



PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL OF RIAU ISLANDS PROVINCE

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Abstract

The challenges of modern education demand not only academic achievement but also the cultivation of students' noble character. In this context, the role of principals in Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) becomes highly strategic. This study aims to analyze and describe the role and influence of principals' Islamic integrative leadership on improving the performance of educational staff within SMA IT. A qualitative approach with a phenomenological method was employed. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with principals and educational staff as well as participant observation. Analysis was conducted interactively through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that Islamic integrative leadership which combines modern leadership models such as transformational, instructional, democratic, servant, and distributive leadership with Islamic values such as exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), consultation (*syura*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice, and a clear vision significantly enhances the performance of educational staff. The integration of these values creates a work culture imbued with a spirit of worship, collaboration, and quality orientation. Educational staff become more motivated, loyal, and productive as they view their work as part of worship. This study concludes that Islamic integrative leadership is not merely a leadership style but an effective organizational culture foundation at SMA IT. Its implementation has been proven to empower educational staff, improve their performance, and support the achievement of sustainable Islamic educational goals. This leadership model is recommended for broader development in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords : Islamic Integrative Leadership, Educational Staff Performance, Principal, Integrated Islamic Senior High School, Islamic Education Management.



1. INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has brought new dynamics to nearly all sectors of life, including education. Increasingly fierce global competition requires every country to prepare superior, adaptive, and highly competitive human resources. In the educational context, these demands are not limited to academic achievement alone but also include the formation of character, moral integrity, and 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. In other words, today's education must produce graduates who are not only intellectually capable but also morally upright and able to play an active role in building civilization (Salfen, 2024).

In Indonesia, the transformation of national education has become even more relevant with the curriculum's emphasis on character strengthening. This is reinforced by Mulyasa's (2017) view that improving the quality of education cannot be separated from optimizing the role of all school components, including educational staff (administrative staff, librarians, laboratory assistants, technicians, and others) who form the backbone of school operations. The performance of educational staff determines the smoothness of administration, services, and various supporting functions, which in turn has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Mulyasa, 2017).

Several studies, such as Leithwood & Sun (2018), affirm that school leadership is one of the key factors in creating a conducive work environment and encouraging improved performance among all school members, including educational staff. Principals are not merely administrators but also instructional leaders, builders of school culture, and drivers of innovation. Within this framework, the quality of a principal's leadership is crucial to the successful implementation of education policies at the micro level (Leithwood & Sun, 2018).

However, the leadership needed in today's era of complexity is not monolithic or singular but integrative. Principals are required to combine various leadership styles according to the situation, conditions, and organizational values. Such an approach is adaptive and collaborative, with the principal acting as a catalyst by empowering teachers and educational staff, fostering shared ownership, and creating synergy to transform the school culture into a dynamic and sustainable learning ecosystem.

Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) have unique characteristics compared to general schools. Islamic values serve as the philosophical foundation that colors all activities. Therefore, principals in SMA IT are required not only to be competent in managerial aspects but also to serve as spiritual role models (*uswah hasanah*). Asy'ari (2019) emphasizes the importance of principals as role models who can integrate Islamic values into their leadership practices (Asy'ari, 2019).

Such leadership demands individuals who are not only adept at strategic planning and resource management but also possess spiritual depth and exemplary moral character (*al-akhlaq al-karimah*). Every policy, interaction, and decision must be guided by values of honesty (*ash-shidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*al-'adl*), and compassion (*ar-rahmah*). The principal functions as a "hidden curriculum" that directly influences the behavior of all school members, far more strongly than mere instructions or theories.



In this context, the *maqashid syariah* also serve as a reference in decision-making, not only efficiency and effectiveness. Values such as preserving religion (*hifzh ad-din*), preserving intellect (*hifzh al-‘aql*), and preserving social relations (*hifzh an-nasl*) become the basis of integration. The result is a unique educational ecosystem where academic success goes hand in hand with the formation of Islamic character.

