# Principal's Strategy in Forming Student' Islamic Characters, Its Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Ones

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**Abstract.** This paper answers questions on   aprincipal's strategy to realize Islamic characters in students; supporting factors and inhibiting one, and the impacts of the implementation. To answer these questions, a qualitative paradigm with the  method  of a case study was used. Data collection that were used namely participant observation, in-depth  interview, and documentary study. The conclusions of this paper are: (1) The strategies  of the Principal at *SMP Islam Terpadu* (Integrated Islamic Junior High School) namely: motivating  the school staffs and teachers, and democratically involving them in school activities; (2) The supporting factors that support the application are good coordination  and cooperation with the school committees, solid team work, and   the facilities; and (3)The inhibiting factors are: various competency the teachers  have, and the lack of planning and controlling aspects of the Principal. 3. The impact of the application of Principal's management is that there is a change in behavior among alumni and students.

**Keywords:** Strategy; Principal; Islamic character

## 1  Introduction

Moral decadence among teenagers has become a worrying phenomenon. The swift currents of globalization and technological sophistication are thought to be accelerating the decline of morality among the nation's youth [1]. The short-term negative consequences of adolescent moral decline are crime and social deviance. The macro and long-term impact of all of this is the decline in the quality of the nation's human resources so that it threatens the development of civilization [2].

Therefore, education is the front line in forming noble characters and Islamic moral values for its students. It is hoped that through these educational institutions there will be a generation that is strong and good in science and technology and faith and piety [3]. It is in this context that principal and educational institutions play a role. According to experts, there are two things that need to be considered, namely as follows:

"First, the principal acts as a central force that drives school life, second, the principal must understand his duties and functions for the success of the school and have concern for the components in the school, especially in improving the quality of graduates." [4]

Oemar Hamalik, restoration in the world of education must be done from two sides, namely from within and outside the school institution. However, the most important thing is that the improvements are executed continuously and not just mere planning without real action [5].

The Integrated Superior Islamic Private Junior High School is one of the educational institutions that is very popular with the surrounding community where the school is located, this is due to the ability of the principal in building good management and communication with the school and its externals.

Even this school, including a school with administrative services is considered good, but based on the initial findings of the study, it turned out that the graph of student graduation achievement did not experience a significant increase, even though the principal's management was very good, so the researchers suspected that there was something unique about this school, which worth researching.

Based on this phenomenon, the researcher suspects that there is a problem in terms of the principal's strategy that has not been optimal in realizing the quality of graduates, namely students with Islamic character. Because of the plague, the researchers took the research title "The Principal's Strategy in Forming Islamic Character in Students at the Superior Islamic Junior High School."

## 2  Method

This paper uses a qualitative approach. This can be seen from the rules and arrangements applied, namely research procedures that produce descriptive, spoken or written data and observed behavior from the subjects themselves. The data obtained in the field based descriptive narrative sentences. This is as corroborated by the opinion of Bogdan and Taylor as quoted by Moleong who said that the core of qualitative research is data in the form of words and narratives [6]. The descriptive data were in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior as stated by Sugiono that the person can be used as a source of research [7].

The research subjects consisted of the Principal, the teachers, the staffs and the alumni. The data of the study were collected through in-depth interviews with the school Principal as well as the teacher councils  at the  SMP  Islam Terpadu. Moreover, data sources also came from residents  living  around  in  the  research  location.  The  data  were  also  collected  through observation of  the places, namely the location and school buildings which  can be a source of information. The   documentary study was done by collecting documents that supports this research. In other words, observations elaborated on matters relating to Islamic moral development activities at the school. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted by conducting questions and answers with informants in the field. Then the documentation is the data or documents supporting this research [8].

The data analysis used is an interaction data analysis model, in this case the data component is carried out simultaneously with the data collection process. After the data is collected, the three components of the analysis (data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing) interact [7]. The data analysis technique is described in the schematic below:
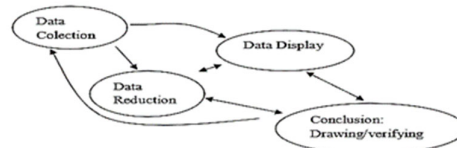
**Fig. 1.** Data Analysis Schematic.

