



Integrating Traditional and Modern Leadership in Education: Strategies to Increase Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

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Community-based education management in Indonesia, especially in environments with strong cultures such as Madin Al-Hidayah Pasuruan, faces challenges in integrating traditional and modern leadership. The main problem is how to combine these two paradigms harmoniously to improve the effectiveness of management and sustainability of educational institutions. This study aims to analyze the process of integrating traditional and modern leadership in Madin Al-Hidayah and identify factors that influence its success. The approach used is qualitative with a case study, through primary data collection from in-depth interviews with 26 respondents including leaders, teachers, and community leaders, as well as secondary data from related documents and literature. Data were analyzed using thematic methods to identify patterns and relationships that support interpretation. The results of the study indicate that the success of integration depends on cultural sensitivity, leader capacity, and adaptive communication strategies. Strategies that successfully implement a gradual and participatory approach successfully strengthen the relationship between customary power and innovative principles of modern leadership. These findings suggest the need for capacity training, active community involvement, and the development of contextual and harmonious leadership models. This study contributes to the development of theory and practice of culture-based education management in Indonesia, while opening up opportunities for in-depth studies on leadership transformation in customary-based communities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, the role of leadership is very important in determining the success of achieving learning goals and institutional development (Lenning et al., 2023). In various communities, especially in community-based educational environments such as Madin Al-Hidayah Pasuruan, challenges arise in integrating two different leadership styles, namely traditional and modern leadership (Megheirkouni & Megheirkouni, 2020).

These challenges include conflicts in leadership approaches, resistance to change, and difficulties in balancing authority and participation. Imbalances and tensions arise in

the context of combining traditional, inherited, paternalistic leadership styles with modern, participatory, competency-oriented leadership styles (Dorsey, 2024). This often occurs within institutions where cultural values and innovative practices collide, creating barriers to improving educational effectiveness and institutional management (Rahim, 2023).

The main problem faced is how to combine the strengths of traditional leadership that has been proven successful with the principles of modern leadership that are more adaptive to changing times, in order to be able to increase the effectiveness of education in the Madin Al-Hidayah environment (Kezar, 2023). Many previous studies, such as works by Safonov et al., (2018) and Baker (2013), highlight basic theories of leadership, but most are general and have not specifically discussed the integration of the two in the context of religious-based community education such as in Pasuruan (Pilo et al., 2025).

Previous research also shows that the success of this integration is highly dependent on the cultural and structural context of the institution. For example, Anwar (2022) study emphasized that successful leadership development in educational institutions requires attention to local values and innovation. Previous research also indicates that transformative leadership, combined with a work culture that values and recognizes the needs of subordinates and encourages their aspirations for achievement, positively impacts educational institutions, both schools and madrasas (Hasanah & Maunah, 2023). On the other hand, previous research highlighted the challenge of dealing with resistance to change from those who still adhere to traditional principles (Giroux, 2024). Thus, this study focuses on how Madin Al-Hidayah, Pasuruan, can successfully implement a strategy that combines traditional and modern leadership.

The main focus of this research is to understand the dynamics of the integration of traditional and modern leadership styles and to identify the factors that support or hinder its success. The main questions that arise are: How can the two leadership styles be integrated effectively in the management of education in Madin Al-Hidayah, and what aspects have the most influence on its effectiveness? The two areas of concern are: (1) the role of local cultural values and modern leadership approaches, such as participatory, innovative, and competency-based leadership and (2) strategies for developing the capacity of leaders in the environment. The limitations of this study include the limited geographical focus in Madin Al-Hidayah and the level of success of the integration which is still early and qualitative.

The results are expected to provide practical guidance for leaders of community-based educational institutions to improve the effectiveness of management and achievement of the institution's vision and mission, while preserving local cultural values that remain relevant in the context of the times (Maki, 2023).

Theoretically, this study attempts to fill the gap in literature regarding the application of traditional and modern leadership integration in community-based educational environments in Indonesia, especially in areas such as Pasuruan. The position of this research is to emphasize aspects of practice and direct experience in the field, so as to be able to provide concrete recommendations that are in accordance with local cultural characteristics and needs. Thus, this research is expected to enrich the treasury of leadership management science and community-based education development in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of how the integration of traditional and modern leadership is implemented in the Madin Al-Hidayah Pasuruan educational environment (Sliwka et al., 2024). The conceptual framework of this study is based on two main theories: transformative leadership theory and organizational culture theory. Both theories are highly relevant to analyzing how local values can be synergized with managerial innovation to improve the effectiveness of educational institution management. A qualitative approach was chosen because it required in-depth exploration of experiences, perspectives, and actual practices in the field, thus enabling researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of the dynamics, supporting factors, and obstacles encountered during the integration process (Suraya et al., 2021).

