

# The Leadership of School Principles in Developing Religious School Culture at the Basic Education Level in Jagong Jeget District, Central Aceh District, Indonesia

Idayani <sup>1</sup>, Khairuddiin <sup>1</sup>, Bahrin <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Syiah Kuala University*

Jln. Teuku Nyak Arief, Darussalam, Banda Aceh, Aceh, 23111, Indonesia

DOI: [10.22178/pos.92-2](https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.92-2)

LCC Subject Category: L7-991

Received 26.04.2023

Accepted 29.05.2023

Published online 31.05.2023

Corresponding Author:

Idayani

[idayanimnoer04@gmail.com](mailto:idayanimnoer04@gmail.com)

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**Abstract.** Principal leadership is also required to create an excellent organisational climate so that all components of the school can play a role together to achieve the goals and objectives of the school organisation. The research objective was to determine the principal's leadership in developing a religious school culture at the basic education level in Jagong Jeget District, Central Aceh District. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects were school principals, teachers, staff, students, and parents in Jagong Jeget District. The results of the study found: 1) the principal's program in developing school culture consists of the vision, mission, goals and program targets; making plans for program activities; creating religious school culture programs in the form of reading asmaul husna, reading blessings, reading daily prayers, reading short surahs, dhuha prayers, reading yasin together, extracurricular tahfizh and so on. Second, the principal's strategy in developing a religious school culture is power, persuasion, and normative strategies. 3) Factors supporting the school principal's leadership in developing a religious school culture are adequate facilities and infrastructure and support from various parties that can support the creation of a religious school culture. At the same time, the inhibiting factors for developing religious school culture are inadequate water availability and limited places for ablution. The solution to these obstacles can be minimised.

**Keywords:** Education; Principal Leadership; Religious Culture.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious effort of parents or teachers to carry out self-development activities for students so that they become human beings by their life goals. Education can help humans raise their dignity compared to other humans who are not educated.

Author [1] explains that schools lead to the goals of national education, namely: 1) educating the life of the nation; 2) developing people who believe and fear God Almighty and have a noble character, have the ability and skills, physical health and spiritual, independent personality, and a sense of social and national responsibility.

A school is a place where teaching and learning activities take place. Learning and teaching are not only interpreted as knowledge transfer activities from teacher to student. High-quality schools or madrasas, both public and private schools, have unique characteristics. Among them, teachers

have a strong commitment towards the task, the principal has good leadership, the climate of school life is full of enthusiasm, the facilities and infrastructure are adequate, the relationship between the school and parents and the community is perfect, the students have a strong learning ethic, the teaching and learning process is full of passion, the teacher and student attendance rates are high, various extra and intra curricular activities, both teachers and students feel proud as citizens of their school.

The principal is described as someone with high expectations for staff and students. Principals are those who know a lot about their duties, and they set the rhythm for their school. This formulation shows the principal's critical role in driving school life to achieve goals. Studies of the success of school principals show that the principal determines a school's centre point and rhythm.

Authors [2] argue that successful principals are principals who understand the existence of a

school as a unique complex organisation and can carry out their role in leading the school. The principal's main task as a leader is to manage the situation, control the group's activities, organisation or institution and become the spokesperson for the group.

Principal leadership is also required to create an excellent organisational climate so that all components of the school can play a role together to achieve the goals and objectives of the school organisation, namely to form a faithful and pious generation.

In developing a religious culture in schools, principal leadership is critical to implement educational goals. Following Law No 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, article 3 reads: National Education functions to develop capabilities and form dignified national character and civilisation in the framework of educating the nation's life, aiming at developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, having noble character, being healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and being a democratic and responsible citizen.

Many factors influence the development of school culture. Based on preliminary research results at SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget and SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget, the school culture is not conducive. The problem faced is the lack of attention of the principal in developing school culture, and the principal does not care about his duties and functions as a leader.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with teachers and principals at SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, creating a school culture that cares for social, religious, nationalist, and independence and cares for the environment has not gone well. In the morning, no teachers are waiting for students at the gate. But one teacher always stands across the road to cross the students because this school is on the side of a major highway.

The observation also found that when doing group assignments in class, they did not work together but did the group assignments privately. Here also the students are less fond of reading.

SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget is located far from the sub-district centre. In this school, implementing a school culture that cares for social, religious, nationalist, self-sufficient and cares for the environment has not gone well. No teachers wait for students in the morning in front of the school.