## 3  Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Strategy of the Principals at *SMP Islam Terpadu* in Realizing Students with Islamic Character

This study found the fact that thePrincipal at the school had made various innovations in shaping the Islamic characters of the students. In school institutions, the principal is the leader who determines whether the school will progress or not (Yasin, 2011). Even Mulyasa agrees with this statement. He said that the principal is the actor behind everything that happens in the school he leads (Mulayasa, 2011). In realizing an Islamic character in students or in other words the quality of graduates, it must involve all existing stakeholders. Nor can it just be piled up on the school principal alone.

External elements needed by school principals for successful leadership are the school culture, school climate and stakeholder participation (Mulyasa, 2005). Here the principal is required to be visionary, namely being able to see the future as desired by the school. The principal must have sensitivity in guiding the success and quality of his students. The school Quality really depends on what the school does:

> "Success in achieving these educational goals is largely determined by the school principal, therefore the principal must be innovative and must be able to produce reforms." (Interview)

Some of these strategies can be analyzed as follows:

### 3.1.1 Maximizing the Planning of New Student Admission

Announcements regarding new student admission are made by the school. Schools are notified in advance by the service, regarding the date of socialization and announcement of new student admission.

> "Socialization is carried out by distributing brochures to all elementary schools in Regency and other accessible areas." (Interview with the school Principal)

Other informants provide additional information regarding this matter as follows:

> "We do socialization using electronic media through the website, then there are also newspapers, posters, banners, and brochures that are spread to several elementary schools through appointed officers." (Interview)

Specifically regarding the socialization media using banners, the school provided the following information:

> "Of course, we put the banners in a place that is seen by many people, so it can be accessed by the public and can persuade the public." (Interview).

### 3.1.2 Organizing the Implementation of School Excellence Programs
### 3.1.2.1 Tahfidz Juz 'Amma' Program

This memorization activity is included in the component of religious activities at school. The activity of memorizing juz 'amma is very different and as easy as teaching other subjects. Each student carries out the tahfidz juz 'amma activity using the same technique.

From the results of field observations and interviews with several caregivers, the Principal, and the coordinators and participants of tahfidz juz 'amma at the Integrated Superior Islamic Private Junior High School.

### 3.1.2.2 Worship Discipline Program at School

In this junior high school to support the Islamic character of students, the school prepares what is called discipline in carrying out worship such as *Dhuhur* prayer in congregation, *Dhuha* prayer, *tadarus* Al-Qur'an, memorizing the Koran and so on.

> "In this school, students are fostered to be disciplined in participating in any activities at our school including religious activities. It is directly controlled by the Principal of this school. Those activities give the students an understanding of what discipline is, and what the benefits of participating in worship activities are at this school. Whether it's in the form of praying in congregation at midday, or reading or memorizing the Koran." (Interview)

### 3.1.2.3 Character Development Program

Everything that is useful, of course, needs to be strived to become a reality. Such is the case with the character building of students in the school which, of course, needs to be realized immediately. The importance of character building is so important, that not only the Principal, even other teachers also commented as follows:

> "Children who are 11-15 years old need character formation and development, because with this character, the first step is the success of the school in educating the students here. Therefore, children who do not know the basics of religious knowledge well, will be taught in this school so that they understand. For example, students by giving lessons on how to pray and so on." (Interview)

### 3. 2 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Principal Strategies in Forming Students with Islamic Character in SMP Islam Unggul Teripadu

### 3.2.1 Supporting Factors
### 3.2.1.1 Cooperating with the School Committee

The school also has a positive and mutually helpful relationship with the school committee. From here we can see how the school committee also provides input for improvements in the school budget.