Madin Al-Hidayah Pasuruan was chosen as the research location because it is considered representative of a community-based educational institution and possesses strong local cultural characteristics. This situation makes it the perfect setting to observe

how elements of traditional and modern leadership can be harmoniously combined. The selection of this location and case study was based on two main reasons: the institution's success and activeness in managing education based on local values, and the existence of leadership innovations that successfully integrate these two paradigms (Samson et al., 2020). The main units of analysis are the leaders of the institution, teachers, the surrounding community, and the entire process of managing educational activities that take place at the madrasah.

The research was designed as a case study with primary and secondary data collection. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 26 informants, including the head of Madin, teachers, community leaders, and students. The data collection process lasted for three months, starting from interviews, activity observations, to supporting documentation studies. Interviews and observations were conducted directly, with systematic field notes, in order to obtain in-depth data that is relevant to the focus of the study (Hancock et al., 2021; Jones, 2022).

The data analysis process was carried out thematically with steps of coding, classification, and interpretation of data based on the theory used. The data obtained were sorted and grouped into main themes such as traditional values, the application of modern leadership principles, the dynamics of the interaction of the two leadership styles, and factors that influence their success (Au-Yong-Oliveira & Costa, 2022). This analysis aims to identify patterns, relationships, and conformity with theory, as well as to clarify arguments and findings that support the development of an effective leadership integration model in the context of community-based education in Pasuruan (Clayton et al., 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In-depth interviews with 26 informants at Madin Al-Hidayah showed that the implementation of traditional and modern leadership strategies runs simultaneously and complements each other, but with varying degrees of success and challenges. The majority of administrators and community leaders confirmed that the local culture of collective and hierarchical nature remains the main foundation in the management of the institution. As stated by one administrator, "We still maintain the use of manners and customs that have been passed down from generation to generation, but we have also begun to adopt innovative leadership principles such as student empowerment and transparency". Meanwhile, leaders and teachers acknowledged that the implementation of modern leadership principles such as delegation of tasks, open dialogue, and active participation has begun to be implemented, although gradually and constrained by strong traditional culture which often limit the acceptance of new approaches, generate resistance, and make full adoption of modern practices difficult.

The results of the interviews also highlighted that the main factor influencing the success of this integration is the community's perception of the role of the leader. Several figures such as Mr. Ubaidillah stated, "The community still expects a form of leadership that is paternalistic and authoritative, but we are slowly showing that democratic and participatory leadership can actually increase the effectiveness of education and togetherness." On the other hand, many teachers and cadres expressed that the main challenge is resistance to change among traditional elements, which sometimes causes tension and uncertainty. However, the strength of collective culture and close family values remain major supporting factors in maintaining the stability of institutional management.

In terms of decision-making and communication processes, the data show a shift from an authoritarian model to a more inclusive and dialogical model, but this process is slow and requires time and special strategies. Most of the 26 respondents stated that the success of integration is highly dependent on the level of education and training of leaders and the application of adaptive and contextual leadership concepts.

Discussion

Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Interview results indicate that the successful implementation of traditional and modern leadership at Madin Al-Hidayah is a non-linear process. In this process, local cultural principles such as hierarchy and kinship serve as fundamental strengths. Meanwhile, modern leadership principles play a complementary role, enhancing the institution's effectiveness and innovativeness (Xu & Guo, 2024).

These findings are consistent with transformational leadership theory and organizational culture integration theory (Ahsan, 2024). Furthermore, this view is in line with Safonov et al., (2018) who stated that for leadership to be effective, leaders must have the ability to adapt to cultural contexts, maximize existing advantages, and overcome all barriers to change.

The findings of this study align with Anwar (2022) view, which asserts that successful leadership development in indigenous communities depends heavily on a deep understanding of local values and the ability to adapt to innovation. Furthermore, this study reinforces the classic work of Baker (2013), which emphasized the need for leaders to act as change agents wisely and sensitively to context. Therefore, this study concludes that the integration of traditional and modern leadership is not simply a simple blend of styles, but rather a highly dynamic process that requires careful consideration of the cultural characteristics and specific needs of the community (Scott, 2022).