Modern leadership models such as transformational, servant, distributive, and instructional have been widely studied in the educational context. However, comprehensive studies that integrate these models with Islamic values especially in the context of educational staff—are still very limited. Yet such integration is believed to produce a leadership paradigm that is not only operationally effective but also imbued with high spiritual and ethical values (Hesti Melliasari, 2024).

Integrating modern leadership models with Islamic values such as exemplary conduct (*qudwah hasanah*), justice (*al-‘adl*), wisdom (*al-hikmah*), and responsibility (*amanah*) is believed to build a work climate full of trust and collaboration. Ultimately, this approach leads to an overall improvement in educational quality. Therefore, research that formulates and tests an Islamic leadership model that is integrative and applicable for educational staff is essential. This model is expected not to remain merely theoretical but to be implemented in practice to shape educational leaders who are skilled at managing institutions while serving as sources of inspiration, motivation, and character building for the entire academic community (Bukhari, 2019).

Educational leadership is the ability to influence, inspire, and empower all school members to achieve shared goals. Educational leaders not only ensure smooth operations but also proactively identify future challenges, design curriculum development strategies, foster a research culture, and apply innovative teaching methods. Effective leadership also builds a strong foundation through collaboration and transparent communication. Leaders create space for dialogue in which teachers, staff, and students feel valued. By fostering a sense of shared ownership, the school climate develops into a supportive ecosystem oriented toward sustainable growth. Leadership styles such as transformational, democratic, distributive, instructional, servant, and visionary each have their strengths. Effective leaders often combine these elements and adapt them to the situation (Wahyudin Nur Nasution, 2015).

In Islam, leadership is a trust (*amanah*), not merely a position. A leader is God’s vicegerent on earth whose duty is to bring benefit. An ideal leader emulates the qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): *siddiq* (truthful), *amanah* (trustworthy), *tabligh* (conveying the truth), and *fathanah* (intelligent). He upholds justice without favoritism and consults (*syura*) in collective decision-making. Thus, Islamic leadership is service: providing a role model, guiding, safeguarding individual rights, and creating a virtuous community (Fauzia Irfiaeh, 2024).

Educational staff are a vital pillar of the educational ecosystem who work behind the scenes to ensure a well-ordered, safe environment that supports student learning success. They include administrative staff, librarians, laboratory assistants, technicians, and even cleaning personnel. They perform management, service, and technical supervision functions to ensure that educational processes run effectively and efficiently.

Improving the performance of educational staff requires support from key factors such as continuous competency development, empowering leadership, adequate welfare, positive



communication, and supportive facilities. Investing in improving educational staff performance is an investment in creating a professional, holistic, and conducive school ecosystem (Syamsul Bahri, 2021).

Islamic integrative leadership unites Islamic spiritual values with modern leadership principles. SMA IT principals who apply this style act as both administrators and spiritual mentors (*murabbi*) as well as role models (*uswah hasanah*). They integrate values such as honesty (*shiddiq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), exemplary conduct (*tabligh*), and wisdom (*fathonah*) into every aspect of school management (Tri Astutik Haryati, 2016).

This approach focuses on creating a harmonious work environment characterized by trust and mutual respect. Principals not only command but also serve, inspire, and empower educational staff to achieve their best potential. The vision of education is not merely to pursue academic scores but also to shape students' noble character. Key factors driving the improvement of educational staff performance in an Islamic integrative leadership ecosystem include transparent communication, continuous professional development, granting autonomy, recognition, and a conducive work environment. Implementing this leadership has a significant impact: educational staff work with enthusiasm, integrity, and responsibility because they view their work as part of worship. The work environment becomes harmonious and collaborative, synergy is built, and educational quality improves (Mulyadi, 2025).