SD Negeri 7 is located in a village in Jagong Jeget District. In 2022 this school will win every SMP 16 Central Aceh competition. However, at SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget, students still do not respect their elders. Some students are still playing when it is time to enter class.

## METHODS

This research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. According to the authors [3] that a qualitative descriptive approach is a research approach based on the philosophy of post-positivism used to examine natural object conditions (as opposed to experiments) where researchers are key instruments, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation, data analysis is inductive/qualitative. The research results emphasise meaning rather than generalisation.

Qualitative descriptive research aims to describe, explain, explain, and answer in more detail the problems to be studied by studying an individual, a group or an event as much as possible. In qualitative research, humans are the research instruments, and the results of the writing are in the form of words or statements that are the truth. The results of this study are expected to provide a complete and well-organised picture of specific components to provide valid final results.

The research subject is an essential part, which acts as a resource for collecting data for the completeness of the research. The issues in this study were school principals, teachers, and students at SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget, and SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget.

The determination of the research subjects above was based on several considerations, including the principal, teachers and students, which are essential elements in educational institutions concerning the leadership of the principal in the development of a religious school culture, all of which are processes in the administration of the principal in the development of a school culture that is religion at the elementary school level in Jagong Jeget District, Central Aceh District.

Data collection techniques are the most strategic steps in research because the study's primary purpose is to obtain data. According to the author [4] that: "Data collection techniques include observation techniques (observation), interview (interviews), documentation, and a combination of the three.

Data analysis techniques in this study used descriptive analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis techniques are procedures or ways of solving research problems by describing the state of the object under investigation (institutions, communities, factories, etc.) as they are based on facts.

According to the [3], data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation by organising data into categories, describing them into units, synthesising, compiling them into patterns, choosing which ones are important and which will be studied, and make conclusions so that they are easily understood by yourself and others.

Thus, the research report will contain data excerpts to illustrate the presentation of the information. The data comes from interview scripts, field notes, photos, videos, personal documents, notices or memos, and other documents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the results of research that researchers have conducted at SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget, and SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget, which concerns the leadership of the school principal in the development of religious school culture at the basic education level in Jagong Jeget District, Central Aceh District, several findings were obtained. These findings were analysed for the causes and consequences of the activities performed.

The principal's leadership is vital in developing a religious school culture. Regarding the administration of Mr Agus Priyanto (principal of SD Negeri 2), Mr Edi Suprpto (principal of SD Negeri 3), and Mr Tri Makno (principal of SD Negeri 7), the researcher concluded that the leadership performance of the principals that are the effective leadership performance of the school principal. Where is the principal effective school principals are a determinant of school quality progress in achieving school goals. An effective school is synonymous with effective school leadership as well. Effective school principals are not only those who have competence from within themselves and for themselves but also can place themselves, understand school goals, and influence teachers, staff, employees and the community to work together in harmony to achieve school goals that have been set determined.

The researcher draws this conclusion based on interviews with school principals, teaching staff, and staff at the schools which the researchers previously described. The researchers adjusted the indicators of effective school principal leadership from these interviews. As said by the author [5] that the effective leadership performance of school principals is as follows:

1. Empower teachers to conduct the learning process smoothly and productively.
2. Able to carry out tasks by a predetermined time
3. Can establish excellent and harmonious relations with the community and actively involve the community to achieve the school's goals.
4. Successfully apply the principles of leadership to the situation, conditions, and level of maturity of teachers and other employees at school.
5. Able to work together with the school management team;
6. Successfully implement the school's goals to the maximum, and be productive by predetermined provisions.

According to the author [6], leaders always foster a sense of brotherhood and unity. He tries to build the enthusiasm of the group members in carrying out and developing their workforce. Democratic leaders always try to stimulate their members to work productively to achieve common goals.

The author [5] argues that strategy is a tool to achieve long-term goals, a potential action requiring top-level management decisions and large amounts of corporate/organisational resources. In addition, it is also emphasised that the strategy affects the prosperity of the company/organisation in the long term and is future-oriented. The system has multifunctional and multidimensional consequences and needs to consider external and internal factors faced by the company/organisation.

In leadership, strategy is essential because it will determine the success of a goal or program. According to the author [7] explains that: the principal uses four methods in instilling students' religious character, namely strategy exemplary, habit formation, integration in classroom learning, and reinforcement in the form of reward and punishment.

