

TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP BASED ON VALUES TO KHULAFUR-RASYIDIN LEADERSHIP AT SMK ENTREPRENEUR INDONESIA SRAGEN

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the transformation of school principal leadership based on the values of Khulafaur-Rasyidin at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen in building a religious, character-building, and productive school culture. The study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to understand the application of the values of honesty, justice, trustworthiness, and wisdom in leadership practices. The research subjects were determined purposively, namely principals who had relevant experience and competence. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research results showed that school principals acted as transformational leaders who becomes as role models, motivators, and agent of change through the internalization of the values of the Khulafaur-Rasyidin in leadership. The application of these values had a positive impact on the improvement of teachers discipline and professionalism, strengthening students' religious character, and creating a harmonious and productive school environment. Humanistic, participatory, and coaching-based leadership strategies support the sustainability of leadership transformation despite resistance to change. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating transformational leadership and Islamic values in improving the quality of vocational education.

Keywords: School Culture, Religious Character, Khulafaur-Rasyidin, Transformational Leadership, Vocational High School

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in shaping the quality of superior and characterful human resources. The role of the principal in the context of modern education is that of a transformational leader, not only limited to administrative management, where they can be leaders capable of bringing positive change to the entire school community. The transformation of school leadership can be defined as a process of changing leadership styles and practices towards becoming more adaptive, inspirational, and oriented towards developing the moral and spiritual values of students. School leadership becomes a main factor in creating a learning environment that is productive, religious, and oriented towards shaping the character of students (Suprianti & Rosmilawati, 2024). Therefore, the leadership model that is implemented should not only focus on academic results, but also shape the character and spiritual values of the school community.

The transformation of school leadership plays a role in directing the school's vision and mission towards better change by involving all school components actively. Effective leadership demands that school principals integrate ethical values, exemplary behavior, and responsibility into every policy implemented. In reality, there are still several obstacles in implementing leadership values in schools, such as a lack of

discipline among students, low motivation to learn, and a lack of role model leadership from school leaders (Rahmawati & Sari, 2023). This phenomenon shows a gap between ideal leadership theory and its implementation in the field. Research by Kurniawan (2022) also found that the weak reinforcement of religious character in secondary schools, one of which is caused by the unoptimal role of the principal as a role model and driver of religious values. This condition shows that the moral and spiritual aspects of leadership still need to be improved in order to line up with the goals of national character education. School leadership plays a strategic role in the development of Islamic Educational Institutions as also proven in research by Suwardi and Samino (2014) through qualitative studies. The results of the study reveal that school principals with democratic, visionary, and open leadership styles are able to build creative and superior school systems through the management of integrated educational inputs, processes, and outputs.

Various studies show that the application of Islamic leadership values such as trustworthiness, fairness, and wisdom can improve the effectiveness of school principals' leadership as well as strengthen the religious culture in the educational environment (Muslim, 2016). The results of a study conducted by Fauziah and Rahman (2022) show that school principals

who apply Islamic leadership principles tend to have better abilities in building an ethical and character-oriented school culture. Similar findings were reported by Hidayat and Nuraini (2023), who found that the leadership values of Rasulullah and the Khulafaur-Rasyidin were able to strengthen teachers' confidence and motivation in carrying out their professional responsibilities. Putra and Lestari (2021) assert that the application of the values of honesty, fairness, and responsibility by school principals has a positive impact on improving discipline and teacher performance in secondary schools. These research results reinforce the importance of applying the leadership values of the Khulafaur-Rasyidin in modern educational leadership practices to create a learning environment that is character-building, religious, and has integrity.

In addition to leadership, Islamic values in educational institutions are also reflected through organizational citizenship behavior based on an Islamic perspective (OCBIP). Research conducted by Shohib et al. (2024) shows that Islamic work behaviors such as trustworthiness, responsibility, and sincerity contribute to improving the effectiveness of educational organizations. These findings confirm that the leadership of school principals plays an important role in shaping organizational culture and positive behaviors among school members based on Islamic values.