The school thus transforms into a dynamic and inclusive educational ecosystem where all stakeholders actively create a learning atmosphere that optimally nurtures students intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Therefore, Islamic integrative leadership forms a strong foundation for excellent and dignified educational institutions (Umi Nadhiroh, 2024).

Based on the above description, this study is directed to answer the following main questions: 1) How is the leadership of principals in SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province? 2) What is the performance of educational staff in SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province? 3) How can the performance of educational staff in SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province be improved? 4) What factors support and hinder the leadership of principals in improving the performance of educational staff in SMA

IT in the Riau Islands Province?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The subjects were three Islamic boarding schools in the Riau Islands Province: SMA Islam Terpadu Imam Syafi'i Batam, SMA Islam Terpadu As Sakinah Tanjungpinang, and SMA Islam Terpadu Jabal Rahma Batam. This study uses a Qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. This research in Descriptive literature study is a systematic process in collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing literature relevant to the research topic. Data collection techniques in this article use Observation, interviews and documentation. The author collects references in the form of books and journals related to the theme of this article, then the author analyzes them (Aditya et al., 2010). The data collection technique in this article uses documentation, where the author collects references



in the form of books and journals related to the theme of this article, then the author analyzes them (Asrulla, 2023).

Data analysis techniques in this article use data reduction, which is the simplification of data that has been collected, then data presentation, which presents data that has been reduced previously, and verification or drawing conclusions from the data that has been obtained related to the research theme. The data analysis technique in this article uses data reduction, which is the simplification of the data that has been collected, then data presentation, which presents the data that has been reduced previously, and verification or drawing conclusions from the data that has been obtained relating to the theme of the article.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. School Leadership at Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in the Riau Islands Province

Based on in-depth interviews, observations, and document reviews in several Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in Batam, Tanjungpinang, and Bintan, it was found that principals generally display a transformational leadership style with a religious touch. They combine managerial functions (planning, organizing, implementing, supervising) with personal role-modeling and an Islamic vision. Almost all teacher and educational staff respondents described the principal as a “mentor figure” who not only directs programs but also exemplifies religious behavior, discipline, and integrity.

This transformational style is evident in several indicators: the principal provides inspiration and motivation, encourages teachers and staff to think creatively, supports technology-based instructional innovation, and gives individual attention to staff who face difficulties. Principals also do not hesitate to directly guide novice teachers or new staff to help them adapt quickly.

In almost all SMA IT observed in the Riau Islands, the school vision is formulated in clear language: to produce a generation of Muslims who are faithful, of good character, intelligent, and able to compete in the global era. Principals use this vision as a “compass” for every policy, from teacher recruitment, curriculum development, to the provision of facilities. The findings show that this vision is jointly understood by teachers, staff, and parents, as the principal actively disseminates it through regular meetings, online media, and orientation programs at the beginning of the school year.

In practice, principals tend to apply participatory approaches. They involve teachers and staff in decision-making, for example in preparing the annual work program, arranging schedules for *tahfidz* (Qur'an memorization) activities, or organizing student competitions. Through meetings and informal discussions, new ideas emerge from the bottom up and are valued. Administrative staff reported that this approach makes them feel appreciated and increases their sense of ownership of school programs.



This participatory approach also helps strengthen an inclusive organizational culture. Senior teachers, new teachers, and non-teaching staff have direct communication access with the principal. Feedback is received openly, making resulting policies easier to accept and implement.

SMA IT principals in the Riau Islands are also progressive in their use of technology. In teaching, meetings, and administrative management, they encourage the use of LCD/projectors, online applications, and school information systems. However, this technology integration is always framed within Islamic values so that students are not only technically skilled but also religiously grounded. Teachers referred to the principal as the main driver of administrative and instructional digitalization while maintaining the school's religious atmosphere.

In terms of supervision, principals regularly monitor the performance of teachers and administrative staff through classroom observations, evaluation of administrative services, and monthly evaluation meetings. This supervision is not merely control but also guidance: principals provide positive feedback, suggest training, and direct capacity building. Respondents stated that such a supervisory style makes them feel supported rather than rigidly monitored.

