

## **Visionary Leadership of The Principal in The Implementation of Character Education at SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong Bogor Regency**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Character education in schools is a severe problem, so it is necessary to find its root and solution. Various policies and formulations of character education have been made by the government and implemented in each school, but so far have not shown the expected results. Different deviations in student behavior at each level of education are still found, such as brawls between students, promiscuity and immorality, drug abuse, and other irresponsible behavior. This study aims to reveal data related to the visionary leadership of the principal as a driver of the character education system at SMA PLUS PGRI Cibinong, Bogor Regency. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection tools using interview, observation, and documentation studies. Meanwhile, the triangulation technique was used to test the validity of the data. The results showed that the principal, with his visionary leadership, had been able to mobilize all components of the character education system at SMA PLUS PGRI Cibinong, Bogor Regency, to create a conducive school environment for the implementation of student character education. The success of this school has been recognized nationally so that it becomes a reference school or a comparative study destination for schools in Indonesia in the implementation of character education.*

**Keywords:** *visionary leadership; principal; character education*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

So far, the implementation of education in Indonesia is less severe in paying attention to character education, especially Islamic education. Whereas socio-culturally, the nation Indonesia is a multicultural nation, multi-ethnic and multi-religious (Nurul Rahmawati dan Muhammad Munadi, 2019: 59). Various educational activities are more dominated by programs oriented towards intellectual development or developing cognitive, logical thinking skills. This is undoubtedly a risky investment for the happiness of human life in the future. According to Mahatma Gandhi, education without character is a fatal sin. Likewise, Theodore Roosevelt in Husen et al. (2010: 2) states, "to educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." Character education is an essential and urgent program to develop and implement correctly in Indonesia.

According to Lickona (1991: 50), there are seven reasons why character education should be delivered: (1) It is the best way to ensure that children (students) have good personalities in their lives; (2) It is a way to improve academic achievement; (3) Some students cannot form a strong character for themselves in other places; (4) Prepare students to respect other parties or people and can live in a diverse society; (5) Departing from the root problems related to moral-social problems, such as impoliteness, dishonesty, violence, violations of sexual activities, and a low work ethic (learning); (6) Is the best preparation for the behavior in the workplace; and (7) Teaching cultural values is part of the work of civilization".

The legal basis for the implementation of character education in Indonesia is apparent, among others, as mandated in the 1945 Constitution, article 31 paragraph 3, namely "The government seeks and organizes a national education system that increases faith and piety and noble character in the context of the intellectual life of the nation... ". Furthermore, to carry out the mandate, it is formulated in Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, that: "The function and purpose of national education are to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to educate the nation's life and create the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

Then in the Master Book of National Policy on National Character Development 2010-2025, the Government of Indonesia emphasizes explicitly the need for character education for the nation for several reasons, namely: "(1) disorientation and not living up to the values of Pancasila; (2) the limitations of integrated policy tools in realizing the values of Pancasila;

(3) shifting ethical values in the life of the nation and state; (4) waning awareness of the nation's cultural values; the threat of national disintegration; and (5) the weakening of the independence of the nation".

All of the above legal foundations are a solid essential capital for the government to protect the potential of young human resources as the nation's next generation, which is very much needed in sustainable national development. This is because teenagers or students in schools are the generations that will receive the relay of action, so they need Islamic education to be prepared and fostered in a directed and sustainable manner so that they become superior, intelligent, skilled human resources, master science and technology well, have faith, have noble character and are independent, also instill an understanding of high values (Saihu and Baeti Rohman, 2019: 441). Character change in students is a process that must be supported (Rahendra Maya, 2013: 286).

To realize the above expectations, implementing serious character education, primarily based on Islamic character, is necessary for Indonesia. This is given the increasing prevalence of deviant behavior of adolescents and students in schools. These behavioral deviations are related to various fields of life, especially in the social, cultural, and moral areas. Some examples of social problems in adolescents include many who commit criminal delinquency, brawls between students, engage in promiscuity and immorality (Unang Wahidin, 2013: 258). Meanwhile, in terms of culture, it can be seen that today's teenagers are starting to lose their identity as easterners and are more influenced by western culture, which tends to be free, so that educational institutions, both Formal, Informal, and non-formal, have duties and responsibilities to internalize education character to his students (Rahendra Maya, 2017: 23) and M. Hidayat Ginanjar, 2013: 232). In addition, there are also problems of moral degradation that are increasingly worrying, such as lack of respect for others, being dishonest, trying to hurt yourself by using drugs, getting drunk, and so on. On this basis, the Ministry of National Education makes policy education that carries character education Ministry Strategic Plan National Education 2010-2014 (Rumba Triana, 2018: 106).

Lickona (1991: 52) reminds us that there are ten signs of a nation on the verge of collapse. These signs include: "(1) increased violence among adolescents, (2) poor use of language and words, (3) strong peer group influence in violent acts, (4) increased self-destructive behavior, such as the use of drugs, alcohol, and free sex, (5) the blurring of good and evil moral guidelines, (6) a decrease in work ethic, (7) the lower respect for parents and

teachers, (8) a shared sense of responsibility for individuals and citizens, (9) the culture of dishonesty, and (10) the existence of mutual suspicion and hatred among others.