Several other sources highlight that resistance to change, both ideologically conceptually and emotionally psychologically, is a common obstacle in innovation efforts (Alshwayat et al., 2023). According to several informants, the success of innovation implementation depends heavily on an effective communication strategy. This strategy must build trust and ensure active community participation in the change process. If this is ignored, the innovation risks failure and could even trigger tension and instability within the community.

This finding strengthens the position that the integration of the two leadership styles must be carried out gradually and sensitively to local cultural strengths. Capacity development and training for leaders and education managers are the main keys (Zhang et al., 2022). Adjustments to new approaches must be carried out contextually and actively involve local cultural elements as part of the transformation process.

The results of this study critically confirm that the success of integrating traditional and modern leadership at Madin Al-Hidayah is not solely determined by the application of innovative and open principles. Rather, such success depends heavily on sensitivity to local cultural values and deeply rooted traditions (Wiroonrath et al., 2024). This aligns with transformational leadership theory, which requires a leader to be an agent of change capable of inspiring the community to embrace innovation while upholding the existing culture (Valero-Pastor et al., 2021). Furthermore, organizational culture theory reinforces these findings by emphasizing that alignment between leadership style and local cultural characteristics is crucial to ensuring a harmonious and effective change process (Shuliang et al., 2024).

The results of this study provide an important contribution to the literature on community-based education management in Indonesia (Novrita et al., 2025), particularly in environments rich in culture and customs. These findings support the theory proposed by Northouse (2018), which states that leadership effectiveness is largely determined by the specific context and unique characteristics of the community.

Specifically, this study in Madin Al-Hidayah demonstrates that the integration of traditional culture and modern innovation must be carried out carefully and gradually within the local context (Zerbe, 2022). This conclusion also reinforces the findings of Anwar's (2022) study, which previously demonstrated that successful leadership development in indigenous communities depends heavily on the harmonious integration of local values.

Unlike previous studies that tended to focus on theory or conceptual models, this research provides detailed and specific empirical evidence regarding the dynamics occurring directly in the field (Smith et al., 2021). The key findings of this study emphasize that strategic steps to combine these two leadership styles must include training and capacity building for leaders, who are the primary drivers of change (Armanious & Padgett, 2021). This capacity building should not be limited to technical and managerial skills but should also encompass aspects of cultural sensitivity, with the goal of ensuring that innovation and change processes can be implemented without triggering excessive resistance.

Practically, the results of this study suggest the need to design specific leadership training programs. These programs should simultaneously instill family values and local customs while introducing collaborative and innovative leadership principles (Arifin et al., 2024). A leadership model that successfully integrates these two values is considered highly relevant and applicable not only to Madin Al-Hidayah but also to similar institutions

with strong cultural characteristics. In this way, community-based educational management can achieve two important goals: increasing the effectiveness of educational activities while strengthening the institution's identity and ensuring its long-term sustainability (Yamamura & Koth, 2023).

Overall, these findings conclude that the key to successfully integrating traditional and modern leadership in community education lies in the level of preparedness, cooperation, and social sensitivity of all parties involved (McNair et al., 2022; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). Going forward, educational leaders and managers must continuously evaluate and adjust their strategies to ensure the success of this integration is maintained. Furthermore, this study paves the way for further research that can delve deeper into the mechanisms of capacity development and the process of cultural transformation in the context of community-based education management in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of traditional and modern leadership styles at Madin Al-Hidayah Pasuruan has been successful, dynamic, and mutually supportive. However, this integration process still requires a more structured (systematic) strategy that is more deeply tailored to the local context. Through a qualitative approach and case studies, it was found that the success of this process is highly dependent on cultural sensitivity, the capacity of leaders, and the ability of the community to accept innovations that are in accordance with local values. These results strengthen the argument that the success of leadership development in a culture-based community environment must pay attention to the balance between tradition and innovation, as stated by the theory of transformational leadership and the theory of organizational culture. This study has considerable significance because it contributes to the development of a leadership model that integrates traditional and modern elements in a parallel and harmonious manner.

The main weakness of this study lies in the limited study range in one location and the qualitative approach, so that the results cannot be generalized widely. For future studies, it is recommended that researchers develop quantitative research with larger samples and expand research locations in various community-based educational institutions with different cultural characters. The implications of this study open up opportunities for the development of a more adaptive and contextual leadership model, and support efforts to increase the effectiveness of local culture-based and innovative education management simultaneously, so as to increase the sustainability and dynamism of community education institution management in Indonesia.

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