional skills as a teacher.

Second, personality competence: Every word, action, and positive behavior can enhance a person's self-image and personality, provided it is done consciously. Personality encompasses both physical and psychological aspects, meaning that every action and behavior reflects a person's character. Personality plays a crucial role in determining whether a teacher can be considered a good educator or, conversely, a negative influence on their students.

According to Sagala (33:2011), from a psychological perspective, a teacher's personality competence demonstrates personal abilities that reflect the following qualities: 1} Firm and stable – Having consistency in actions that align with legal norms, social norms, and ethical standards. 2} Mature – Displaying independence as an educator and having a strong work ethic as a teacher. 3} Wise and prudent – Benefiting students, the school, and society by demonstrating openness in thinking and actions. 4} Authoritative – Exhibiting respectable behavior that positively influences students. 5} Having noble character – Demonstrating exemplary behavior that students can emulate, acting in accordance with religious norms, being honest, sincere, and helpful. The values of personality competence can serve as a source of strength, inspiration, motivation, and innovation for students.

Many Indonesian teachers understand that education is a field of service to God Almighty, the nation, the country, and humanity in general. Indonesian teachers, who embody the spirit of Pancasila and uphold the 1945 Constitution, share responsibility for realizing the ideals of the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945. Therefore, Indonesian teachers are called to fulfill their duties by adhering to fundamental principles as a code of ethics, which reinforces that a teacher's noble heart is reflected in their daily life. Teachers genuinely share knowledge and values with their students. When discussing personality competence, it ultimately depends on the teacher, as those with a profound sense of heart demonstrate a complete personality. This inner strength consists of spiritual, emotional, and moral strength, compassion, politeness, tolerance, honesty, purity, self-discipline, self-respect, responsibility, moral courage, diligence, commitment, aesthetics, and ethics.

Third, social competence: According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 4, Paragraph 1 states: *"Education shall be conducted democratically and equitably, without discrimination, while upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national diversity."* This statement emphasizes that education must be conducted in a democratic and fair manner, free from bureaucratic paradigms. If bureaucracy takes precedence, the space for creativity and innovation in education, particularly at the institutional level, will not be fulfilled as envisioned in the 2003 National Education System Law. A democratic approach to education, especially in providing learning services to students, inherently contains social dimensions. Therefore, in carrying out their duties, educators must prioritize social engagement.

Social competence relates to a teacher's ability to interact with others as a social being. As members of society, teachers must exhibit politeness, communicate effectively, and engage positively with students, fellow educators, school staff, parents, the surrounding community, and stakeholders involved in education. This objective condition highlights that a teacher's

social competence is evident in their interactions—both in their professional role and as a member of society—and in how they implement these skills in daily life.

Fourth, professional competence: The fourth essential competence that teachers must possess is professional competence. Teachers are a crucial factor in the administration of education in schools; therefore, improving the quality of education also means enhancing the quality of teachers. Teacher quality improvement is not only related to their welfare but also to their professionalism. Law No. 14 of 2005, Article 1 Paragraph (1) states that a teacher is a professional educator whose primary duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education. As professionals, teachers must have sufficient pedagogical competence. This competence is reflected in their ability to apply various educational concepts, implement effective teaching principles, demonstrate engaging and interactive teaching strategies, and maintain discipline, honesty, and consistency.

Teachers must continuously engage in lifelong learning to update and renew their knowledge. This can be done by conducting research, whether through literature reviews or classroom action research. The school principal is responsible for enhancing teachers' professionalism to ensure high-quality education that satisfies both students and parents as educational service users. Likewise, teachers must have a strong awareness and commitment to continuously improve their competence and professionalism to provide optimal learning experiences, ensuring both a high-quality learning process and satisfactory outcomes.

The influence of school leadership on teacher performance Previous studies on the impact of school leadership on teacher performance have been widely conducted in both developing and developed countries, including Indonesia. Research by Sumarno (2009), Wulandari (2012), Engku (2012), Wahyuningsih (2011), and Jalilizadeh et al. (2013) has found that leadership has a significant influence on teacher performance. Similarly, Sudarto (2012) found that leadership significantly affects teacher performance. Moreover, Machumu and Kaitila (2014) stated that democratic school leadership positively and significantly influences teachers' job satisfaction. Susanti (2013) found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Meanwhile, Adeyemi (2011), who conducted research in Nigeria, concluded that autocratic school leadership supports teachers' performance rather than hinders it.

