



Principal's Strategy in Developing Human Resources of Islamic Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the leadership strategies implemented by the principal of SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan in developing the quality of human resources (HR) within the educational environment. Using a qualitative approach and an intrinsic case study design, data were collected through naturalistic observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and subsequently analyzed thematically. The findings show that the principal implements five integrated leadership strategies: moral guidance, capacity development, mentoring and collaboration, technological adaptation, and empowerment. These strategies significantly contribute to the enhancement of teachers' professional competence, interpersonal skills, and motivation. The impact of this leadership practice extends to the improvement of educational quality, including learning models, teaching effectiveness, student learning motivation, and academic achievement. This study emphasizes that strategic leadership plays a central role in shaping a responsive, innovative, and sustainable educational environment. The integration between leadership theory and contextual implementation offers a comprehensive model for improving educational quality through systematic human resource development.

Keywords: leadership, human resources, strategy

INTRODUCTION

Human resources hold a central role in various sectors, becoming the main driving factor that determines the direction and success of development in every field. In organizations, human resources are understood as a structured and integrated system designed to manage and optimize individual potential effectively and efficiently to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization. Individuals categorized as human resources are organizational assets who possess competencies, attitudes, and knowledge that can be maximally empowered to support the achievement of the institution's vision and mission [1].

The improvement of human resource (HR) quality becomes a strategic factor in building excellent organizations, including in the context of educational institutions such as schools. Competent and professional HR plays an important role in creating educational governance that is effective, efficient, and adaptive to the changes of the times [2]. Within the framework of educational management, teaching and educational staff who possess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, serve as the main elements in supporting the achievement of national educational objectives [3].

Investment in human resources (HR) development will provide long-term impacts on the productivity and service quality of the organization. Therefore, the presence of qualified HR within the school environment not only contributes to the successful implementation of the curriculum but also the creation of a constructive and enlightening learning climate [4]. An educational environment supported by competent HR will be more capable of responding to the challenges of globalization and promoting an educational transformation oriented toward quality and equity [5].

The quality of human resources is not formed instantly but is the result of a process influenced by various factors that interact synergistically. One of the main determinants in this process is effective leadership. Effective leadership has a strategic role in directing, managing, and optimizing individual potential, thereby enabling the development of human resources in a structured manner and alignment with the vision and objectives of the organization [6].

The effectiveness of leadership is a strategic determinant in the formation of highly competitive human resources. Leadership that can articulate the vision with precision, provide systematic support for strengthening individual capacity, and create a conducive organizational ecosystem becomes a primary

prerequisite for the creation of human resources who are not only technically competent but also possess integrity and high work motivation. Within the framework of human resource management, adaptive and transformative leadership enables the optimization of individual functions and roles based on their domains of competence. Thus, the contribution of human resources to the achievement of institutional objectives, particularly in the education sector, can take place productively, sustainably, and with a quality-oriented focus [7].

The principal, as a key actor in the leadership structure of educational institutions, plays a strategic role in formulating policies and implementing systematic measures to improve the quality of human resources (HR) within the school environment. The leadership of the principal holds high significance in directing the process of organizational transformation through the design of strategies that support the strengthening of professional competencies of teachers, educational staff, as well as the holistic and sustainable development of students' potential [8].

Although various previous studies have discussed the importance of leadership in the field of education, most of these studies still focus on administrative aspects or tend to generalize leadership strategies without considering the complexity and uniqueness of the context of certain educational units, particularly vocational schools in rural areas. Studies that directly associate the principal's leadership strategies with the process of comprehensive human resource development encompassing teachers, educational staff, and students are still relatively limited, especially in the context of private schools in rural areas such as SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan.

Therefore, this study has the urgency to fill this gap by examining in depth the principal's leadership strategies in developing the quality of human resources within the school environment. This focus is important to formulate a leadership model that is not only theoretical but also applicable and contextual. By using an intrinsic case study, this research is expected to contribute to enriching the discourse on educational leadership and to present best practices that similar educational institutions in other regions can replicate.

