

Democratic Leadership of the Principal in Optimizing Educator Performance at Junior High School (SMP) Ma'arif 2 Alian

Awaludin Solih^{1*}, Sudadi², Benny Kurniawa³, Imam Subarkah⁴, Sukataman⁵
Institut Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen

Corresponding Author: Awaludin Solih awaludinsolih88@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Leadership, Democratic, Optimization, Performance

Received : 10 January

Revised : 23 February

Accepted: 27 March

©2025 Solih, Sudadi, Kurniawa, Subarkah, Sukataman: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

A leader must have good leadership. A leader who does not have a leadership spirit will not be able to move his members. One of the leadership styles that is idolized and liked by many members is a democratic leadership style. This leadership style is embracing and everything related to policies and programs will involve and think about everyone who is a member. The purpose of this study is to determine the important role of a principal who has a democratic leadership style in improving better performance. The improvement is carried out by all members at SMP Ma'arif 2 Alian. Efforts made in maximizing data collection, this study uses more qualitative research methods. Through qualitative research methods, it is hoped that a deep understanding can be found about the important role of democratic leadership in improving the performance of its members. Data collection is carried out by means of interviews, observations and documentation. The results of this study are several efforts made by the principal such as mentoring and instructing other teachers to learn from each other, sending teachers to various events that support increased competence (training, workshops), building good communication in order to grow a sense of belonging to the institution

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an instinct that a leader must have. Thinking about how to bring an organization to be better and of higher quality must be instilled and nurtured continuously. This kind of soul is sometimes innate in someone since birth, there are also souls that are honed and exposed by joining several organizations that hone their leadership skills. However, the leadership soul that is present since birth can be influenced by parents and the surrounding environment. An environment that supports being a leader often has a culture of mutual cooperation between one another. So that habits that have been built from the environment are not only beautiful memories, but also become habits that someone brings to school and the work environment.

With a culture of helping each other, it implies that someone thinks about people if they become a leader they must think about their members and be active in involving various things related to policies, programs that are the reference for members to work. Because not all members who work do their jobs well and optimally. Therefore, the role of leaders in improving member performance is very necessary and important to do. The impact of improved performance will have an impact on the quality of educational institutions, the quality of educational institutions will have an impact on the formation of students and alumni who are ready to compete.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The two interrelated things as above will be determined by a leader. All changes are delegated to the shoulders of a leader or principal. However, in leadership there are many leadership styles such as authoritarian leadership style, where a principal or leader emphasizes full control over school policies and decisions. In this style, the principal makes decisions without involving many other parties, such as teachers, staff, or students. In addition, another leadership style is transformational, where a principal focuses on inspiring and motivating educators or members to achieve higher goals through passion and innovation. Headmaster who apply this style try to motivate positive changes in their members and not just manage.

The next leadership style is charismatic, which relies on the principal's personal appeal to motivate and inspire staff and students. Headmaster with this style are able to influence others through strong communication skills and an attractive vision. Charismatic dreaming has its own appeal because it has special or superior personality traits. The leader here is seen as special because of his admirable and authoritative personality traits. In that personality, the leader is accepted and trusted as someone who is respected, revered, obeyed and obeyed willingly and sincerely. In the discussion of charismatic leaders, there are several differences of opinion where charismatic leaders are born from disharmonious social relationships or social crises, so that God grants charismatic leaders so that a civilized society can be built. There are also those who view this charismatic leader as also born in organizational circles or the political world, and sometimes charisma is misused in fulfilling personal interests and setting aside organizational interests.

Actually, in the division of leadership styles, there are various kinds besides those mentioned above. What is clear is that the existence of a leader plays a role and has a big influence on the progress and quality of organizations, institutions, and others. Basically, the purpose of having a leader or principal is to bring educational institutions or organizations to be more advanced, more qualified. If the leader is in an educational institution, it means the purpose of the leader is to influence, coordinate, and mobilize members in the educational institution so that educational or school goals can be achieved effectively and efficiently. In achieving school goals, it is necessary to improve the performance of people involved in educational institutions. Like the Principal of SMP Ma'arif 2 Alian who has a democratic style, trying to achieve school goals by focusing on performance, both the performance of members and the performance of the principal himself. In this study, several efforts or strategies of the principal will be explained in improving member performance. Because if the performance is good in members, it will be easier to realize the vision, mission and goals of the school's existence.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of democratic leadership in SMP Ma'arif 2 Alian. Data collection techniques used include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. This approach was chosen because it provides an opportunity to understand more deeply the dynamics of leadership in schools, including the relationship between the principal, teachers, and staff. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explain, predict and control the phenomenon of democratic leadership of SMP 2 Ma'arif in its steps to improve member performance. In general, the main objective of this study is to explore how Headmaster implement democratic leadership principles and how this affects the performance of teachers and staff in schools to explore how teachers and staff perceive the principal's leadership style, the extent to which they are involved in the decision-making process, and its impact on their performance and the quality of education provided