2. Performance of Educational Staff at Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in the Riau Islands Province

Based on observations and interviews at several Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in the Riau Islands Province, including Batam, Tanjungpinang, Karimun, and Bintan, it was found that educational staff play a vital role in supporting the smooth running of educational processes. They consist of administrative staff, librarians, laboratory assistants, ICT technicians, cleaning staff, security, and other support personnel. Their presence allows teachers to focus on teaching and mentoring students.

The number of educational staff varies across schools depending on school size and whether a boarding/non-boarding system is applied. In boarding schools, staff numbers are higher because they must support students' daily activities around the clock. The study found that the composition and qualifications of educational staff affect the quality of educational services and user satisfaction (teachers, students, and parents).

The findings show that, in general, educational staff at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province demonstrate fairly good professionalism. This is reflected in the fact that most staff understand their main duties and functions. Administrative staff manage correspondence, archives, student data, and reports. Laboratory staff understand equipment use procedures and safety. In terms of discipline, attendance and punctuality are relatively good. Staff arrive before working hours begin and complete tasks on schedule. Furthermore, in terms of service, teachers and students reported receiving friendly and prompt service from administrative, library, and laboratory staff.

Nevertheless, the study also revealed that technical competence levels especially in information technology are still varied. Younger staff generally master the digital applications



used by the school (such as academic information systems, digital attendance, grade management apps) more quickly, while senior staff sometimes require additional training. Some schools have held in-house training, but not routinely.

As Islamic-based schools that integrate technology and religious values, SMA IT in the Riau Islands have begun implementing digital systems for various services. Educational staff use computers and the internet for: Recording student and teacher data, including attendance and grades; Managing correspondence electronically; Managing digital libraries; Managing financial or tuition information.

The findings show that using technology accelerates services and improves data accuracy. However, human resource readiness is uneven. Schools with progressive leadership usually provide scheduled technology training. In schools with minimal training, staff tend to operate digital systems in a limited way and still rely on manual records.

The study found problems of uneven task distribution. In some schools, educational staff face heavy workloads because of limited numbers. Administrative staff, for example, also manage inventory and student activities, disrupting the completion of their main tasks. This affects service quality and causes work stress. Conversely, in schools with more complete staffing, task distribution is more proportional, resulting in more optimal services. Teachers and students feel the difference in the speed of administrative services, tidiness of facilities, and cleanliness of the school environment.

Educational staff motivation is influenced by welfare and recognition received. Respondents cited allowances, salaries, and work facilities as important factors affecting work enthusiasm. Principals who actively provide recognition (such as certificates, thank-you notes, training recommendations) make staff feel appreciated. However, the study also found that in some schools, allowances or incentives are inadequate, especially in remote areas. As a result, work motivation decreases and staff tend to work only to fulfill obligations. The geographic conditions of the Riau Islands, scattered across many islands, also make access to training and capacity building for educational staff more difficult than in mainland areas.

The findings show that educational staff at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province generally have good working relationships with teachers and school leaders. They are involved in school activities such as religious events, student competitions, or annual programs. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and boosts work morale. In schools with participatory leadership, educational staff are more willing to voice ideas and complaints. Principals open two-way communication channels, for example through monthly meetings or official WhatsApp groups. Staff feel their input is valued, which positively impacts performance.

The study found that nearly all SMA IT in the Riau Islands have mechanisms for evaluating the performance of educational staff, although frequency and instruments differ. Some schools assess performance every semester, some once a year. Indicators usually include discipline, service timeliness, technology mastery, and attitude toward service users. After evaluation, principals



provide feedback personally or through meetings. A constructive approach makes staff feel coached rather than judged. In schools with weak coaching, staff tend to repeat mistakes or perform tasks monotonously.