These findings indicate that previous studies have not yielded fully consistent results, likely due to differences in context. Therefore, further research remains relevant, particularly in examining the roles and functions of school leadership and teacher competence in junior high schools in Indramayu Regency. This study will explore how school principals' leadership is implemented through short-term (annual programs), medium-term (four-year programs), and long-term policies and programs. Among these, the most crucial and sustainable initiative is the enhancement of school human resources, particularly by improving teacher competence in classroom learning. This is expected to improve the quality of education and boost students' motivation to learn, both at school and at home.

The issue related to the role and function of leadership among junior high school principals in Indramayu Regency stems from the challenges faced by school principals in managing the institutions they lead. This is particularly relevant to the aspect of teacher

competence, which requires serious attention, alongside the need to improve school management in handling educational institutions from the elementary to high school levels.

To complement the explanation above, the following are some fundamental reasons why the author has chosen the focus on teachers in public junior high schools (SMPN) in Indramayu Regency as the core issue of this research:

1. The increasing demands and expectations of society regarding the quality of education. These demands and expectations are met by educational institutions or school units, particularly SMPN, by enhancing teacher competence in accordance with their respective subject qualifications.

2. Junior high schools are required to compete with other equivalent schools to meet the expectations and demands of parents and society. Therefore, efforts to enhance the potential of junior high school teachers are an appropriate step in advancing education, particularly in public junior high schools (SMPN) in Indramayu.

Based on the explanation above, the focus of this research is to conduct a study on "The Implementation of Islamic Leadership Values by School Principals in Enhancing the Competence of Public Junior High School Teachers in Indramayu."

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To refine the research direction regarding the core issues of this study, it is necessary to establish a procedure that includes the research approach and methods, research location and time, data and data sources, data collection procedures, data analysis, and data validity (validity and reliability). A research method must have a specific research design. The primary objective of the research design is to describe and explain the research procedures used or the steps that must be taken, particularly concerning the research timeline, valid data sources, how data is collected, and the comprehensive and systematic processing of that data.

This research adopts a qualitative approach, while the method used is descriptive-qualitative. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982:17-30), the characteristics of qualitative research include: (1) direct data sources in natural settings, with the researcher as the primary instrument; (2) descriptive in nature; (3) prioritizing process over product or outcome; (4) inductive data analysis; and (5) emphasizing meaning. The data collection techniques used in this research include participatory observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document studies.

Data analysis in this study is conducted qualitatively. The qualitative procedure is used to interpret the objective description of the school principal's leadership model in enhancing the pedagogical competence of junior high school teachers. In conducting research on the issues formulated in Chapter I, the qualitative research method is based on constructivism, which views reality as multidimensional, interactive, and a social experience. The interactive qualitative research method is used because the focus of this study is to examine the phenomenon of leadership based on Islamic values, particularly how school principals enhance teachers' pedagogical competence. The choice of this method is based on the consideration that the expected research goal is to obtain information related to phenomena, symptoms, and existing facts and to gather factual explanations regarding individuals—namely, school

principals and teachers—as the unit of analysis. Essentially, this research aims to describe the extent of the contribution of school principals' Islamic values-based leadership.

According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a research method based on post-positivist philosophy, used to study objects in their natural conditions (as opposed to experimental research), where the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection techniques are inductive-qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. This is reinforced by Bogdan and Biklen (1992:13), who state that: "Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or product." In this context, the process refers to an investigative activity focusing on the relationship between the implementation of Islamic leadership values in schools and improving teacher competence in two junior high schools in Indramayu Regency.

The qualitative research approach is also referred to as a naturalistic approach because the field situation is natural and unaltered, as it exists without manipulation (Nasution, 1992:18). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:27), they state that:

> "Data collection in qualitative research should be conducted directly by the researcher, who must approach the data source personally. This model allows for a descriptive, explanatory, and comprehensive approach. The descriptive approach aims to answer 'what' is happening, while the explanatory approach seeks to answer 'why' and 'how'."

Bogdan and Biklen (1982:27-30) further outline the characteristics of the qualitative approach, which include: 1} Direct data sources in a natural setting, 2} Descriptive in nature, 3} Emphasizing process rather than product or outcome, 4} Inductive data analysis, and 5} Prioritizing meaning.

To assess the reliability of research data, researchers must conduct member checking, which involves verifying the data obtained from research subjects to ensure its accuracy. Additionally, peer checking is required as a further step to gain validation and agreement on the data. The qualitative research method is based on constructivist philosophy, which views reality as multidimensional, interactive, and requiring interpretation based on social experience.

