



Principal's Leadership Style and Implications for Improving the Performance of PAI Teachers

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Abstract: School principals play a central role in school management and influence teacher performance, including Islamic Education (PAI) teachers who not only teach subject matter but also instill religious values in students. This study aims to examine the leadership style of school principals and its effect on improving the performance of PAI teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta. The research approach used is descriptive qualitative, with informants consisting of school principals, PAI teachers, and vice principals in charge of curriculum, who were selected purposively. Data collection was conducted through interviews, documentation, and literature review, then analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing stages, and its validity was strengthened through source triangulation. The findings show that the principal combines transformational, democratic, situational, and participatory leadership styles. This approach encourages open communication, teacher involvement in decision-making, adjustment of directions according to teacher characteristics, and religious values education through school activities. The combination of these leadership styles has a positive impact on PAI teachers' performance, as seen in increased motivation, discipline, sense of responsibility, innovation in learning, and better teaching quality, while also strengthening the overall character building of students.

Keyword : principal leadership; PAI teacher performance; SMKN 1 Surakarta.

Abstrak: Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah memegang peranan sentral dalam pengelolaan sekolah sekaligus memengaruhi performa guru, termasuk guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) yang tidak hanya mengajar materi pelajaran tetapi juga menanamkan nilai religius pada siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah serta efeknya terhadap peningkatan kinerja guru PAI di SMKN 1 Surakarta. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan bersifat kualitatif deskriptif dengan informan berupa kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan wakil kepala sekolah bidang kurikulum, yang dipilih secara purposive. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, dokumentasi, dan kajian literatur, lalu dianalisis dengan tahapan reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan, serta diperkuat validitasnya melalui triangulasi sumber. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah mengombinasikan gaya kepemimpinan transformasional, demokratis, situasional, dan partisipatif. Pendekatan ini mendorong terciptanya komunikasi yang terbuka, keterlibatan guru dalam pengambilan keputusan, penyesuaian arahan sesuai karakter guru, serta pembinaan nilai religius melalui aktivitas sekolah. Kombinasi gaya kepemimpinan tersebut berdampak positif pada kinerja guru PAI, terlihat dari peningkatan motivasi, disiplin, rasa tanggung jawab, inovasi dalam

pembelajaran, serta mutu pengajaran yang lebih baik, sekaligus memperkuat pembentukan karakter siswa secara menyeluruh.

Kata kunci : kepemimpinan kepala sekolah; kinerja guru PAI; SMKN 1 Surakarta.

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Introduction

Education plays an important role in improving the quality of human resources and developing individuals who can adapt to the dynamics of change in the social, economic, and technological fields (Ainiyah et al., 2025; Arif et al., 2025). The educational process is not only centered on insight skills, but also on the creation of character, moral values, and critical thinking skills by students. Strengthening the character of the education system is a crucial factor in developing the excellence of human resources and also being able to overcome obstacles in the future. Khairiyah & Dewinda (2022) said that character education contributes greatly to realizing quality human resources and being able to compete in social and professional life. The findings are also in line with Purwati & Aiman Faiz's (2023) Research explains that quality human resources are not solely based on the aspect of intelligence, but also on strengthening religious values in character education that are applied sustainably in the school and family environment.

The effectiveness of teachers as the main party in teaching and learning activities plays a role in the quality of education in educational institutions. Teachers are responsible for designing, conducting, and assessing learning activities that have a direct impact on student development (Azizah & Usman, 2023; Hasan & Aziz, 2023; Kamali & Sugiyanto, 2024). Various factors play a role in determining teacher performance, so that it does not solely depend on individual competencies, and is also influenced by the work environment, the culture of the school organization, and the contribution of the principal's leadership to the management process and teacher development in the school environment (Amanullah et al., 2023; Ayumi & Nasution, 2025). The principal has a position as a leader within the educational institution responsible for directing, managing, and ensuring that all resources owned by the school are optimally utilized. In its implementation, the leadership of school principals does not only focus on managerial affairs, but also includes competencies to build effective communication, motivate teachers, and conduct professional development on an ongoing basis. According to Carudin & Khomisan Agus (2022), the principal's leadership style and work atmosphere in schools have a good and real impact on teachers' performance when carrying out learning. The effectiveness of leadership in an educational environment is determined by positive interactions

between principals and teachers. Amelia et al. (2025) emphasized that the success of leadership in educational institutions is greatly influenced by the collaborative relationship between leaders and followers who collaborate to achieve organizational goals.