Research by Herayati (2020) shows that school principal leadership plays an important role in building character culture through exemplary behavior, motivation, supervision, and reinforcement of religious and moral values in the school environment. School principals who actively direct and control the behavior of school members have proven to be able to reinforce the values of truthfulness, discipline, and responsibility among students. This finding confirms that the transformation of leadership values, including exemplary behavior and integrity, is the main foundation in improving characters habits at school, as required at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen.

Subsequently, Siregar's (2021) research shows that school principal leadership has a significant influence on teacher character building. Through a quantitative approach with correlation analysis, research shows that principals who are able to guide, nurture, and consistently supervise teacher performance will have an impact on improving professional character, responsibility, and discipline. This finding reinforces that the role of the principal not only determines the direction of school policy, but is also an important factor in fostering a work culture with character, in line with the needs of SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen in strengthening the values of exemplary behavior and integrity in the school environment.

Another research by Mariana (2021) also shows that school principal leadership has a strategic role in encouraging school effectiveness, especially in the context of the sekolah penggerak program. Through a literature review approach, the findings of this study confirm that school principals function as the main drivers of change, rather than merely structural symbols. The principal's ability to manage change, optimize resources, and build a student-oriented learning culture has proven to be a determining factor in the school's success in achieving its educational goals. Adaptive and visionary leadership can strengthen the implementation of learning that

leads to the realization of the Pancasila student profile, which emphasizes a balance between the academic competence and moral character of students.

Research by Kusumanigrum et al. (2020) shows that leadership quality and school culture have a direct influence on educator performance. In the context of Islamic boarding school-based education in East Java, Kusumanigrum found that learning leadership, change leadership, spiritual leadership, professional ethics, and school culture contribute significantly to improving teachers' teaching performance. This confirms that effective school leadership not only builds a positive school atmosphere, but also able to empower human resources optimally to achieve educational goals. These findings reinforce the relevance of applying moral and religious leadership in shaping the behavior, work ethic, and professionalism of educators.

The leadership values of the Khulafaur-Rasyidin can be an inspiration in developing a character-based educational leadership model. The first four caliphs in Islamic history, Abu Bakar, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Thalib, showed exemplary leadership based on high moral and spiritual values. Each of them had distinctive leadership characteristics that can be used as guidelines for school principals in carrying out their duties. Abu Bakar was known for his honesty and trustworthiness, Umar with his decisiveness and fairness, Uthman with his generosity and gentleness, meanwhile Ali with his wisdom and courage in enforcing justice. These values are in line with the goals of modern education, which is oriented towards character building, integrity, and the moral responsibility of school members (Siregar & Hamzah, 2023). Therefore, reinforcing the values of the Khulafaur-Rasyidin can be a solution to the challenge of weak moral exemplary leadership in schools today.

In addition, the quality of school principal leadership has also been proven to have an important role in improving teacher performance in various educational units. Purwoko (2018) shows that school principal leadership, teacher commitment, work discipline, and school culture gives a positive and significant influence on improving teacher performance. These findings are in line with the results of research by Akbar and Imaniyati (2019), which explains that transformational leadership styles can encourage teachers to work more effectively through the example and motivation provided by their leaders. Another study by Elly and Soraya (2020) also confirms that school principal leadership and a conducive school environment simultaneously have a significant effect on teacher performance at the vocational education level. These results reinforce that leadership effectiveness plays a direct role in shaping teachers' work ethic and professionalism.

The research that had been conducted by Sulhi Daud and Muspawi (2017) showed that the leadership of the principal is very important in fostering the religious character of students through structured programs in school activities, including the role of the principal as a guide and person in charge of religious affairs at school. Subsequently, a study by Musthofa et al. (2022) found that effective principals were able to influence the formation of students' religious character in SMK through program planning, educational communication, and consistent daily role modeling. Therefore, the application of the Khulafaur-Rasyidin leadership values by principals has a

strong empirical basis in improving the quality of students' character.

As a vocational education institution, SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen has an important role in shaping students who are not only competent in skills, but also have strong character and solid religious values. Based on results from initial observations, there are still challenges in implementing religious habits and role models in the school environment. This condition shows the need for school principals to be active in transforming the leadership values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* into tangible practices. This transformation is reflected in the principal's mindset, attitude, and actions in building a work culture that is honest, fair, and based on moral exemplary behavior.