Lickona's statement above reinforces the concerns of many parties about the lack of success of character education in Indonesia; Character building is the goal of national education (Rumba Triana, 2018: 106). This concern is very reasonable because more and more facts show the damage to students' morale in many schools, such as cases of bullying. This case is an example of teenagers or students who lack empathy for others. A junior high school student in Bekasi hanged herself because she could not stand the taunts of her friends as the son of a porridge seller. Genk Nero from Pati carried out a more sadistic act; they consisted of a group of girls who committed violence against their first-year students or anyone who dared to disturb their gang.

The events above are just a few of the cases of bullying that are reported in the media, and ironically, these events occur in the educational environment. However, of course, there are many other cases of bullying that happen in the academic environment and should be watched out for. This phenomenon of violence occurs at the school level and in universities. Of course, it is still apparent in memory the events that happened in the Institute of Domestic Government (IPDN) with the climax of the death of a Praja due to being mistreated by his seniors in the campus environment.

The explanation above shows a gap between the expectations of various policies and the implementation of character education in schools with the reality of student behavior and educational output, which is still far from expectations. Many factors certainly cause this condition, but the principal's leadership factor deserves attention; the implementation of character education in schools is not enough with a good program or curriculum content but requires a figure who can inspire and move all parties or elements involved. The presence of a visionary principal is a determining factor in character education that can bring all aspects towards the expected goals. Malaysia (2013: 67) reveals that: "Leadership of the principal is one of the factors that can encourage the realization of the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives through programs that are carried out in a planned and gradual manner. Principals are required to have strong management and leadership abilities to make decisions and implement character education initiatives to improve school quality".

Based on the above thought, the authors are interested in conducting research focusing on the visionary leadership of the principals in the implementation of character education. This is seen as essential to inspire various parties, especially school leaders, to improve their vision and performance in the implementation of character education.

## **B. METHODS**

In connection with the data needed in this study in the form of a narrative or a description of words that can describe the research subject holistically, the way that is considered appropriate is using a qualitative descriptive method. This research is related to the visionary leadership of the principal in the implementation of student character education at SMA PLUS PGRI Cibinong, Bogor Regency. The determination of the school to be the subject of research with the consideration that it has become a national reference in the implementation of character education so that many school leaders from various regions in Indonesia visited to conduct comparative studies. Interviews, observation, and documentation studies were used as a data collection tool. At the same time, the data sources in this study involved the principal, vice-principal, several teachers, and several students. Then, triangulation techniques were used to test the validity of the data. This technique is used to test the validity of the data based on the method used and test the validity of data from various data sources by cross-checking. Before the data is presented, data reduction is first carried out; this is done to remove data that is considered unimportant or irrelevant. After the information is presented, data interpretation and data analysis are carried out before concluding.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It is known that the implementation and development of character education at SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong is based on the vision of the Principal, namely Dr. H. Basyarudin Thayib, M.Pd., who, since he was appointed as the 3rd principal in 1983, wants to make SMA PGRI Cibinong as one of the leading private high schools in West Java and one of the meccas of national education. Therefore, the first step he took was to change the name of SMA PGRI Cibinong to SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong, which was inaugurated on December 11, 2003, by Prof. Dr. H. Iim Wasliman, M.Pd, M.Si as the Head of the West Java Provincial Education Office.

The Principal said that to realize the above objectives, SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong faced strategic issues as follows.

1. The increasing demands of parents on quality education services.
2. Increasing demands for the use of ICT in education management for effectiveness and efficiency in achieving educational goals

3. The higher the number of brawls between students in the City and Regency of Bogor, thus demanding schools to be more severe in implementing character education.
4. More and more negative information that is easily accessible to students and encourages changes in values in society so that it becomes a burden on the mental development of students (children/adolescents),
5. The increasingly heavy influence of global life in various life demands adjustments in content and educational approaches.
6. Increasing demands for quality improvement, efficiency, competitiveness, and relevance of graduates to the needs of the world of work

Based on the above, SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong, in its management activities, has taken strategic steps by formulating a vision: "Excellent in Quality and Achievement, Global Insight, Religious, Entrepreneur, As Agent of Change and National Cultural Education." The vision formulation begins with a series of SWOT analysis steps carried out by considering scientific principles, including factual, measurable, and objective.

This vision is a hope for the future that through education that is superior in quality and achievement, it is hoped that it will be able to create generations who are religious, intelligent, independent, and able to compete in global life so that they can become agents of change that remain rooted in their culture. The vision also indicates the seriousness and strong commitment of the Principal to create generations of noble and challenging character in facing global competition based on faith and piety, knowledge and technology, national culture, and local wisdom.

To realize the above vision, SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong made a realistic and operational mission as follows:

1. Professional school management.
2. Increasing the quantity and quality of learning support facilities and infrastructure.
3. Improvement and development of professional competence of teachers.
4. Development of student learning skills (learning skills).
5. The use of information technology in supporting the learning process.
6. Instilling the values of faith and piety for all school members and displaying them in all activities.
7. The application of modern learning methods by the new concepts and paradigms of education.
8. Consolidation of identity as a PGRI educational institution.