Various studies on educational leadership show that there is an influence of the principal's leadership style on all school organizational dynamics and teacher performance. Various studies on educational leadership confirm that the leadership style of school principals affects the dynamics of school organizations as well as teacher performance. Leadership that is able to inspire, convey clear directions, and encourage positive change will have an impact on improving the quality of educational organizations. According to Windasari et al. (2022), the transformational leadership of the principal has an impact on changing the school organization by encouraging teacher motivation, commitment, and participation. These findings show the suitability of Helmina et al. (2023) emphasized that the principal's leadership style also plays a positive and very significant role in improving teacher performance in vocational schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers play a special role in the education system because they do not only deliver learning materials, but also play a role in fostering moral, ethical, and religious attitudes to students. Therefore, the performance of PAI teachers is one of the important parts in the formation of the quality of students in the school environment. Effective leadership support for school principals is needed so that PAI teachers are able to carry out their professional duties optimally and develop learning innovations that are relevant to the needs of students.

Research on the relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance has been conducted at various levels of education (Dewi et al., 2024; Umam & Hasan, 2025). However, studies that specifically examine the influence of school principals' leadership on improving the performance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in Vocational High Schools are still relatively limited. This condition shows that more in-depth research is still needed to examine how the leadership role of school principals can contribute to improving the performance of PAI teachers in the vocational school environment. This is important because vocational high schools have different characteristics, needs, and challenges compared to other types of schools.

SMKN 1 Surakarta plays an important role in producing graduates who are not only skilled in their fields of expertise but also apply religious values and have good character. The role of PAI teachers in shaping students' character is very important in this context. The performance of the principal in providing guidance and direction can affect the quality of learning while strengthening students' religious values. This study aims to analyze a principal's leadership style and its

influence on the performance of PAI teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the study of educational leadership, especially in an effort to improve the performance of Islamic Education teachers in vocational schools.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach. This method is used to describe the leadership style of school principals and their impact on improving the performance of Islamic Education teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to present data according to real conditions in schools, so that leadership practices and their impact can be clearly depicted. According to Lexy (2011), qualitative research is a type of research that produces descriptive data in the form of words, both spoken and written, from the people or behaviors being studied. The use of this approach aims to examine social phenomena as a whole under natural conditions. The research was carried out at SMKN 1 Surakarta. The consideration of the selection of the research location is based on the school's role as one of the state vocational schools that contributes to fostering students' character through PAI learning. The field research process lasted approximately two months, starting with the data collection stage and continuing to the verification of research findings.

The informants of this study were determined by *purposive sampling*, which was chosen because they were considered to be able to provide data relevant to the subject of the research. The main informant of this research is the principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta, who plays the role of the leader of an educational institution. The supporting informants for this research consist of two PAI teachers, a deputy principal in the field of curriculum, and a deputy principal in the field of student affairs, who are actively involved in the learning process and management of academic activities in schools. The informants who supported this study consisted of two Islamic Education teachers, one deputy principal in charge of the curriculum, and one deputy principal in charge of student affairs, who were actively involved in the learning process and the management of academic activities in the school. The involvement of several informants aims to obtain more in-depth data related to the leadership practices of school principals and their impact on the performance of PAI teachers.