> "The biggest source of funds obtained by the Integrated Islamic Private Junior High School comes from the government and stakeholders are also there sometimes to help, yes." (Interview)

### 3.2.1.2 Solid Cooperation with Stakeholders

Based on an interview with the head of public relations at the school, he told the researchers as follows:

> "The school here is assisted by the Office and there is also a re-check." (Interview)

Observations of researchers in the field obtained data that the supporting factors for management at the school are stakeholders who work hand in hand in the process until the end. (Observation)

### 3.2.1.3 Facilities and Infrastructure

The principal exercises control to evaluate which school assets are good and which ones need to be replaced.

"In this case, the principal is thinking about how to complete the facilities and infrastructure in this school." (Interview)

## 3.2.2 Inhibiting Factor

The obstacles experienced by the Principal in improving the quality of graduates are, among others as follow:

### 3.2.2.1 Diverse Teacher Competencies

There are still some teachers who are not disciplined in their duties, come late and go home early. Such conditions are problem in the school, as one teacher put it:

"Actually, the Principal of the Integrated Superior Islamic Private Junior High School is enough to give warnings and sanctions to teachers who are not disciplined. Sometimes the teachers just ignore them. Maybe the school Principal in the future should pay more attention, and be more firm in giving sanctions and reprimands." (Interview)

### 3.2.2.2 Planning aspect is still weak

One of the obstacles to this school is the recruitment process for teaching staffs and teacher placement that are not in accordance with the competence of the teacher. The school staff recruitment planning process here is still not based on the school's needs. This has influenced the principal's planning regarding the problem of teacher recruitment and finally the Principal only accepts teachers who want to teach at the school. (Observation)

### 3.2.2.3 Difficulty in Controlling

To achieve the goals that have been set together in the school, the difficulty of controlling is one problem. This is as stated by the teacher who provided information to the researchers as follows:

"The problem of improving the quality of teachers' teaching carried out by the Principal in my observation of the principal's planning is not optimal. Because I see that our Principal doesn't really understand good school management, both in terms of recruitment of teaching staff in schools, as well as the placement of teachers in the subjects they will care for. I have never been directed by the principal on how to prepare lessons and lesson plans, therefore, I myself do not teach using lesson plans. I teach as it is just by referring to the textbook and even then with the lecture method and playing while learning, because I do not understand the procedure for making lesson plans (Interview result).

## 3.3 The Impact of Implementing the Principal's Strategy in Realizing Students' Islamic Characters

Based on the results of data collection with informants in the research field, changes in attitudes after character building in schools begin to appear in daily life at schools, which include:

- There are students, both active and alumni who wear the *hijab*. Never before had they worn their *hijab*;
- Decreasing cases of students violating school rules
- Almost never again students and alumni who smoke in the school environment or outside the school
- Seeing the impact of the research, it was obtained that the results of this study are in accordance with several relevant previous studies. That is to prove that there is indeed a good influence from the Principal's efforts to implement management strategies in the formation of Islamic characters in students

# 4 Conclusion

The strategy carried out by the principal at the Integrated Islamic Private Junior High School implemented in the school has two main points, namely: (1) the principal always motivates the staff and teacher councils in the school and (2) the principal always acts democratically by involving staff and teacher councils to make decisions, especially in improving the quality of alumni, (3) Planning the input of the New Student Admission process carefully, so that in the end it can produce quality alumni/output, and (4) Schools implement programs excellence for students during camping activities, so that alumni get valuable it experience that has an effect when they graduate.

The factors that support the application of principal management in improving the quality of graduate students at the school are: (1) The principal carries out coordination and cooperation with the committee; (2) Building work solidity with existing stakeholders; and (3) the principal's policy is also supported by existing facilities and infrastructure to support the quality of alumni. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are: (1) the quality of teacher teaching in the field varies widely, (2) the planning aspect of the principal still needs to be addressed, and (3) there is still a lack of control from the principal.

The impact of the implementation of the principal's strategy in improving the quality of student graduates at the school, namely: most of the students and alumni of the school have realized the importance of the quality of the quality of graduates with an Islamic character.

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