In line with this, the role of the principal is key in integrating the leadership values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* in preparing students who not only have work skills, but also strong character and religious values. The principal of SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen is expected to transform the leadership values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* into daily leadership practices. This transformation includes changes in the way of thinking, acting, and interacting with teachers, educational staff, and students, thereby creating a school culture based on the values of honesty, justice, and exemplary behavior.

Based on the above description, this study was conducted to examine how the transformation of school leadership based on the values of *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen were realized in real practice. This study aims to understand the extent to which the principal is able to apply Islamic leadership values in facing modern educational challenges and building a religious, ethic, and oriented school culture on character building of students. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute to strengthening the concept of Islamic leadership in the vocational education environment.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of the leadership values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* in the transformation of school principal leadership. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is in line with the research objectives, which focus on in-depth understanding, experiences, and the views of the research subjects directly in the real context of the school environment. The research subjects were school principals who were selected based on specific considerations, namely because they were considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. Research data was collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation of principal leadership activities. The data obtained was then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to comprehensively describe the form of leadership transformation based on the values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin*.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with the principal of SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen, this study describes that leadership transformation in the school context is understood as a comprehensive change process that not only focuses on improving academic quality but also involves system renewal, work culture, and strengthening the character building for the entire school community. The principal views transformational leadership as the ability to be a role model, provide inspiration, build a shared vision, and empower teachers to be able to adapt to the evolution of the times, particularly developments in technology and the needs of the business and industrial worlds. This view is in line with the concept of modern leadership, which emphasizes the role of leaders as agents of change. These findings are in line with research conducted by Noor & Dartim (2021), which states that transformational leadership is managed through a system approach involving *inputs*, *processes*, and *outputs*. Transformational leadership has an important role in directing the learning process and school management to produce outputs in the form of improved school quality and achievement, that are still based on Islamic moral and ethical values.

At SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen, the implementation of the leadership transformation concept is realized through various innovations, such as the digitization of administration, the application of project-based learning, and the strengthening of student character through consistent habit-forming programs. In addition, the principal also builds collaboration with the industrial world as a strategy to ensure that graduate competencies remain relevant to current work needs. The *coaching* and mentoring approach to teachers is also an important part of efforts to improve pedagogical competence and strengthen teacher professionalism in facing the dynamics of the modern curriculum. These findings are in line with the research by Siswanto *et al.* (2025), which shows that the transformational leadership of school principals has a significant effect on improving teacher performance.

This leadership transformation is increasingly evident through the strategies implemented to improve discipline, character, and work culture in the school environment. The principal emphasized the importance of role modeling as the main foundation for building a culture of discipline. Punctuality, integrity, and commitment to completing tasks were set as examples of behavior to be emulated by teachers and students. Punctuality, integrity, and commitment in completing tasks are used as role models that are emulated by teachers and students. This exemplary behavior is not only built in administrative matters, but also in the way the principal shows himself as a lifelong learner. On the other hand, the implementation of SOPs and consistent rules becomes a systematic effort to ensure that all learning and administrative activities run according to standards. This helps to establish discipline as a culture, not just a momentary instruction. In addition, the principal also establishes two-way communication with teachers and educational staff, and creates a culture of appreciation to motivate the school community. Although appreciation does not always take the form of grand rewards, simple forms of appreciation can have a positive impact on the work atmosphere. Habit-building programs such as greeting, smiling,

and saying hello, dhuha, morning tilawah, literacy before class, and other habits unique to Islamic boarding schools also contribute to strengthening students' character development. Continuous monitoring and evaluation ensure that teachers receive feedback on their teaching performance, discipline, and classroom management, so that the transformation of school culture can proceed consistently. These findings are in line with the research by Sidik et al. (2025), which shows that transformational leadership accompanied by a conducive school culture has a significant effect on increasing teacher motivation and performance.