The data collection techniques used for this study include interviews, documentation, and literature studies. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner so that the researcher had a guideline for questions as well as providing opportunities for the interviewees to explain their experiences and views more broadly. Interviews were conducted with school principals, PAI teachers, vice principals for curriculum, and school representatives for student affairs. Each

interview session lasts about 30–60 minutes and is carried out directly in the school environment. The various questions asked touched on the principal's leadership style, teacher coaching, academic supervision, and efforts that have been made to improve the performance of PAI teachers. The interview process is recorded to facilitate the process of transcription and data analysis. Documentation techniques are used to complete the interview data. The documents that are the material for analysis in this study include school work program documents, PAI teacher learning implementation plans, and religious activity documents in schools. The document analysis was carried out to get a clearer and more objective picture of how the principal's leadership is applied in supporting the improvement of the performance of PAI teachers. This research is also supported by literature reviews sourced from books and scientific articles relevant to the topics of educational leadership and teacher performance. The literature was selected based on its suitability with the research focus and its contribution in explaining the concept of principals' leadership and the dynamics of educational organizations. According to Kasiram (2010), the use of various literature sources in research aims to strengthen the theoretical foundation and assist researchers in understanding the phenomenon being studied more comprehensively.

The data analysis in this study was carried out in stages since the data collection process took place. The stages of analysis in this study include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The data reduction process is carried out by selecting, grouping, and simplifying information from interview results and documentation relevant to the focus of the research. At this stage, the researcher also encoded interview data to identify themes related to principals' leadership practices, teacher development strategies, and their impact on PAI teacher performance. The next stage is the presentation of data, which is carried out by compiling research information in the form of a descriptive narrative so that the relationship between the leadership of the principal and the performance of PAI teachers can be understood systematically. After that, conclusions are drawn based on the patterns of findings that emerge from the results of data analysis.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies the source triangulation technique, namely by comparing information obtained from school principals, PAI teachers, and vice principals so that the data used is more reliable and valid. The researcher also double-checked the results of the interview through a confirmation process to informants (*member checking*) to ensure that the data obtained was in accordance with the actual conditions. In addition, the researcher also held discussions with colleagues to review the data analysis process to minimize potential bias in the interpretation of research findings. This step was

taken to increase the credibility of research findings and maintain confidence in the research results.

Results And Discussion

Results

Based on information obtained through an interview with the Head of SMKN 1 Surakarta, it was found that the leadership applied in the management of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is integrative by combining transformational, democratic, situational, and participatory approaches. This leadership pattern is reflected in various leadership practices related to teacher development, organizational communication, and the implementation of school programs. Transformational leadership is reflected in the efforts of school principals to share support, direction, and example to PAI teachers in carrying out their obligations. The principal emphasized that the duties of PAI teachers are not limited to delivering subject matter, but also to guiding the formation of students' religious character. The principal said in an interview:

"PAI teachers play an important role in guiding the character of students. Therefore, I always emphasize that the learning process not only conveys material, but also instills religious attitudes and values in students."

This motivation is usually conveyed in teacher meeting forums and learning activity evaluation meetings. Directions are also given directly when discussing the implementation of religious activities and PAI learning activities in schools. Communication between the principal and PAI teachers takes place openly through formal meetings and informal discussions in the school environment. Teachers can convey the obstacles faced during the learning process through direct discussions with the principal. The principal explained:

"If there are obstacles in learning, the teacher can usually discuss directly with me to find a solution together."

This communication pattern allows for the exchange of information related to the implementation of learning and other school activities. The democratic approach can be seen from the involvement of teachers in various decision-making forums in schools. Teachers are allowed to express opinions and inputs related to learning activities and school programs. The Principal said:

"Every time we hold a meeting, we make sure teachers can share input or views on the learning process and school activities."

The forum was held in the form of a teacher meeting that discussed school work programs, planning learning activities, and the implementation of other school activities. Situational leadership style is reflected in the adjustment of the leadership approach based on the conditions and characteristics of each teacher. The principal

considers the experience, abilities, and needs of teachers when providing direction and coaching. The principal explained:

"Every teacher has a different personality and experience, so the approach I take also adapts to the conditions of each teacher."