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SMP Ma'arif 2 Alian is one of the educational institutions established under the auspices of the Nahdlatu Ulama (NU) mass organization, precisely under LP Ma'arif. The Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Educational Institution (LP) is one of the important components in the Nahdlatul Ulama organizational structure which plays a role as a departmental apparatus in the field of education. As an institution established by NU, Ma'arif has a very strategic goal in creating an education system that is not only of high quality, but also in accordance with the values taught by NU, namely Islam Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. The establishment of the Ma'arif Educational Institution aims to realize the ideals of education that have been NU's commitment since its inception. For NU, education is not just a teaching and learning activity, but is one of the main pillars in building an independent and characterful society. The education developed by the Ma'arif Education Institute is expected to produce a generation that is not

only intellectually intelligent, but also strong in morality, has good morals, and understands and practices the moderate teachings of Islam and rahmatan lil-'alamin.

As part of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization, the Ma'arif Education Institution has a very significant role in managing the education sector in Indonesia, especially in areas that are the main bases of NU, such as Kebumen Regency. This institution focuses on education based on Islamic values and local culture, with the aim of producing quality human resources who are ready to face the challenges of the times. In Kebumen Regency, the Ma'arif Education Institution has grown rapidly, providing various levels of education that can be accessed by the community, from basic education to higher education. The Ma'arif Education Institution in Kebumen Regency manages various types of schools that cover various levels of education. In addition to providing education at the basic level, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), this institution also offers education at the Junior High School (SMP), Vocational High School (SMK), and university levels. The diversity of these levels of education reflects Ma'arif's commitment to providing comprehensive and inclusive education, providing opportunities for everyone to access quality education, and ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to develop their potential according to their interests and talents.

Therefore, the principal of SMP Ma'rif 2 Alian has a strong determination to realize a school that is able to produce superior and quality generations. In an effort to realize this, the principal of SMP Maa'irf 2 Alian with his democratic leadership style always invites and discusses members in achieving common goals. The results of the study found that the performance of previous educators was not fully optimal and very good, the data was obtained from the researcher's survey. The assessment of the survey The assessment of teacher performance at SMP Ma'arif 2 Alian was carried out by referring to the Regulation of the Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel Number 7607 / B.B1 / HK.03 / 2023 concerning Management of Teacher and Principal Performance by filling in several application systems. The initial picture of teacher performance can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Pre-Survey of Teacher Performance at Ma'arif 2 Alian

No	Teacher Performance	Category				
		Absolutely No Good	Not good	Enough	Good	Very good
1.	Planning Learning	-	-	3	1	1
2.	Implementing Learning	-	-	2	2	1
3.	Assessing learning outcomes	-	1	4	-	-
4.	Guiding and training students	-	-	3	1	1
5.	Perform additional tasks	-	-	1	3	1
	Total	-	1	13	7	4

From the table above, it can be concluded that teacher performance is quite good, but has not reached the optimal level, because most of the teacher performance indicators were answered with a fairly good assessment.

Democratic Leader

Headmaster who adopts a democratic leadership style is a leader who emphasizes the importance of openness, cooperation, and participation in every aspect of school management. This leadership style involves all elements of the school, from teachers, staff, students, to parents, in every decision-making process, and creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusiveness. Under the leadership of a democratic principal, decisions taken do not only come from the leader, but also through a deliberation process involving various related parties. Headmaster who implement democratic leadership realize that the success of education does not only depend on the policies implemented, but also on the active participation of all parties in formulating and implementing these policies.

Headmaster who implement democratic leadership believe that every member of the school has the right to give their opinions and be involved in decision-making. In practice, this leader not only provides direction, but also listens to input from teachers, students, and parents regarding various existing problems. This creates a more harmonious atmosphere, where each individual feels valued and involved in the educational process. Headmaster with a democratic leadership style will involve teachers and staff in every stage of decision making. For example, when there is a change in curriculum or a new policy, the principal will hold an open meeting or discussion to obtain input from various parties. In this way, the decisions taken will be joint decisions, which reduces the potential for dissatisfaction and increases mutual trust between all parties.

The above explanation illustrates that a principal with a democratic leadership style has many advantages that make him respected and an example for many people. This leadership style emphasizes participation, cooperation, and openness in every aspect of school management. This type of leader always involves all related parties - such as teachers, staff, students, and parents in every important decision-making, which ultimately creates a sense of togetherness and supports the achievement of common goals. Although democratic principal leadership has many advantages, there are also some disadvantages that need to be considered. One of them is the decision-making process takes longer because it involves many parties. This can be an obstacle in situations that require quick and effective decisions.