Qualitative research is aimed at describing and analyzing the phenomenon of school leadership in a detailed context, supported by in-depth interview notes. The researcher seeks to establish a leadership model where school principals fully understand their duties and functions within a professional leadership system. Therefore, an in-depth interactive qualitative approach is used, employing direct data collection techniques to interpret leadership phenomena in two schools. The goal is to develop a comprehensive and holistic depiction of school leadership through the detailed perspectives of informants based on real-life experiences in the field. Consequently, a descriptive qualitative approach is applied.

Sukmadinata, N.S. (2005:52) states that research methodology refers to the methods or activities in conducting research, which are based on fundamental assumptions, philosophical and ideological viewpoints, as well as the key questions and issues being addressed. The research method serves as a guide in conducting research. According to Sorharto (1993:77), "A research method is a structured mode of thinking and action, carefully prepared to conduct

research and achieve its objectives. Certain critical conditions must be met to provide precise and thorough guidance, ensuring accurate and valid results that meet high scientific standards." Furthermore, Sugiyono (2007:3) describes qualitative research as a method used to obtain in-depth data by directly examining the object of study. This data carries holistic, dynamic, and interpretative meaning, emphasizing understanding rather than generalization.

This research aims to describe school leadership in enhancing teacher competence in public junior high schools in Indramayu Regency. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative method is employed, utilizing an activity-based analysis design. According to Sukmadinata (2005:74), in qualitative research, manipulation or controlled intervention in variables is not allowed. Instead, all elements—such as activities, conditions, events, components, or variables—must be studied as they naturally occur. Sugiyono (2007:3) further states that in qualitative research, data collection is not guided by a pre-existing theory but is instead driven by the facts discovered during field research. Thus, data analysis follows an inductive approach, where findings are used to develop hypotheses or theories.

Additionally, Sukmadinata N.S. (2005:94) explains that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena from the perspective of participants. Participants include individuals who are observed, interviewed, or asked to provide data, opinions, thoughts, and perceptions. A qualitative researcher must be able to integrate with respondents and understand their viewpoints. Subagyo, A.B. (2004:122) highlights that qualitative research focuses on systematically studying efforts to improve educational practices, whether by individuals or groups, through practical actions, reflection, and innovation. Similarly, Nasution (1988:5) states that qualitative research essentially involves observing people within their natural environment, interacting with them, and striving to comprehend their language and interpretation of the world around them.

In qualitative research, the researcher goes directly into the field. Subagyo A.B. (2004:53) states that the emphasis is on process and meaning, which are not strictly examined or measured in terms of quantity, identity, or frequency. Instead, the focus is on the constructed nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the subject, and the provision of accurate and authentic information. In qualitative research, the researcher enters the field equipped with interview guidelines, documentary study guides, and observation guides.

According to Sukmadinata, N.S. (2005:99):

"Qualitative research requires careful planning to determine the location, participants, and data collection process. This plan is emergent, meaning it changes and evolves according to findings in the field. The design is circular because purposive sampling, data collection, and data analysis are carried out simultaneously and interactively, rather than as separate steps."

This study employs a descriptive method, as explained by Sugiyono (2007:10): "Research is conducted intensively, with the researcher participating in the field for an extended period, carefully recording events, conducting reflective analysis on various documents found in the field, and producing a detailed research report." Furthermore, in qualitative research, the researcher is expected to immerse themselves with respondents and understand their perspectives. Sugiyono (2007:21) states that qualitative research provides a comprehensive and

clear depiction of the social situation being studied, allowing for a comparative analysis of various events, different social situations, or time periods. It can also uncover patterns of relationships between different aspects and contribute to hypothesis and theory development. In qualitative research, the researcher goes directly into the field, armed with interview guides, documentary study tools, and valid facts and data.

Sukmadinata N.S. (2007:95) explain that qualitative research seeks to examine participants' perspectives using multiple interactive strategies, such as direct observation, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and flexible data collection methods. Nasution (1988:15) adds that qualitative research requires the researcher to observe field conditions, interact with respondents, and understand their language and interpretation of their environment. Therefore, the researcher must be physically present in the field, engaging directly with participants in their natural setting.