The role of the principal in directing the school's vision and policies is another important aspect of the change process. The principal ensures that all elements of the school have a common understanding of the direction of the institution's development by aligning the school's vision, mission, and goals with the needs of the world of work, technological developments, and national character values. This vision is then outlined in various measurable policies, such as flagship programs, student competency targets, and academic and non-academic service standards. In leading positive habits, the principal provides guidance through socialization and workshops so that all teachers understand the objectives of the policy and how to implement it. The school environment is also built to support the creation of a safe, religious, disciplined, and productive learning climate through worship habits, extracurricular activities, rules and regulations, and collaboration with Islamic boarding schools. The principal also ensures the sustainability of each program by conducting periodic evaluations so that the impact of the policy can be felt in a tangible way, both in student behavior and teacher work culture. Turaya (2025) explains that the principal, as a visionary leader, plays an important role in communicating the vision, facilitating change, and creating an innovative and conducive school culture. The principal also ensures the sustainability of each program by conducting periodic evaluations so that the impact of the policy can be felt in a tangible way, both in student behavior and teacher work culture.

In the context of Islamic leadership values, the principal integrates the values of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin*, such as honesty, justice, trustworthiness, and wisdom, as the moral basis for every leadership activity. The value of honesty is manifested through transparency and openness of information, especially in decision-making and policy delivery. The principal ensures that all school members receive information fairly, both through regular meetings and internal communication platforms. Fairness is applied in the distribution of tasks, performance appraisals, and enforcement of discipline regardless of personal connections or backgrounds. All teachers are positioned as individuals with equal opportunities for development, and appreciation is given based on actual achievements. The value of trustworthiness is realized in the form of timely program completion, keeping promises, and ensuring that all policies taken benefit the school. Wisdom is manifested through deliberations with teachers, staff, foundations, and even parents in making decisions, so that the policies made are more mature and reflect the values of fairness. This is in line with research conducted by Fadhli (2021), which shows that the internalization of Islamic leadership values such as trustworthiness, fairness, and wisdom plays an important

role in creating school management that is transparent, accountable, and oriented towards the common good.

The application of the *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* leadership values has had a tangible positive impact on the school environment. The working atmosphere has become more harmonious because teachers feel valued through fair and transparent policies. This is in line with research conducted by Sudarto and Niron (2025), which found that effective school leadership can strengthen school culture and improve teacher performance significantly. Internal conflicts decrease as open communication increases, making it easier to resolve problems in a solution-oriented manner. Teachers' discipline and work ethic improved because the leaders' exemplary behavior encouraged teachers to follow suit, especially in terms of arriving on time, completing administrative tasks, and improving the quality of learning. The implementation of Islamic habit-building character has also had a positive impact on student behavior, which has become more polite, responsible, and easily guided. The religious culture in schools has become more vibrant through dhuha (early morning prayer), morning tilawah, and Islamic boarding school activities. In addition, the relationship between schools and parents and the community has improved because the strong moral commitment of the school leadership is clearly evident in various programs and policies.

Although many positive changes have taken place, the implementation of these values also faces several challenges. The main challenge that arises is the difference in mindset and old habits of some teachers and students that are not easy to change. Resistance to new cultures such as transparency, discipline, or trustworthiness often hinders the transformation process. In addition, individual inconsistency in executing the values of trustworthiness and justice is a separate obstacle. To overcome these challenges, the principal implemented a number of strategies, including sustainable role modeling as the main tool for change, gradual dissemination of values through various forums, and personal mentoring and coaching for teachers who had difficulty adapting. The principal also opened a forum for deliberation so that every teacher and staff member could express their obstacles and aspirations. A humanistic approach that emphasizes dialogue and coaching has proven to be more effective in creating school culture change than a coercive approach. This finding is in line with the results of research by Umami and Wahyudi (2025), which shows that the implementation of transformational leadership in schools must be accompanied by adaptive strategies to overcome resistance to cultural change, especially among teachers and educators who have old habits.