Several main challenges identified in this study include: Limited Continuous Training: Not all educational staff have access to regular training, especially in information technology and educational service management. Limited Facilities and Infrastructure: Supporting work facilities such as computers, internet networks, or workspaces are still limited in some schools. Welfare and Incentives: Large differences between schools in allowances create uneven work motivation. Uneven Staff Distribution: Schools in urban centers find it relatively easier to recruit qualified staff compared to schools on small islands.

The findings show that good performance of educational staff directly impacts the smoothness of the teaching-learning process. Teachers can focus on teaching because administrative matters are well handled. Students feel more comfortable learning because facilities are well maintained and services are fast. Parents also experience satisfaction with administrative services, such as more orderly report card collection or tuition payment.

Conversely, in schools where educational staff are limited or their performance is low, teachers and students face obstacles. Administration is delayed, facilities are poorly maintained, and the school atmosphere is less conducive. This demonstrates the importance of educational staff in supporting the overall quality of education.

3. Ways to Improve the Performance of Non-Teaching Staff at Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in the Riau Islands Province

This study was conducted to answer a fundamental question: how can the performance of non-teaching staff at Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) across the Riau Islands Province be improved? Data were collected through in-depth interviews with principals, non-teaching staff, teachers, and foundation representatives in Batam, Tanjungpinang, Bintan, and Karimun, as well as through direct observation of staff duties and the review of school performance and policy documents. This approach provided a comprehensive picture of the initial condition of the non-teaching staff, the challenges they face, and practical strategies that can be applied.

Overall, non-teaching staff at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province have already demonstrated adequate professionalism. They perform essential functions in administrative services for teachers and students, library and laboratory management, financial administration, and facilities maintenance. Nevertheless, the study found variations in quality between schools, particularly in mastery of information technology, service speed, and facilities management. The main challenges identified include limited continuous training, uneven work facilities, disproportionate workloads, and disparities in staff welfare between schools. This situation highlights the need for specific strategies to further optimize non-teaching staff performance.



Most informants stressed that training is the key to performance improvement. Many staff members have never attended formal training in modern administration, information technology, excellent service, or digital record management. Some progressive principals have initiated in-house training, such as the use of academic information systems, digital archiving, excellent service training for administrative staff, and occupational safety training for laboratory assistants. The impact is clear: staff who participate in training work faster, more accurately, and more confidently. This study recommends that schools develop an annual, continuous training plan.

The study also shows that staff productivity is highly influenced by the adequacy of facilities. Many non-teaching staff complained about slow computers, unstable internet connections, or cramped workspaces. Schools that have provided new computers, fast printers, strong internet networks, and ergonomic workspaces reported increases in productivity and teacher-student satisfaction with services. Therefore, periodic facility audits and planned budgeting for equipment renewal are crucial to boosting performance.

Disproportionate workloads reduce service quality. In some schools, one administrative staff member handles multiple tasks and becomes exhausted. Schools with clear job descriptions and proportionate task allocation achieve more focused and productive non-teaching staff. In some cases, hiring additional staff or utilizing part-time workers has proven helpful in maintaining service quality.

Motivation is a key determinant. Staff at schools offering additional incentives, performance allowances, or non-financial recognition show higher work enthusiasm. Appreciated forms of recognition include certificates and thank-you notes in monthly meetings, recommendations for out-of-town training, and bonuses at the end of the school year. For schools unable to provide financial incentives, symbolic recognition or simple welfare programs, such as flexible working hours have been enough to increase staff loyalty.

This study found that many principals already have staff performance evaluation tools but have not used them consistently. Routine evaluations with constructive feedback have been proven to help staff identify their strengths and weaknesses. Schools that successfully implement such systems have clear performance indicators timeliness of administrative services, archive neatness, number of services completed on schedule and provide feedback individually or through staff meetings. As a result, staff are more motivated to improve their performance.