This study uses a descriptive research method, as outlined by Sukmadinata N.S. (2007:164-167): "Research and development is a process aimed at creating new products or improving existing products in a justifiable manner. In research and development, several methods are used, including descriptive, evaluative, and experimental methods. Descriptive research is the most fundamental type of study, aimed at describing phenomena, facts, data, and information, whether natural or human-made. This includes data on the role of school leadership in improving teacher competence at the junior high school level."

This study systematically and comprehensively examines both school leadership and teacher competence in junior high schools, focusing on their activities and interactions. Descriptive research is used to determine necessary actions based on information, facts, and data, including: Present condition (the current state of affairs), Desired condition (what we aim to achieve), and how to get there (strategies for achieving the goal). One type of descriptive research is developmental studies, which track changes over specific timeframes using longitudinal (long-term) and cross-sectional (short-term) approaches. Another type is comparative studies (causal-comparative research), which compares two or more similar situations, events, activities, or programs. This comparison helps identify key factors influencing similarities and differences and determines dominant factors resulting from specific situations or events.

In the qualitative research concept, constructivist philosophy assumes that reality is multidimensional, interactive, and shaped by shared social experiences. A qualitative researcher believes that reality is a social construct, where individuals or groups assign meaning to events, people, processes, and objects. According to Sukmadinata N.S. (2005:9), activity analysis is used to examine tasks or job execution. In this study, the leadership functions of school principals in Indramayu are analyzed.

This research takes place in Indramayu Regency, one of the regencies in West Java Province. Indramayu's geographical, topographical, and climatic conditions are similar to other northern coastal regions of West Java. The regional development priorities of Indramayu Regency focus on education, healthcare, and improving residents' purchasing power. Among these priorities, educational equity and the availability of adequate educational facilities are key aspects. The goal is to ensure quality education that produces skilled and professional

human resources, guided by faith and morality. The research process consists of several stages, which include:

The preliminary study, conducted through a literature review, involved visiting two public junior high schools:

1. State Junior High School 1 Kandanghaur, Kandanghaur District, Indramayu Regency.
2. State Junior High School 1 Anjatan, Anjatan District, Indramayu Regency.

The data collected in the educational phase included:

1. School data, educational staff, students, school employees, school leadership, and policies/programs implemented at SMPN 1 Kandanghaur, Indramayu.
2. School data, educational staff, students, school employees, school leadership, and policies/programs implemented at SMPN 1 Anjatan, Indramayu.

The research focuses on the leadership of two school principals, representing the 92 public junior high schools in Indramayu Regency. The subjects of the study include school principals, teachers from both schools, school staff, and the surrounding community. The primary research instrument in this study is the researcher, who directly participates in the research site and interacts with all research subjects. To facilitate data collection, recording, and documentation, the researcher also employs the following techniques: A) Observation Observation, as a data collection technique, has distinct characteristics compared to interviews and questionnaires. While interviews and questionnaires always involve direct communication with people, observation is not limited to human interactions but also includes natural and environmental objects. Sutrisno Hadi (in Sugiono, 2010: 203) stated that observation is a complex process, composed of biological and psychological processes, with perception and memory being two of the most crucial elements.

In qualitative research, observation serves as a primary data collection tool. The eyes function as the main medium, but this process can also be supported by cameras, video recordings, and film recordings. In naturalistic qualitative research, observation can be categorized into three types: Open Observation – The researcher interacts directly with individuals or the community as respondents, and their presence is explicitly known. Closed Observation – The researcher observes systematically without the respondents being aware of their presence. Indirect Observation – The researcher does not interact directly with respondents but collects data through intermediary media.

The researcher must clearly outline the observation methods used in the research report. Three key aspects ensure accurate and valid observation: The method should minimize bias and subjectivity—cross-checking among observers is necessary. Evaluation should focus on behavior rather than individuals—the assessment should emphasize job-related behaviors instead of personal attributes. Observations tend to be more precise and objective when analyzing tangible rather than intangible tasks. B) Interviews An interview is a purpose-driven conversation between two parties: the interviewer, who asks questions, and the interviewee, who provides answers. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 266), interviews serve to: Construct understanding about individuals, events, organizations, emotions, motivations, demands, and concerns. Reconstruct past experiences as remembered by respondents. Project

future expectations based on current insights. Verify, modify, and expand information from other sources (triangulation) and validate researchers constructed understandings (member checking).

This process includes listening to school principals' statements. According to Lincoln and Guba, interviews follow seven key steps: Identifying interview subjects. Preparing key discussion topics. Initiating the interview. Conducting the interview flow. Summarizing and confirming key points. Documenting the interview results. Identifying follow-up actions.