These adjustments are made, especially when teachers face obstacles in the implementation of learning or the implementation of school activities. The participatory approach can be seen from the involvement of teachers in the planning and implementation process of various school programs. Teachers are involved in discussions related to learning activities and activities that support student character development. This involvement provides space for teachers to contribute to the implementation of school programs.

Spiritual coaching programs are also part of the leadership practices found in this study. The school organizes a joint Qur'an reading activity attended by teachers and education staff every two weeks. The principal explained:

"We hold Qur'an reading activities together every two weeks so that the school atmosphere still has a religious feel and teachers can also be role models for students."

The activity was carried out before the teaching and learning activities began and was followed by teachers who were at school on the day of the activity. The results of the interviews revealed that the various leadership strategies implemented by school principals are closely related to efforts to improve the performance of PAI teachers in carrying out their professional duties. The increase can be seen in the aspects of work discipline, the implementation of learning administration, and the implementation of learning activities in the classroom. The Principal stated:

"We always encourage teachers to improve the quality of learning and carry out their responsibilities fully."

The findings of the study indicate that the principal's leadership practice is realized through motivation, open communication, teacher involvement in decision-making, adjustment of leadership approaches according to the teacher's conditions, and the implementation of spiritual coaching activities in the school environment.

Discussion

Principal's Leadership Style Towards Improving the Performance of PAI Teachers

School principals play a very important role in directing and improving the quality of teacher performance in schools. Through his leadership, the principal seeks to build a work environment that is able to encourage teachers to carry out learning tasks more effectively and professionally. The findings of the study indicate that the principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta implements a leadership model that combines transformational, democratic, situational, and participatory approaches in school management. This approach can be seen through giving direction to teachers, communication that takes place openly, and teacher involvement in various school activities. In practice, the principal also provides support and

motivation to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers so that learning activities are not only oriented to the delivery of subject matter. Learning is also expected to instill religious values and shape the character of students. In an interview, the principal said, "PAI teachers have an important role in shaping the character of students. Therefore, I always remind that learning is not only centered on the delivery of material, but also on the formation of students' religious attitudes and values."

Principal's Leadership Style

This finding explains that the principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta does not use one leadership style alone, but rather combines several leadership approaches in school management practices, namely transformational, democratic, situational, and participatory styles. The application of these various approaches can be seen in the way the principal gives direction to teachers, builds work communication, and involves teachers in various forms of school activities related to the learning process. The transformational approach can be seen from the efforts of the principal to encourage PAI teachers so that learning does not only focus on the delivery of material, but also on the formation of student character. The principal stated, "PAI teachers play a crucial role in shaping a student's character. Therefore, I always remind that learning is not limited to focusing on the delivery of material, but also on the formation of students' religious attitudes and values." The democratic and participatory approach can be seen from the involvement of teachers in school meetings and discussions related to learning activities. The principal explained, "In every meeting, we always provide opportunities for teachers to express their opinions or input related to learning activities and school activities." The situational approach is also seen from the way the principal adjusts his approach based on the conditions and characteristics of the teacher, as conveyed in the interview. Each teacher has a different character and experience so the leadership approach needs to adjust to these conditions.

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership in the school environment is reflected in the role of leaders in motivating and being role models for PAI teachers. The principal plays an active role in stimulating the commitment and professionalism of the staff through an inspiring approach. This model spurs teachers to optimize potential, give birth to innovation, and strengthen their work ethic to realize academic goals. A key characteristic of this style is the leader's ability to create an inclusive, synergistic, and collaborative work atmosphere. In practice, transformational leadership is a strong foundation for the formation of a progressive school environment and the improvement of the quality of education. Zulfahmi *et al.* (2024) emphasizing that the main pillars of this style include clarity of vision, personal integrity, effective communication, and tangible support for all elements of the school.