The leadership style of the principal plays a major role. Principals who maintain open communication, listen to input, and involve staff in decision-making foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Good practices found include monthly brainstorming forums for administrative staff, involving staff in planning meetings, and giving direct recognition to outstanding staff in front of teachers and students. These measures have been proven to boost morale and work enthusiasm.

As schools with Islamic character, strengthening Islamic work culture time discipline, sincere work, friendly service, and integrity has a positive impact on staff performance. Schools



that regularly hold staff religious gatherings, moral guidance, and joint spiritual activities have more ethical, polite, and dedicated non-teaching staff. Thus, strengthening Islamic work culture is an effective way to enhance performance.

Another widely voiced recommendation is to expand the use of digital technology for routine staff tasks for example, automatic digital attendance systems, school inventory management applications, digital libraries, and online financial systems. Schools that have implemented such technologies report lighter staff workloads, faster services, and more accurate records provided that supporting training is available.

The study also emphasizes that performance improves when non-teaching staff have good working relationships with teachers and external parties. Collaborative programs such as joint seminars, teacher–staff training, or comparative studies broaden staff perspectives. Schools that invite professional resource persons from outside to coach administrative staff record significant improvements in staff competence.

Based on these findings, several strategic steps to improve the performance of non-teaching staff at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province are: conducting regular training in modern administration, excellent service, and information technology; providing adequate work facilities; balancing workloads proportionally; offering fair welfare and incentives; strengthening performance evaluation systems with clear indicators and constructive feedback; adopting participatory leadership styles; reinforcing Islamic work culture; utilizing digital technology optimally; and encouraging collaboration with teachers and external parties.

4. Obstacles to Improving the Performance of Non-Teaching Staff at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province

Initial findings show that the principal's leadership plays a central role in shaping and directing the performance of non-teaching staff. However, the effectiveness of this leadership is greatly influenced by interrelated supporting and inhibiting factors: the principal's competence, resource availability, support from the school foundation, the strength of Islamic work culture, and external conditions such as government policies or community dynamics.

Supporting factors include:

- a. **Principal's Managerial and Leadership Competence**
Principals with strong managerial abilities especially in planning, organizing, controlling, and evaluating are more effective at guiding non-teaching staff. Informants from Batam and Bintan reported that principals there regularly draw up annual work plans, hold coordination meetings, and monitor staff performance periodically. They also demonstrate participatory leadership by keeping communication open and listening to staff feedback. This practice fosters ownership and work motivation.
- b. **Support from Foundations and Stakeholders**



At several SMA IT, foundation support is evident in budget allocations for training, provision of new work facilities, and the recruitment of additional administrative staff. Other stakeholder support appears in incentives, allowances, or awards. Such support helps principals implement staff performance improvement programs.

c. Islamic Work Culture

As Islamic educational institutions, SMA IT instill values of discipline, trustworthiness, cooperation, and sincere service. A strong Islamic work culture provides a moral foundation for non-teaching staff to work professionally. Principals who consistently organize religious activities such as staff Qur'an study groups and moral coaching report that their staff are more polite, meticulous, and disciplined.

d. Provision of Training and Competency Development

Non-teaching staff who have undergone training in modern administration, information technology, or excellent service show better performance. Principals who proactively seek training opportunities through the Education Office, professional institutions, or in-house training have successfully improved their staff's capabilities.

e. Adequate Facilities and Infrastructure

Schools that equip administrative staff with new computers, stable internet connections, academic information systems, and ergonomic workspaces experience significant increases in service speed. Principals play an important role in proposing facility upgrades to the foundation and ensuring their maintenance.

f. Structured Evaluation and Supervision Systems

Several principals have implemented staff performance evaluation systems with clear indicators timeliness of service, archive neatness, and teacher/student satisfaction. Feedback is given regularly, so staff understand work standards and are motivated to improve.