According to Mulyasa (2003: 180), an interview is a form of communication between two individuals, where one gathers information by asking structured questions for a specific purpose. C) Document Analysis Document analysis is often overlooked in research but serves as an essential data source. Documents provide recorded information on social phenomena and facts, which can be in the form of handwritten notes, printed materials, or electronic recordings (audio, visual, or audiovisual). Documents are classified into two types: Public documents (e.g., newspapers, magazines, office reports). Private documents (e.g., diaries, letters, emails). According to Creswell (2010: 270) and Arikunto (2002: 135), documentation involves analyzing written materials, such as books, magazines, regulations, daily logs, and official documents, to obtain written records related to personnel, school administration, and community participation in education policies. D) Field Notes To complement observations, interviews, and documentation, researchers also use daily field notes. According to Mangkuprawira, Sjafri (2004: 74), field notes should cover: Activity plans. Implementation details. Findings and challenges encountered. Efforts taken to solve problems. E) Transformational Leadership in Education In a modern, democratic society, a school leader must possess aspirational strength, creative and moral influence, and transformational leadership. A professional school leader should: Motivate and inspire team members to align with educational goals. Implement a systematic and well-planned educational program. Focus on efficiency and effectiveness to achieve success in input, process, output, and outcome—key indicators of a successful educational leader.

Research Stages on the Implementation of Islamic Values-Based Leadership by School Principals in Enhancing Teacher Competence in Indramayu Regency This research employs a qualitative methodology with several stages, including: 1) Orientation Stage This stage involves various preparations related to administrative requirements. In naturalistic research, developing formal instruments is not mandatory, as the researcher serves as the primary instrument. However, to facilitate research implementation and data collection, structured data entry formats are created. Another crucial aspect of this stage is building close communication with research data sources to ensure that the data and information provided are free from bias and personal interests of the sources. 2) Exploration Stage This stage delves deeper into issues related to the research topic. Techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis are intensified to obtain relevant, significant, and comprehensive data, ensuring the research problems can be effectively addressed. Specifically, in document analysis, the reviewed documents must be directly related to the research problem and provide a deeper explanation of the data obtained through observation, interviews, and document study.

3) Member Check Stage Member checking is conducted to ensure the validity and credibility of collected data, particularly from interviews. This involves confirming the data after

conducting observations, interviews, and document studies. Additionally, data verification and corrections are made to ensure that the information aligns with the research problem.

Validity in Qualitative Research Design validity reflects the clarity of research findings in accordance with actual conditions. In qualitative research, validity measures the extent to which interpretations and concepts align with the perspectives of both participants and researchers. This means that both the researcher and participants should have a mutual understanding in describing and explaining leadership events, particularly in interpreting the role of school leadership in enhancing teacher competence in junior high schools.

In qualitative research, validity depends on data collection and analysis techniques. It can be achieved through the combination of three strategies for enhancing validity and reliability: Extended Data Collection – Conducting research over a longer period allows for progressive data analysis, ensuring consistency between findings and reality. Multi-Method Strategy – Combining various data collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, document analysis, and multiple sources (triangulation), enhances the credibility of findings. Participant Language Precision – Data should be recorded word-for-word to ensure clarity and detail in interpretation. Ultimately, validity and reliability refer to the accuracy of research results rather than the research instruments. An instrument is considered valid if it accurately measures the intended aspect—such as the transformation of conventional leadership into professional school leadership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretically, leadership is the process of influencing people in determining organizational goals, motivating followers' behavior to achieve those goals and influencing improvements in group and cultural dynamics (Veithzal R, 2004). Thus, leadership is the ability to influence people within a social system (beliefs, ideals, values, enthusiasm, ways of thinking) to achieve common goals (institutions) with increasing productivity. A democratic leadership model implies that a leader is always willing to accept and appreciate suggestions, opinions, and advice from staff and subordinates through a deliberation forum to reach a consensus. A democratic leader understands that an organization must be structured in a way that clearly defines the various tasks and activities that need to be carried out to achieve the organization's objectives. In the field of education, the essential elements of educational leadership are followers, goals, and the act of influencing. An effective leader is one whose members feel that their needs are met, whether related to work, motivation, recreation, health, clothing, food, shelter, or other essential aspects they deserve.