In the context of SMKN 1 Surakarta, the implementation of transformational leadership is also seen through the consistency of the principal in aligning the school's vision with the actual needs of PAI teachers. School principals are not limited to delivering policies theoretically, but also translating them into real programs such as strengthening pedagogic competence, learning reflection forums, and developing curriculum innovations. This approach shows a concern for individual development as well as the achievement of

institutional goals. Thus, the leadership carried out is able to build trust, increase loyalty, and foster a collective spirit in realizing the quality of sustainable education. This transformational style also encourages the creation of a change in the mindset of teachers who are no longer only in the position of task implementers, but develop into innovative learning intermediaries and have a vision for the future. The principal also opens opportunities for PAI teachers to try and develop new learning strategies, utilize educational technology, and develop a more contextual approach according to the needs of students. Through continuous moral and academic support, teachers feel more confident in improving their quality and performance. As a result, the learning process is not only oriented towards the achievement of the curriculum, but also on the formation of Islamic character and values that are more profound and applicable to students.

Democratic Leadership Style

The democratic leadership style can be seen through the involvement of PAI teachers in the discussion and decision-making process, related to learning activities and religious programs in schools. The principal provides a space for teachers to express their opinions, inputs, and evaluations of the implementation of the program that has been running. In the interview, the principal explained that every form of religious activity and learning program is usually discussed together in a teacher meeting forum so that decision-making does not only come from the leadership, but also considers the views of the teachers. This practice allows teachers to actively participate in the development of religious education activities in schools.

This practice is also seen in the division of duties given to PAI teachers to manage learning activities, religious programs, and student character development. A leadership pattern that consistently involves teachers in every policy-making process is able to foster a sense of responsibility for the implementation of various school programs. The results of the study also revealed that teachers' participation in educational activities and the development of religious values in the school environment contribute to strengthening the formation of students' character in the world of education. Sayekti et al. (2022).

Situational Leadership Style

The application of situational leadership style is reflected in the way the principal adjusts the leadership approach to the working conditions and characteristics of PAI teachers in schools. The principal does not apply the same leadership pattern to all teachers, but considers the background of experience, ability level, and needs of each teacher in implementing learning tasks. The results of the interviews revealed that each teacher has a diverse background and experience, so the leadership approach applied needs to be adjusted to these conditions. Teachers who have experience are given more flexibility in managing learning, while teachers who still need guidance receive more intensive direction and assistance. The findings are also in line with Rahman & Subiyantoro's (2021) research which shows that the leadership role of school principals in the learning process, such as providing training, motivation, and building coordination and communication with teachers, has an important role to support the effectiveness of learning in schools.

The adjustment of the leadership approach is also seen when school leaders provide assistance and encouragement to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in dealing with various situations in the school environment, various learning obstacles and the implementation of religious activities at school. The principal tries to help teachers find solutions through direct communication and evaluation of the activities that have been carried out. Leadership practices that adjust to teachers' work situations allow the coaching process to run more flexibly and responsive to needs in the field so that teachers can carry out their duties well. learning and religious education activities more effectively.

Participatory Leadership Style

The principal applies a leader pattern that provides space for PAI teachers to participate in the planning process to evaluate the work program at SMKN 1 Surakarta. Teachers are involved in meetings, discussions, and evaluation activities related to the implementation of learning programs and school activities. The involvement aims to enable teachers to provide consideration and input on the planned program as well as understand the role that needs to be played in its implementation. Teachers' involvement in the decision-making process encourages responsibility for the school program and helps ensure that the planned activities run well. This is related to the research of Sari et al. (2022) which states that the involvement of school members in the decision-making process has an important role in increasing their obligations and participation in the school's programs.

The principal also tries to maintain openness in the management of school programs by explaining the purpose of the activity and conducting periodic evaluations with teachers. Each planned activity is usually accompanied by an explanation of the program's objectives and the expected form of contribution from PAI teachers. Teachers are also allowed to convey input as well as challenges encountered during the implementation of the program. This open communication pattern helps to create a better working relationship between principals and teachers, as well as support the implementation of learning activities and school programs in a more targeted manner.