Inhibiting factors include:

a. Budget Constraints

Limited funds are a major obstacle in some locations. Training programs are not routine, work facilities are uneven, and adding administrative staff is difficult. As a result, staff are overwhelmed and principals struggle to implement performance improvement programs.

b. Principals' Workload

Some SMA IT principals have to handle many administrative tasks, reducing their focus on coaching non-teaching staff. Busy schedules hinder regular supervision and evaluation.

c. Resistance to Change

Some non-teaching staff are reluctant to adapt to new systems, especially digital technology. Without adequate support and mentoring, staff are slow to transition to more modern procedures. Principals who are impatient or fail to provide in-depth socialization find it harder to accelerate change.

d. Inequality in Staff Welfare Between Schools

Non-teaching staff welfare varies across SMA IT. Some schools can offer allowances and bonuses, others cannot. This disparity affects staff motivation, and principals at low-budget schools find it harder to inspire work enthusiasm.



e. Lack of Coordination with Teachers and External Parties

In some schools, the relationship between non-teaching staff and teachers is not yet harmonious. Teachers often submit data at the last minute or in incorrect formats, overwhelming administrative staff. Principals who do not emphasize cross-department coordination face obstacles in improving staff performance.

f. Insufficient Programs for Strengthening Work Culture

Although Islamic values are a hallmark of SMA IT, some schools do not consistently organize staff moral development. As a result, the Islamic work culture expected to support performance has not been well internalized.

Supporting and inhibiting factors do not stand alone but interact with each other. Principals with competence and participatory leadership styles tend to be more capable of overcoming obstacles, for example by requesting additional funding from the foundation for training and facilities, reorganizing task distribution to prevent staff overload, taking a personal approach to overcome staff resistance, and designing non-financial recognition strategies when financial incentives are limited. Conversely, principals with weak managerial capacity or authoritarian leadership styles are more hampered by budget constraints, staff resistance, and weak work culture.

Some good practices successfully implemented by SMA IT principals to optimize supporting factors and minimize obstacles include: Monthly review forums where non-teaching staff present work challenges and propose solutions; Semesterly in-house information technology training to improve staff digital literacy; Gradual facility and budget audits to renew work equipment based on priorities ; Symbolic awards such as certificates for exemplary staff, public thank-yous in front of teachers and students, or recommendations to attend out-of-town seminars; and Staff moral development programs such as weekly Qur'an study sessions and routine Islamic values activities.

These practices have been proven to improve motivation, discipline, and skills among non-teaching staff, even with limited resources. The combination of these factors determines the success of principals in building professional and productive non-teaching staff. By optimizing supporting factors and overcoming inhibiting factors through creative strategies, school leadership can become the main driver of quality improvement at SMA IT in the Riau Islands Province.

4. CONCLUSION

Research conducted at Integrated Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA IT) in the Riau Islands Province shows that the quality of educational services is influenced by school principals' leadership, the professionalism of educational staff, and participatory management systems. Principals generally apply a transformational leadership style with a religious orientation by combining managerial functions, personal role modeling, motivation, coaching, and a clear Islamic vision. Their participatory approach, which involves teachers and staff in planning, decision-



making, and evaluation, creates an inclusive work culture, two-way communication, and a sense of ownership over school programs. They also encourage digitalization and staff development so that supervision becomes constructive coaching.

Educational staff play a vital role in supporting the smooth teaching–learning process with fairly good professionalism, although there are variations in technology mastery, workload distribution, and motivation influenced by welfare. Performance improvement strategies include continuous training, adequate facilities and infrastructure, proportional task distribution, fair incentives, clear performance evaluations, strengthening Islamic work culture, and optimal use of digital technology.

This study also found supporting factors such as principals' managerial competence, foundation support, Islamic work culture, facilities and infrastructure, training, and evaluation; as well as inhibiting factors such as budget constraints, heavy workloads, staff resistance, welfare disparities, and weak coordination. By optimizing the supporting factors and addressing the obstacles, SMA IT has the potential to improve the quality of education and produce graduates with Islamic character who are excellent and competitive.

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