From the explanation above, as well as the results of observations and interviews with researchers with the principal, teaching staff and school staff

can be concluded that the principal's strategy in implementing a religious school culture is through a power strategy. In this case, the role of the school principal is vital, including program planning, delegating tasks and authority, establishing good communication, coaching and evaluating programs, and renewing or innovating religious culture in schools. While the second and third strategies are persuasive strategy and normative strategy, in this case, habituation, exemplary, giving rewards and punishments, surveys, and student monitoring all require the support of all school members.

Religious value is one of the values of strengthening character education which is closely related to God Almighty and manifested through obedient attitudes and behaviour in carrying out the teachings of the religion adhered to, tolerance of other religious practices, and living in harmony with adherents of other faiths.

According to the author [8], several indicators can become religious values: Worship values; Jihad values; Moral values and discipline; Exemplary Values; Value of Trust and Sincerity.

According to the author [9], there are three religious values: faith and purity, honesty, and civility. From these religious values to become a religious culture can be realised through beliefs, activities, and religious symbols.

The values instilled are moral through daily habits such as a culture of smiles, greetings, politeness, and manners. Furthermore, the importance of discipline is also developed by arriving at the beginning of time so that you can carry out the habits before entering class. Then the value of sincerity in charity. Exemplary values are also developed because students imitate the behaviour of their teachers.

Implementing religious and cultural activities is, of course, inseparable from supporting and inhibiting factors. The following factors support implementing religious school culture: adequate facilities, infrastructure, and support from various parties.

According to the author [10], the supporting factors for fostering a religious school culture are the high trust of students' parents in the school principal in carrying out each coaching program. This factor is a separate key to the success of school institutions in carrying out school programs because they receive the full support of the parents of students.

From the opinion above, it can be concluded that with the support from parents, it can support the implementation of the programs that have been planned. Good communication between school institutions and students' parents is the key to success. It determines the students' achievements in learning activities at school. There is good cooperation between the principal and teachers in supporting school activities. The inhibiting factor in fostering religious culture is the lack of facilities and infrastructure.

The author [11] reveals that school culture is basically not empty of history; therefore, understanding the meaning of school history becomes necessary to create a positive school culture. Schools don't come suddenly and become big. It took a struggle to be able to realise the school. Wealth, energy, and thoughts are sacrificed to build a school. Not to mention the problems that come and go, starting from the problem of how to motivate children's enthusiasm for learning, school administration, and parents' complaints to how to make teachers prosperous. To overcome this problem, all school members must work hard to find a solution. Whereas in implementing the culture formed by the school, there are indeed obstacles and supporters of activities.

From the opinion above, it can be concluded that the supporting and inhibiting factors must exist, especially for large schools still developing. This inhibiting factor must be overcome and resolved by the school principal, then corrected and sought a way out. The school aims to find solutions and plan activities optimally to achieve the goals planned by the school. Things that support the implementation of school activities are well maintained and maintained.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research conducted at SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget and SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget regarding the leadership of the principal in the development of religious school culture, it can be concluded as follows:

The school principal's program in developing religious school culture, namely formulating programs including the vision, mission, goals and program targets; making program activity plans, creating religious school culture programs in the form of reading asmaul husna, reading blessings, reading daily prayers, reading short surahs of the

Quran, praying dhuha, reading Yasin together, extracurricular tahfizh and so on.

The strategy of the principals of the school in developing a religious school culture is to use power strategy, persuasive strategy, a normative strategy which includes: a) program planning; b) exemplary; c) participation and support in every religious activity; d) habituation; e) instilling religious, cultural values; f) evaluation; g) there is an annual update of the religious culture program; h) Good communication between all school members; i) gift reward for both teachers and students.

Factors supporting the principal's leadership in developing religious school culture, namely adequate facilities and infrastructure and various

parties' support, can help create a religious school culture. At the same time, the inhibiting factors for developing religious school culture are inadequate water availability and limited places for ablution. The solution to these obstacles can be adequately minimised.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Head of the Central Aceh District Education and Culture Office, the Principal of SD Negeri 2 Jagong Jeget, the Principal of SD Negeri 3 Jagong Jeget, and the Principal of SD Negeri 7 Jagong Jeget, who have provided research opportunities, and thanks to the supervising lecturers who have guided I am finishing this article.

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