This study aims to examine the principal's leadership strategies in human resource development at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan. The research focus includes strategic approaches, implementation challenges, and their implications for the quality and sustainability of education. The findings are expected to contribute to strengthening an adaptive and quality-oriented educational leadership model.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design aimed at exploring in depth the principal's leadership strategies in human resource development at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan. The research population consisted of the entire school community, with informants selected purposively, including the principal as the key informant, as well as teachers, educational staff, and students as supporting informants. The sources of data included primary data obtained through naturalistic observation and semi-structured interviews, as well as secondary data obtained from institutional documents such as work programs, human resource development reports, and supervision results. The instruments for data collection consisted of interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document review formats. The data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. All data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques through the processes of coding, categorization, and interpretation of meaning to reveal leadership patterns and their implications for educational quality, with data validity maintained through source and method triangulation as well as the member checking technique [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Principal's Leadership Strategies in Developing Human Resources

Leadership is positioned as a multidimensional process that functions to influence individual behavior within the framework of achieving institutional objectives. Rather than solely serving as a directive instrument, leadership also encompasses the articulation of a strategic vision, the strengthening of collective action orientation, and the reconstruction of organizational values and culture. Through its transformative influence, leadership contributes to creating internal cohesion, optimizing human resource potential, and shaping an organizational climate that is adaptive to the dynamics of change.

Leadership strategies are understood as a set of systematic approaches applied by a leader in directing, motivating, and mobilizing individuals and groups to achieve organizational objectives effectively and efficiently. Leadership strategies encompass the formulation of policies and transformative measures aimed at driving organizational change, reinforcing the quality of adaptive leadership, and ensuring the internalization of vision and understanding of the dynamics and challenges faced by all organizational elements [10].

Table 1. Principal's Leadership Strategies

Strategy	Theoretical Approach	Development Focus
Moral Building	Ethical values and organizational culture	Professional commitment and responsibility
Capacity Development	Human Capital Theory	Pedagogical and adaptive skills

Strategy	Theoretical Approach	Development Focus
Mentoring & Collaboration	Social and collegial learning	Knowledge transfer and teamwork
Technological Adaptation	Transformational leadership in the digital era	Work efficiency and digital innovation
Empowerment	Empowerment theory and work motivation	Autonomy, recognition, and creativity

Based on the field findings, the leadership strategies implemented by the principal in developing the quality of human resources (HR) at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan reflect a multidimensional approach that is strategically integrated. This approach is not only administrative but also shows leadership characteristics that are transformative and adaptive to the dynamics of change, showing that the principal plays a central role as the main driver in shaping a progressive and competitive educational ecosystem.

The main findings indicate the presence of five complementary leadership strategies: moral building, capacity development, mentoring and collaboration, technological adaptation, and empowerment. The moral building strategy was implemented through the cultivation of work ethics and professional responsibility. The principal emphasized a collective vision and a culture of mutual respect, in line with organizational value theory, which states that morality serves as the fundamental foundation in shaping a productive work culture [11].

The capacity development strategy was realized through training, workshops, and pedagogical discussions, both formal and informal. This reflects the principles of Human Capital Theory, which emphasize the importance of long-term investment in the development of individual competencies. Supporting factors for the success of this strategy included teachers' willingness to continue learning and the principal's support in providing space for professional development [12].

At the same time, mentoring and collaboration were facilitated through peer mentoring among teachers and academic supervision. This social interaction proved to strengthen professional networks, accelerate knowledge transfer, and build teachers' self-confidence. This is in accordance with

socio-cultural learning theory, in which collaboration within the zone of proximal development accelerates competence enhancement [13].

Meanwhile, technological adaptation became a response to the demands of digitalization. The principal actively encouraged the use of technology in managerial and learning processes to create efficiency and innovation. This strategy reflected the principle of digital transformational leadership, in which the leader acts as a facilitator of technology-based change. However, this implementation faced challenges such as limited infrastructure and varying levels of digital literacy among educators [14].