Research by Rahmawati (2024) also confirms that effective school leadership can improve teacher performance through coaching, clear communication, and moral exemplary behavior. Principals who demonstrate fairness and consistency in their policies will encourage teachers to work more disciplined, responsible, and committed to their duties. These results are consistent with the conditions at SMK Presiden Sragen, where the application of leadership values based on integrity and exemplary behavior has been proven to improve the work culture of teachers while strengthening religious character and professionalism in the school environment.

Overall, the results of the study show that the leadership transformation implemented at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen is running systematically and is oriented towards changing the school culture through exemplary behavior, consistent rules, habitual character building, and the formation of a shared vision. The integration of the leadership values of *the Khulafaur-Rasyidin* strengthens the quality of leadership in building a productive, religious, and character-building learning environment. The application of the values of honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and wisdom not only has an impact on improving teacher discipline and professionalism, but also on shaping student character and increasing parental trust in the school. Despite challenges in the implementation process, a humanistic and collaborative strategy makes this transformation sustainable and provides long-term impact on the development of school culture. This is further reinforced by the findings of Saputra and Syahrullah (2025), which show that school leadership has a real contribution in building student character, especially in the aspects of discipline, responsibility, and positive behavior at school. Although there are still a number of challenges in the implementation process, a humanistic and collaborative leadership approach allows this transformation to take place sustainably and have a long-term impact on the development of school culture.

In addition, the results of the study also show that leadership transformation at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen does not only focus on structural and administrative changes, but also on developing human resource competencies. The principal plays an active role in improving teacher capacity through mentoring, *coaching*, academic supervision, and strengthening a culture of dialogue. This approach makes teachers feel valued, empowered, and better prepared to face the demands of the modern curriculum and technological developments. This finding is supported by research conducted by Firdaus and Yosepty (2025), which found that collaborative and reflection-based academic supervision management can improve teachers' professional competence significantly through a dialogical and coaching approach. Collaborative efforts, such as cooperation with the business and industrial world (DUDI), also expand the quality of learning, so that students gain experience that is relevant to the needs of the world of work. This kind of transformation shows that school leadership is not only focused on managerial matters, but also on professional and pedagogical transformation.

The application of the values of *the Khulafaur-Rasyidin* has had a significant influence in strengthening the morality and spirituality of the entire school community. The values of trustworthiness and justice have created a school climate that is more transparent, accountable, and oriented towards collective responsibility. Religious habituation programs such as *dhuha*, *tilawah*, early literacy, and strengthening discipline based on exemplary behavior have been proven to shape students' characters more holistically and consistently with research on moral and spiritual leadership in educational environments, which shows that the application of spiritual values through structured leadership can have a positive impact on the formation of students' religious characters (Ghazali *et al.*, 2025). Challenges in the form of diversity of thought and old habits are still encountered, but a persuasive approach through deliberation, personal assistance, and consistent role modeling

keeps the entire transformation process running smoothly. Thus, the integration of transformational leadership and Islamic values has proven effective in creating a school culture that is superior, religious, and adaptive to the times.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the leadership transformation at SMK Entrepreneur Indonesia Sragen runs comprehensively and is oriented towards strengthening school culture, teacher character, and student competence. The principal acts as a transformational leader who not only manages administration but also serves as a role model, motivator, and driver of change through the application of *Khulafaur-Rasyidin* leadership values, such as honesty, justice, trustworthiness, and wisdom. The application of these values has proven to have a positive impact on discipline, work ethic, teacher professionalism, and the formation of students' religious and moral character.

In addition, humanistic, collaborative, and coaching-based leadership strategies enable teachers and educational staff to feel valued, empowered, and ready to face the challenges of the modern curriculum and the needs of the industrial world. A conducive school environment, a consistent system of rules, and character building programs make the school culture more harmonious, transparent, and productive. Despite challenges such as resistance to change and differences in old mindsets, persuasive approaches, deliberation, and personal mentoring ensure the sustainability of leadership transformation in schools. With this, the integration between transformational leadership and Islamic leadership values has proven to be effective in creating schools that are excellent, religious, character-building, and adaptive to the changing times. This study emphasizes the importance of school principals as agents of change who are able to build a school culture based on morals, ethics, and professionalism, thereby improving the overall quality of vocational education.

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