Performance Optimization Steps

- Teaching and Learning Process

In teaching and learning, educators must master the material better than their students. This is so that if the students' understanding is not well absorbed, then the teacher or educator must be able to explain and describe the material that has not been understood. However, what if an educator does not master both the understanding of the material and the administration of teaching. Then who will the educator ask? This is where the role of the principal is in optimizing each educator's performance so that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly and well. The steps taken by the principal should be to provide assistance to teachers who still do not master or do not fulfill or complete the administration of teaching and learning. In addition to assistance, the principal provides peer tutoring.

Mentoring for teachers aims to facilitate the development of their professional skills in various aspects, such as classroom management, pedagogical approaches, and teaching strategies. One of the main advantages of mentoring is helping teachers to manage their classes better and implement more efficient teaching techniques. Through mentoring, educators can receive useful input on the best ways to teach, organize learning, and build more effective relationships with students. Mentoring also allows educators to share experiences and solve challenges they face in teaching, such as difficulties in implementing the curriculum or using educational technology. With mentoring,

educators can get more appropriate and targeted solutions, and feel more connected to their colleagues.

In optimizing the performance of educators in learning to teach, peer tutors are needed. Sharing between educators helps teachers to share experiences and knowledge, which can later improve their teaching skills. With mentoring from more experienced teachers, educators who may be new or facing difficulties can gain practical insights to apply in their classrooms. This mentoring is more than just teaching pedagogical theory, but also provides concrete strategies, classroom management techniques, and ways to overcome student problems that will improve the quality of learning. Through mentoring between educators, more experienced teachers can provide constructive feedback and share teaching methods that have been proven effective. This allows new or challenging educators to develop their skills more quickly through observation, discussion, and direct practice with their colleagues.

- Educator Professionalism

Building a culture of professionalism in performance, teachers are sent or assigned to participate in several activities that support the improvement of their performance, such as training, workshops and others. Training and workshops are designed to provide teachers with the opportunity to hone their skills and expand their knowledge. The purpose of this program is not only to introduce new theories or concepts, but also to provide practical experience that can be immediately applied in daily teaching activities. By participating in training and workshops, teachers can learn new ways to manage classes, utilize educational technology, and apply more effective and innovative learning methods.

In addition, training and workshops provide opportunities for teachers to share experiences and collaborate with colleagues. Teachers from various backgrounds and disciplines can exchange ideas and share teaching strategies, which ultimately enrich their methods. This program also helps build professional networks that can support the continuous development of educators' skills. Both of these support each other with the previous discussion points, so that a work culture that prioritizes quality and works hand in hand with others will be created in realizing a quality educational institution.

- Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Cultivating a sense of belonging in teachers is essential to improving their performance. When teachers feel connected to their school and their tasks, they will be more motivated and committed to carrying out their roles responsibly. This sense of belonging creates an emotional attachment to the educational institution and students, which encourages teachers to work harder in achieving educational goals. A sense of belonging will make teachers feel more responsible for their role in the school. When teachers feel an important part of the educational institution, they will be more enthusiastic and committed to giving their best in every aspect of their work. This triggers high work enthusiasm, which has a direct impact on improving the quality of learning and teacher performance in the classroom. Teachers who feel they have an important role in the school will tend to be more active in finding solutions to problems that arise, and more open in discussing and collaborating with fellow educators to improve

the quality of teaching. Efforts to foster this sense of belonging, the principal communicates with all teachers with a humanistic approach and asks things related to performance. If there are obstacles, teachers can convey them willingly and the principal can follow up seriously. A good relationship and communication pattern between the principal and members will foster a sense of belonging to the institution so that members work with enthusiasm and sincerity. This will also produce good work culture and organizational culture.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Democratic leadership has a positive impact on the progress of educational institutions. A principal who is able to mobilize and motivate his/her members in taking steps to realize the vision, mission and goals of the school is a principal who is able to accommodate the complaints of his/her members. The complaints that are conveyed and absorbed will be the measure of the principal in advancing educational institutions. In addition, in advancing educational institutions, the principal takes steps to optimize the performance of educators. These steps include providing assistance to educators who encounter obstacles in learning (mastery of material, learning administration), instructing other members to share, delegating teachers to attend training, workshops in improving teacher competence, and finally