The empowerment strategy was implemented through the delegation of authority, the provision of appreciation, and opportunities for participation in decision-making. This is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy and recognition as factors of sustainable work motivation. The key factors for its success were the presence of trust from the leadership in individual capacities and a school culture that was open to innovation [15], [16].

2. Improvement of Human Resource Quality

The improvement of human resource (HR) quality is a strategic process aimed at developing individual capacity comprehensively, encompassing technical, interpersonal, and managerial aspects, as well as the formation of work character [16]. This process includes continuous training, career development, and the internalization of organizational values. The objective is to shape HR who are adaptive, innovative, and able to contribute optimally to the achievement of institutional goals. The ideal quality of HR comprises relevant technical competence, strong interpersonal skills, as well as high integrity and work motivation. This can be achieved through a holistic approach that integrates knowledge, experience, and value cultivation.

Table 2. Improvement of Human Resource Quality

Dimension	Theoretical Basis	Focus of Improvement
Technical Competence	Human Capital Theory	Professional knowledge and skills
Interpersonal Skills	Soft Skill Development	Collaboration, communication, empathy
Transformational Leadership	Transformational leadership in the digital era	Motivation, vision, and a positive work environment
Need-Based Training	Need-Based Training Model	Relevance and effectiveness of training programs
Motivation and Empowerment	Self-Determination Theory	Initiative, responsibility, job satisfaction

The research findings at SMK Al Hasan Proppo Tengginah Pamekasan revealed that the development of human resource (HR) quality in the context of vocational education requires a holistic,

integrated, and contextually oriented approach. The quality of HR does not depend only on the fulfillment of academic qualifications. Still, it is also strongly determined by teachers' ability to apply adaptive

learning practices and to build constructive interpersonal relationships. This phenomenon shows that strengthening HR capacity cannot be carried out partially but must target both technical and affective dimensions simultaneously.

One of the important findings in this study is the existence of a gap between formal academic competence and practical skills in managing the learning process. Although the majority of teachers have met formal educational standards, many still face challenges in delivering material contextually, being responsive to students' needs, and establishing professional collaboration. This affirms the relevance of Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes that investment in the development of functional competencies must be accompanied by continuous cultivation to generate optimal productivity [17].

On the other hand, interpersonal skills such as effective communication, empathy, and the ability to work in a team were found to be the main determinants in shaping a positive learning atmosphere. The low capacity in this aspect indicates that teacher training models that focus solely on technical skills are inadequate. These findings are in line with the soft skill development approach, which positions emotional intelligence as the foundation for the formation of professional relationships and effective instructional leadership [18]. Therefore, the improvement of HR quality must be structurally designed to encompass affective, emotional, and social aspects systemically.

The leadership aspect emerged as a crucial factor mediating the success of HR development. The principal, as the central figure in the educational organization, played a strategic role in shaping the work culture, facilitating professional development, and maintaining teacher motivation. Schools led by leaders with a visionary orientation showed stronger tendencies in terms of job satisfaction, self-development initiatives, and active participation in institutional activities. These findings are consistent with the Transformational Leadership framework [19], which emphasizes the importance of vision, inspiration, and the creation of a supportive work environment to foster sustainable HR development.

Nevertheless, this study also identified significant structural challenges, particularly related to the effectiveness of training programs. Many of the trainings organized were not based on a real needs analysis in the field, either in terms of substance or implementation methods. As a result, these trainings did not provide meaningful contributions to enhancing teachers' professional capacity. This reinforces the relevance of the Need-

Based Training model [20], which emphasizes the importance of needs assessment as a prerequisite for designing training that is relevant and has a direct impact on work practices.

The principal's leadership strategies at SMK Al Hasan showed positive tendencies in supporting HR development through participatory patterns, the provision of autonomy, and recognition of performance. This pattern created a work climate conducive to the growth of intrinsic motivation, accountability, and individual initiative. This reflects the principles of Self-Determination Theory, in which the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness serve as the primary foundation for driving long-term performance and job satisfaction [21].