The role of leadership is understood as a set of behaviors expected from an individual in their position as a leader. Covey classifies leadership roles into three categories: Pathfinding – The role of establishing a clear vision and mission. In an educational institution such as a school, the leadership of the principal should be forward-looking while considering existing realities, including both potential and limitations. Aligning – The role of ensuring that the organization's structure, systems, and operational processes support the achievement of its vision and mission. The continuity of an organization in implementing its vision and mission through various programs depends on the effectiveness of leadership. If the principal exercises effective leadership, the institution will function smoothly. Empowering – The role of inspiring

individuals to express their talents, ingenuity, and creativity to accomplish tasks while maintaining consistency with agreed-upon principles. A democratic leadership model practiced by the principal can support the implementation of the institution's vision, mission, and programs, ensuring that all members fulfill their respective duties and functions to achieve the desired goals.

Based on these three leadership roles, it can be concluded that a leader must define the vision and mission of the organization to determine its direction. Once the vision and mission are established, they must be supported by a well-structured system and operational processes. Furthermore, the leader must inspire and mobilize organizational members by leveraging their talents, ingenuity, and creativity to consistently work in alignment with the agreed principles. The most crucial consideration in democratic leadership is deliberation, prioritizing the principle of justice for all parties to ensure that decisions do not harm many people and that policies are implemented comfortably. A principal, as an individual, must internalize leadership concepts and apply them effectively, considering the diversity of human resources they lead, acknowledging both differences and similarities among individuals.

Enhancing teacher competency is a continuous necessity that must be pursued through various techniques to improve teachers' mastery and understanding of pedagogical competence—which includes methods, strategies, and approaches used in the teaching process, considering the different developmental conditions and backgrounds of students.

Regarding efforts to improve teachers' pedagogical competence, the principal, as the leader of an educational institution, must develop work programs that incorporate teacher competency enhancement activities, including: Empowering the curriculum sector – Those responsible for the teaching program must thoroughly understand curriculum content and its development. Organizing MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum) activities – These must be well-programmed according to the needs of each subject. Continuous and structured monitoring – To assess the success of teacher competency improvement programs. Establishing a clear and structured agenda – Training sessions should be conducted both within and outside the school to enhance teachers' pedagogical competencies.

The Role of the School Principal in Enhancing Competence A school principal must play a key role in improving competence by fulfilling their leadership responsibilities in accordance with government regulations related to principal competencies, which include personal, managerial, social, and entrepreneurial competencies. These four competencies serve as a reference for principals in carrying out their roles to advance education by enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence. The leadership model for school principals, as described above, follows the "EMASLIM" approach. As an educator, the principal's role is not only to manage and assign tasks to teachers as subordinates but also to master and understand theories of learning, teaching methodologies, and instructional strategies. Moreover, the principal should be capable of demonstrating these skills in the classroom as part of their duty and responsibility as an educator, guiding students toward achieving their aspirations.

As a manager, the principal must organize school management effectively, including managing teachers, educational staff, facilities and infrastructure, student affairs, education financing, and school-community relations. School management should align with general

management principles applied in other institutions. When these management functions are executed efficiently, planned programs can be successfully implemented.

As an administrator, the principal must professionally handle school documentation and records, including curriculum documents, student affairs, facilities, financial administration, staffing, and other organized activities, ensuring that all files are properly maintained and categorized. As a supervisor, the principal must conduct teaching supervision programs to observe classroom learning activities, focusing on how teachers apply teaching methods and deliver subject content to students. The results of these supervisory activities should be used to identify areas for improvement and further development in subsequent lessons. As a leader, the principal must motivate teachers and staff to achieve better performance and ensure high-quality productivity. This includes assisting teachers in overcoming difficulties in classroom instruction to enhance learning quality. Ultimately, this contributes to satisfactory educational outcomes for students, parents, and the community. As an innovator, the principal must foster creativity and innovation to enhance teacher competence, providing insights and inspiration for teachers to excel as professional educators. By implementing innovative teaching strategies, the principal can help achieve engaging and high-quality learning experiences. As a motivator, the principal must cultivate a positive work environment, encouraging teachers and staff to remain enthusiastic and productive. Creating a comfortable and inspiring atmosphere enables teachers to maximize their potential, develop their skills, and continuously improve their competencies

The Impact of the Principal's Role on Teacher Competence and Education Quality Based on these various roles and functions, it is expected that school principals can influence teachers to improve their competencies, leading to positive changes and advancements in education. A high-quality education system is achieved through effective teaching processes that adhere to educational standards in both content and instructional methods. Quality education management develops educational structures and cultures that encourage students to: Learn to know – acquiring knowledge and understanding. Learn to do – applying knowledge in practical situations. Learn to be – developing self-identity and personal growth. Learn to live together – fostering collaboration and teamwork. Quality education management can be seen as both a science and an art—the science involves systematically organized knowledge tested in managing education quality according to set standards, while the art refers to adaptive performance styles that integrate cultural development with real-world needs (link and match, fit for use).