Principal's Ability to Build Effective Communication with PAI Teachers

The relationship that exists between the principal and PAI teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta is an important factor in supporting the sustainability of the learning process and the implementation of various school activities. Communication is facilitated through two-way dialogue so that information can be exchanged properly, the delivery of ideas, and the alignment of understanding related to school policies. Through this communication, the principal can explain the purpose of the school program as well as provide direction that is correlated with the implementation of learning by PAI teachers in the classroom.

Communication is also a means for teachers to convey obstacles that are faced during the learning process, so that the principal is able to provide support or find solutions together. This interaction is carried out through meetings, discussions, and direct consultations between teachers and principals. Clarity of information and openness of communication help reduce misunderstandings in the implementation of tasks and strengthen the working relationship between leaders and teachers. This condition is in line with Mukhlisoh's (2024) view the research shows that open communication in the school

environment is able to create a harmonious work atmosphere while encouraging improvement in teacher performance.

Professional Development and Development of PAI Teachers

The Principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta contributes to the professional development of PAI teachers through a number of activities aimed at improving pedagogic competence and teacher professionalism. This support is realized through the involvement of teachers in training activities, workshops, and discussion forums for subject teachers such as MGMP which can be a means of sharing experiences and improving teaching skills. Professional development efforts are also carried out through coaching activities related to the implementation of learning and religious activities in schools. One of the programs carried out is regular Quran reading activities involving teachers and students every two weeks. These activities not only play a role in strengthening religious nuances in the school environment, but also become a medium for PAI teachers to affirm their role in instilling Islamic values in students. With the participation of teachers in various professional development activities and religious activities, they are encouraged to improve the competence and quality of learning applied in the classroom. According to the view of Rodiya & Suklani (2022) who states that teachers as professionals need to continue to develop competence and awareness of their professional duties as teachers.

Supervision and Performance Evaluation of PAI Teachers

Supervision and assessment of the performance of PAI teachers includes the obligation of the principal to ensure that teaching and learning activities at SMKN 1 Surakarta run commensurate with the educational goals that have been set. The principal monitors the implementation of teachers' duties through learning administration examinations, observation of classroom activities, and evaluation of programs run by PAI teachers. The goal is to assess the extent to which teachers' performance has been achieved while identifying aspects that still need improvement.

The evaluation carried out is then used as a basis to provide input and direction to teachers so that the learning process runs more effectively. In addition, the principal recommends that teachers participate in training programs or discussion forums that support the improvement of professional competence. The supervision not only functions as an assessment tool, but also as a means of coaching that aims to improve the quality of learning continuously. According to Isyaroh's (2023) In view, evaluation is a structured data collection activity that functions as a basis for determining decisions to improve the quality of educational program implementation.

The Impact of Principal Leadership on the Performance of PAI Teachers

The leadership carried out by the principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta affects the implementation of the duties and performance of PAI teachers in learning activities at school. The leadership applied is not only related to the management of school administration, but also related to coaching, providing motivation, and support for improving the quality of learning carried out by teachers. The impact of this leadership can be seen from the increasing consistency of PAI teachers in carrying out their duties, starting from the preparation of learning tools, classroom management, and the implementation of

learning outcome evaluations. School principals, through continuous coaching and communication activities, carry out learning in a more planned manner and adjust learning methods to the needs of students. The principal's assistance in improving teacher professionalism, providing input on the implementation of learning, and awards regarding teacher performance also optimize the work encouragement of PAI teachers. This situation plays a role in creating a more regular learning process while supporting the improvement of the quality of teachers' performance in carrying out educational tasks at school.

Changes in Attitudes and Motivation of PAI Teachers

The leadership of the principal at SMKN 1 Surakarta shared the influence of changes in the attitude and work motivation of PAI teachers in carrying out learning tasks. A leadership approach that involves teachers in various school activities and provides space for teachers to express their opinions, teachers feel recognized and trusted in their professional roles. This condition encourages an increase in teachers' responsibility and commitment in carrying out their duties, starting from the preparation of learning tools, the implementation of the learning process, to the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

The teacher also showed an effort to use several methods and media. The application of more varied learning aims to make learning activities more interesting for students. The coaching implemented by the principal, along with support regarding teacher professional development, also plays a role in encouraging teachers' work morale and their confidence in carrying out the learning process. This impact is not only seen in improving individual performance, but also This also supports the formation of synergy between teachers in conveying learning experiences and strategies. Agree with Sidik et al. (2024) that changes in teachers' attitudes and the use of more varied learning methods can contribute to improving the quality of learning implementation and achieving student learning outcomes.