REFERENCES

- Afif, Nur, M Azmi Zamzami, Asrori Mukhtarom, Agus Nur Qowim, and Universitas Muhammadiyah, 'STRATEGI LEMBAGA PENDIDIKAN MA'ARIF NU PUSAT DALAM MENGHADAPI TANTANGAN DI ERA GLOBALISASI', 4.2 (2022), pp. 120-32
- Afrida, Yanti, and Hayati Fitri, 'Implementasi Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dengan Budaya Organisasi Terhadap Kinerja Guru', *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 105-12, doi:10.61987/jemr.v1i2.43
- Fauzi, Fatchul, Rokhmaniyah, and Muna Fauziah, 'Kepemimpinan Pembelajaran Melalui Pendekatan Komunikatif', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Inovasi Pendidikan*, 2015, pp. 475-85
<https://jurnal.fkip.uns.ac.id/index.php/snip/article/viewFile/8967/6527>
- Hurin In Lia Amalia Qori, 'KEPEMIMPINAN KARISMATIK VERSUS KEPEMIMPINAN TRANSFORMASIONAL', *Analisa*, 1.2 (2013), pp. 70-77
- HUSNY, MOCH MARDYANA, 'Penerapan Model Workshop Untuk Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru Dalam Menetapkan Ketuntasan Belajar Minimum (Kbm) Di Smp Negeri 1 Setu, Kabupaten Bekasi Tahun Pelajaran 2019-2020', *Jurnal Pedagogiana*, 8.49 (2021), pp. 1-12, doi:10.47601/ajp.44
- Latifah, Zauhar, 'PENTINGNYA KEPEMIMPINAN DALAM ORGANISASI', *Seminar Nasional: Magister Manajemen Pendidikan Uniska Mab*, 1.1 (2021), pp. 234-43
- Mirsa, Nur Rina Priyani, Endang Sri Budi Herawati, and Agung Purwa Widiyan, 'Peran Kepemimpinan Demokratis Dalam Pengambilan Keputusan Lingkungan Sekolah', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 4.2 (2024), pp. 820-30, doi:10.53299/jppi.v4i2.628
- Muhammad Subhan, Dkk, *Gaya Kepemimpinan (Yayasan Cendekia Mulia MAndiri, 2023)*
https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/GAYA_KEPEMIMPINAN/ktjYEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=1&dq=kelebihan+dan+kekurangan+pemimpi+n+demokratis&pg=PR6&printsec=frontcover
- Nasution, Wahyudin Nur, 'Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Di Sekolah', 22.1 (2015), pp. 66-86
- Oktapiani, Thia, 'GAYA KEPEMIMPINAN KHARISMATIK KYAI', 6.2 (2021), pp. 199-210

- Rofifah, Ika Rifa, and Sukataman Sukataman, 'Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Pada Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah (MBS)', *Cakrawala Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Dan Studi Sosial*, 7.1 (2023), pp. 62-75, doi:10.33507/cakrawala.v7i1.1161
- Sabon, Simon Sili, 'EFEKTIVITAS PELATIHAN GURU MELALUI PENDIDIKAN DAN LATIHAN PROFESI GURU', *Jurnal Penelitian Kebijakan Pendidikan*, 11.3 (2019), pp. 159-82, doi:10.24832/jpkp.v11i3.210
- Sagala, Syaiful, *Pendekatan & Model Kepemimpinan*, 2108th edn (Prenadamedia Group, 2018)
- Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan R&D* (Alfabeta, 2017)
- Suhartati, Tri, 'Efektivitas Pendampingan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Guru Dalam Melaksanakan Pembelajaran Di Sekolah Dasar', *Syntax Literate ; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, 8.11 (2023), pp. 6807-22, doi:10.36418/syntax-literate.v8i11.14063
- Trisnawati, Teti, Vina Vijaya Kusuma, and Dwi Yulianto, 'EFEKTIVITAS METODE TUTOR SEBAYA BERBASIS YOUTUBE DALAM MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN NUMBER SENSE MATEMATIS SISWA DITINJAU DARI PERBEDAAN JENIS KELAMIN PADA MATERI BILANGAN', *Jurnal Lebesgue : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Matematika, Matematika Dan Statistika*, 4.1 (2023), pp. 7-22, doi:10.46306/lb.v4i1.209
- Wahyuni, Sri, Sukatin Sukatin, Inda Nur Fadilah, and Winda Astri, 'GAYA KEPEMIMPINAN OTORITER (OTOKRATIS) DALAM MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN', *Educational Leadership: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 123-30, doi:10.24252/edu.v1i2.26148
- Yanti, Faridah, 'PENGARUH GAYA KEPEMIMPINAN DEMOKRATIS KEPALA SEKOLAH TERHADAP KOMPETENSI GURU', 6.1 (2021), pp. 9-24