Competitive Education Management for National Excellence According to Hanafiah (2009:146), high-quality educational institutions are characterized by their ability to excel cooperatively, comparatively, and competitively in an uncertain, fast-changing, complex, and dynamic environment. Ananto Kusumah and Wahab (in Hanafiah, 2009:147) propose two strategies to develop a culture of excellence in the national education system: Creating a conducive educational climate – A lack of motivation for students to achieve their highest potential is closely linked to broader societal issues. Awareness of skill development and professional excellence remains underdeveloped in society. Fostering a competitive educational environment – A competitive atmosphere can be encouraged by providing better

recognition and rewards for outstanding achievements, inspiring students and educators to strive for excellence.

Enhancing Teacher Competence Regarding the improvement of teacher competence, Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 1, Paragraph 10, states: "Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that must be possessed, internalized, and mastered by teachers or lecturers in carrying out their professional duties." This is based on the belief that the elevated status of teachers as professionals, along with high appreciation from society, necessitates continuous improvement in competence. Intellectual competence encompasses various knowledge components within an individual that are essential to support different aspects of performance as a professional teacher. This competence can be developed through government-initiated self-improvement programs. Meanwhile, Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, Article 28, Paragraph 3, and Law No. 14 of 2005, Article 10, Paragraph 1, classify educators as learning agents at the elementary, secondary, and early childhood education levels. These competencies include: a) Pedagogical competence b) Personality competence c) rofessional competence d) Social competence.

A professional teacher must meet competency standards. According to Rusman (2011:370), teacher competency standards serve as a benchmark for the mastery of knowledge and behavior required to fulfill professional roles in line with their responsibilities, qualifications, and education level. The objective of teacher competency standards is to provide a standard reference for improving the quality of the learning process. The scope of teacher competency standards consists of three main components: Learning management competence, which includes lesson planning, conducting learning interactions, assessing student performance, and implementing follow-up actions. Potential development competence, which focuses on professional growth. Academic mastery competence, which includes educational insights and expertise in academic subjects (Ministry of National Education, 2004:9).

Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Competence To ensure quality teaching, especially regarding pedagogical competence improvement, teachers must think proactively and anticipate future challenges. Continuous learning and updating knowledge are crucial, which can be achieved through literature studies or action research, such as classroom action research. Competence represents a behavioral dimension underlying competent performance and is often referred to as behavioral competence, as it explains how individuals behave when performing their roles effectively. Efforts to enhance pedagogical competence in schools are closely tied to school leadership models. The Education Office of Indramayu Regency has implemented policies to improve the Human Development Index (HDI) in education, including managing schools under the Ministry of National Education as an integral part of the national education system. The goal is to enhance teacher competence to improve student outcomes, making them more effective and efficient. The following are some of the strengths and potential in Indramayu's education sector: All junior high schools (SMPN) in Indramayu are accredited as A (excellent). Strong willingness to progress and improve. Teachers are qualified at least with a bachelor's degree (S1). Over 20% of junior high school teachers hold a master's degree (S2). Many teachers are certified. School principals have passed competency assessments. Relatively large student numbers in some schools. A conducive learning environment. Many untapped potentials that can be further developed.

Challenges in Implementing Quality Education Despite these strengths, challenges exist in creating high-quality schools through effective teaching processes. Some of the issues identified include: A lack of commitment among school leaders and teachers to establish a quality-oriented learning environment. Insufficient facilities and infrastructure that do not meet the national education standards required for quality learning. Limited funding for school operational activities, which affects efforts to improve teacher competence. Most teachers are civil servants (PNS) and already certified, yet inconsistencies in funding allocations hinder educational quality improvement programs. Ineffective school management despite having adequate personnel. Failure to fully meet the National Education Standards, particularly in terms of process and educator qualifications. Ineffective communication of school programs to parents, communities, and stakeholders involved in education policymaking.

To address these issues, targeted efforts are required to ensure that schools meet their needs and do not hinder principals from improving teacher competence. The ultimate goal is to produce high-quality graduates through improved learning standards.