Improving Teacher Discipline and Responsibility

The leadership of the principal at SMKN 1 Surakarta also contributes to improving the discipline and sense of responsibility of PAI teachers in carrying out their obligations as teachers. The principal emphasized the importance of discipline in carrying out school activities, especially related to punctuality, the implementation of teaching schedules, and the preparation of learning administration. Through continuous supervision and coaching, teachers are encouraged to be more orderly in carrying out their duties and comply with the form of rules in schools. This disciplined attitude is not only seen from the presence of teachers in learning activities, but also from readiness. Teachers are encouraged to develop learning tools, apply appropriate methods, and evaluate student learning outcomes. Direction and support from the principal play a role in fostering teachers' awareness of their professional responsibilities as educators, so that the implementation of duties becomes more orderly and directed. Referring to Wahyudi's (2021) Research which states that the principal's leadership and the level of teachers' work discipline have an impact on the development of teacher performance in carrying out the learning process at school.

Quality of PAI Teacher Performance

The performance of PAI teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta is influenced by the leadership of the principal, especially related to professionalism, discipline, and quality of learning. Teacher performance is basically influenced by pedagogic ability, professional competence, social ability, and personal responsibility as a teacher. Improving teacher performance is an important part of efforts to strengthen their professionalism in carrying out educational tasks. PAI teachers have a role that is not only related to the delivery of religious materials, but also in guiding students to understand the core values of morals and character formation. Principal leadership support through open communication, coaching, and evaluation of learning implementation supports teachers in improving the quality of planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning in the classroom.

Leadership that encourages teachers to reflect and improve the realization of learning that is carried out. Teachers strive to update learning tools, apply more diverse methods, and utilize learning media and technology that are in line with students' needs. These efforts show the professional development of teachers in carrying out their duties as teachers. In line with Aulia et al. (2024) namely improving the performance of PAI teachers related to strengthening professional competencies and teachers' commitment to optimizing the quality of learning in schools.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the leadership of the principal of SMKN 1 Surakarta during the management of PAI teachers is carried out through a combination of several leadership styles, namely transformational, democratic, situational, and participatory. The use of these diverse techniques can be seen in the practice of motivating teachers; teachers are provided with space to participate in decision-making forums, and principals adapt leadership styles to the needs and character of each teacher. In addition, the principal also supports the development of religious values through school activities, such as reading the Qur'an together, which is carried out regularly. This leadership practice shows that school administration does not only focus on administrative aspects, such as professional development of teachers and strengthening religious values in the school environment.

The impact of leadership practice is reflected in the change in the attitude and motivation of PAI teachers in carrying out learning tasks. Teachers show greater dedication when creating learning tools, implementing teaching and learning activities, and assessing student learning outcomes. Teachers' involvement in various school activities and discussion forums also encourages the formation of smoother communication between principals and teachers. This situation encourages teachers to synergize and share knowledge as well as learning strategies, so that the implementation of learning activities in schools can run in a more

directed, coordinated manner, and facilitate the development of a more effective learning process.

The leadership of the principal also contributes to improving the discipline, responsibility, and quality of performance of PAI teachers at SMKN 1 Surakarta. Through coaching, supervision, and evaluation of the implementation of teachers' duties, school principals encourage teachers to carry out their professional duties more optimally. Support for teacher professional development through training activities, discussion forums, and involvement in school religious activities also helps to improve teacher competence and professionalism. Thus, the leadership of school principals that is communicative, participatory, and adaptive can encourage the improvement of the performance of PAI teachers while strengthening the implementation of religious education and student character development in the school environment.

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