Conceptually, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that emphasize the importance of integration between technical competence development and soft skills, the importance of need-based training, and the role of transformative leadership in shaping organizational culture [22]. Nevertheless, this study offers a distinct empirical contribution by depicting a model of strategic leadership that has developed in the local context of a vocational school in a rural area, a perspective that is relatively underrepresented in the educational leadership literature.

The management of human resources at SMK Al Hasan Proppo Tengginah Pamekasan showed that the integration of transformative leadership, contextual training, the strengthening of technical and interpersonal capacities, and psychological empowerment became the main foundation in building an adaptive and competitive educational ecosystem. This model reflects the synergy between theoretical approaches and field practices that are oriented toward the quality and sustainability of educational institutions.

3. The Effect of HR Quality on Education

Systematic efforts in developing the quality of educators have a significant correlation with the improvement of educational quality at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan. The research findings showed that the strengthening of educator competencies had a direct impact on various aspects of the educational process, including the effectiveness of learning models, the improvement of instructional quality, the growth of student learning motivation, as well as achievements in both academic and non-academic fields. This phenomenon indicates the inherent interrelation between the quality of human resources in education and the quality of educational implementation itself.

Table 3. The Effect of HR Quality on Education

Dimension of Educational Quality	Supporting Theory	Impact Focus
Learning Model	Instructional Leadership	Efficiency, innovation, and learning relevance

Dimension of Educational Quality	Supporting Theory	Impact Focus
Learning Quality	Quality Teaching Framework	Adaptive methods and continuous evaluation
Learning Motivation	Self-Determination Theory	Active engagement and learning comfort
Student Achievement	Achievement Motivation Theory	Improvement of academic achievement and participation in competitions

The research findings at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan reinforced the argument that the improvement of educational quality greatly depends on the capacity of human resources, particularly educators, who have been nurtured through systematic, participatory, and quality-oriented leadership patterns. One of the most prominent aspects was the implementation of a learning model that emphasized effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance to students' needs. Educators showed the ability to design adaptive learning processes, utilize resources optimally, and adjust instructional strategies to classroom characteristics. These findings reflected the practice of instructional leadership, in which the principal acts as the primary catalyst in achieving teaching quality [23].

In the dimension of learning quality, teachers showed a high level of professional competence in designing and adjusting teaching methods based on actual classroom needs. The learning strategies applied were not static but involved regular evaluation and pedagogical reflection to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process [24]. This approach represented the Quality Framework, which emphasizes the importance of adaptability, critical reflection, and continuity in maintaining learning quality. The pedagogical awareness possessed by the teachers indicated the presence of a professional culture that prioritizes continuous improvement as the foundation of quality educational practice [25].

The quality of educators also had a direct implication for the improvement of students' learning motivation. In practice, teachers not only delivered material informatively but also created an inclusive and supportive learning environment in which students felt valued, empowered, and actively engaged [26]. Teachers provided space for student autonomy, encouraged open discussions, and strengthened emotional involvement in the learning process. This is in line with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and social relatedness are the key to building intrinsic motivation and sustained learning persistence [27].

The next dimension that reinforced the role of educators in improving educational quality was the increase in student achievement, both academic and non-academic. Field data showed an upward trend in academic scores and students' success in participating in competitions, both at the local and external levels. Not only in the classroom, but also in

extracurricular activities, scientific projects, and vocational competitions, students' involvement showed that the guidance provided by teachers encompassed the holistic aspects of student development [28]. These findings are consistent with Achievement Motivation Theory, which states that a learning environment supportive of achievement will produce students with a high achievement orientation, especially when supported by a leadership system that reinforces potential [29].

CONCLUSION

The principal's leadership strategies at SMK Al Hasan Tengginah Proppo Pamekasan, which include moral strengthening, continuous training, mentoring and collaboration, technological adaptation, and teacher empowerment, have contributed significantly to the improvement of human resource quality, particularly educators. The implementation of these strategies had a direct impact on the enhancement of learning models and learning quality, the improvement of students' learning motivation, and the achievement of more optimal performance. This asserts that structured human resource management becomes the primary foundation in driving sustainable educational quality and transformation.

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