Mechanisms for Teacher Competence Enhancement The process of enhancing teacher competence follows specific mechanisms designed by school leaders. This directly impacts the quality of teaching and influences the input, process, and output of education. In the future, educational institutions that meet all National Education Standards (SNP) comprehensively will be capable of producing competitive graduates. However, if teacher competency improvements are not addressed through structured programs and policies, difficulties will arise. To avoid these challenges, necessary reforms should be made in: Education Policy The effectiveness of competency improvement efforts is influenced by policies and programs. If policies are well-designed, widely accepted, and competitive, teachers can easily implement them. However, current programs have not fully optimized the role of school leadership in improving teacher competence. Given that most public schools employ civil servant teachers, they must meet the four core competencies and comply with the eight National Education Standards. Political and financial constraints often limit the effectiveness of these initiatives, impacting the balance between input and output in public schools.

Programs To enhance teacher competence, objective, accountable, and sustainable programs must be implemented, including: a) Developing teacher competency improvement programs based on national education standards. b) Socializing programs with teachers, staff, parents, and stakeholders. c) Designing school management programs that include monitoring, supervision, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up actions. d) Regular monitoring by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to assess efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. e) Continuous school-based learning management conducted by teachers and principals.

Conclusion and Future Implications Efforts to improve teacher competence must prioritize human values rather than rely solely on authoritative policies. This approach aims to rectify past mistakes made by school leaders and teachers in delivering quality education. The most crucial outcome is ensuring that the efforts made by school principals in enhancing teacher pedagogical competence align with national education standards.

To support this initiative, the Ministry of National Education and the Indramayu Education Office have undertaken several steps: Conducting socialization programs before implementing teacher competency improvement initiatives. Mapping schools that will be

targeted for competency enhancement programs. Organizing workshops and training for designated implementation teams. Providing financial and non-financial assistance to schools requiring additional support. Monitoring schools through educational supervisors to encourage improved teacher performance. The success of these programs depends on factors such as infrastructure, management, and funding. Effective coordination among stakeholders—teachers, principals, policymakers, and the community—will ensure a more disciplined, collaborative, and goal-oriented educational environment. By addressing these challenges, schools can move beyond mere instruction to empower students with superior competencies, ultimately creating a highly competitive and innovative generation.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion: 1} The democratic leadership of school principals, implemented through guidance techniques such as meetings, briefings, training in MGMP and KKG activities, as well as training conducted outside the school, has contributed to improving the pedagogical competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency. 2} The role and leadership model of school principals, based on Islamic values, has led to changes and improvements in teachers' teaching processes as a tangible manifestation of principals' efforts to enhance the competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency. 3} The managerial implementation of school leadership, encompassing planning, organizing, execution, and evaluation—integrated into the principal's work program and delegated to assistant principals—has effectively and efficiently improved the competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency. 4} Strategies employed by school principals to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence include enforcing time discipline, providing rewards and sanctions, conducting supervision activities, monitoring program implementation, and reviewing evaluation results. These strategies have positively influenced the pedagogical competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency. 5} Challenges faced by school principals, including human resources, management, teacher performance, relationships with the community, relationships with parents, and collaboration with stakeholders, have posed obstacles to their efforts in improving the pedagogical competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency. 6} Solutions and efforts undertaken by school principals to address these challenges include enhancing guidance and training, improving integrated school management, refining teacher performance, fostering communication and collaboration with the community and parents, and strengthening cooperation with relevant stakeholders who are committed to education. These initiatives have had a positive impact on principals' efforts to enhance the pedagogical competence of junior high school teachers in Indramayu Regency.

Recommendations: Based on the conclusions and implications outlined above, the following recommendations are proposed: 1} School principals should further empower teachers within their own schools who possess higher competencies, encouraging knowledge-sharing among teachers and revitalizing MGMP and KKG activities. 2} Teachers should be more open to sharing experiences and knowledge related to their teaching duties and be willing to acknowledge their shortcomings, continuously expanding their knowledge and perspectives through ongoing learning and extensive reading. 3} The government, as the policymaker and authority, should focus more on human resource development and demonstrate greater support

for education through programs aimed at enhancing teachers' professional competence. 4}
School principals, the community, and parents should establish better communication and
collaboration to foster a shared commitment to education, ensuring the intellectual and moral
development of students undergoing their educational journey.

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