9. Strengthening the implementation of school cultural chess, namely: learning culture, discipline culture, clean culture, and a culture of unity and brotherhood

The findings above show that the mission of SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong almost entirely refers to character education efforts, especially in points (6), (8), and (9). The mission has been socialized and implemented well by all school members in their daily activities. The socialization of the vision and mission of SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong, among others, was installed in the teacher's office, in the school environment, and on social medtask school members carry out the mission, or in other words, all school activities are the implementation of the school's mission. This shows that SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong has a Vision and Mission that is understood and implemented by the principal, teachers, and all school members.

To ensure that all programs in carrying out the school's mission are carried out properly by all school members, SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as a reference in carrying out the duties of every school member. In addition, all school program implementation is monitored and evaluated correctly. To carry out monitoring and evaluation, SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong has a Quality Control Group, which supervises through daily, weekly, monthly, and semester monitoring of the course of learning activities. In addition, evaluation of teacher performance and the achievement of the school's work program is also carried out to obtain information as feedback and become the basis for making improvements and developments. For school residents who violate the rules, the principal consistently and objectively provides sanctions, starting from a light warning punishment to severe punishment in the form of termination of work for those who commit repeated violations.

The results of the hard work of all parties, especially school residents, now SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong has become a national reference school in character education, thus becoming the object of comparative studies from various schools in Indonesia. However, the strength of implementing all these missions lies in the visionary leadership of the principal. According to Suwatno (2020), "The principal is the most central figure in school management. The importance of this position must be seriously realized by every school principal, regardless of the level of education. The principal is like a train locomotive. He is the main variable determining the school's performance he leads. Whether the school progresses, stagnates, or even declines, the three probabilities are strongly influenced by the role of the principal. So, the first important point that must be realized is the urgency of the position and role of the principal in determining school performance and progress".

Visionary leadership is a leadership style oriented towards changes that occur in the future. Therefore Mutohar (2013) defines "visionary leadership as the ability possessed by school principals in predicting future changes related to their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced, to advance educational institutions and the ability to influence others through the interaction of individuals and groups as a form of cooperation within the organization to achieve the goals that have been set effectively and efficiently. Similarly, Komariah and Triatna (2010:121) interpret that: "Visionary leadership is the behavior of leaders with the ability to create, formulate, communicate, transform and implement ideal thoughts that come from themselves or the results of social interactions regarding the organization in the future and goals that must be realized through the commitment of all personnel. In line with the above opinion, Robbins (2001: 195) defines that: "Visionary leadership is the ability of leaders to create and articulate a realistic, trustworthy, attractive vision of the future for an organization or organizational unit that continues to grow and improve until at the moment."

It can be concluded that visionary leadership is the behavior of leaders who are oriented towards future changes by having the ability to predict, innovate, formulate, socialize, and implement their ideas by inviting and growing awareness of all personnel in the organization to move towards achieving the goals that have been set effectively and efficiently.

The school's vision and mission are not just expressions or rhetorical sentences with moral nuances and ideals but must emerge from the ethical awareness of a leader or principal. The school's vision should ideally be the call of the principal's soul to improve the condition of the school he leads in the next few years. According to Andriani (2008:55), "The creation of this vision is based on the results of environmental observations, as well as intuition in predicting trends in changes in the school environment. Therefore, a school vision is usually formulated by top management, namely principals who have sufficient ability and experience in managing schools. This does not rule out the possibility of discussion in creating the vision. The strategic vision of this school serves as a direction for school change.

So, in formulating the vision and mission, ideally, it involves the elements responsible for making it happen, namely the principal, teacher representatives, and school committees. The formulation of the vision must be rational, broad, and lead to the ideal situation so that it is possible to be realized. However, all strategic decisions should be based on an analysis of the internal and external environment. Then the vision must be disseminated to all school members to realize the vision jointly. Related to this, the visionary leadership of the principal



is a determining factor in the implementation of character education in schools. According to Heryanto (2014): "The principal is the key to the school's success. The principal's success in carrying out his roles and functions is determined by how much knowledge and how deep his understanding of leadership science is and how his leadership behavior is.

Related character education efforts in schools, visionary principals can formulate various ideas into long-term vision, mission, and character education programs, then socialize them, and together with all school members, carry out character education programs seriously and consistently. A visionary principal will provide guidance, direction, and control and evaluate every implementation of education, including character education. Seth Kahan (2002) explains that "visionary leadership involves extraordinary abilities and expertise to offer future success and glory. A visionary leader can anticipate all events that may arise, manage the future and encourage others to act in the future correctly".

Based on the research findings above, it shows that the principle of SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong is a visionary leader who can formulate, socialize, and implement his ideas, both the results of reflection and the results of discussions with all school members regarding the conditions and organizational goals that must be realized in the future through the commitment of all personnel. Hoover (2003) in Hidayat (2012:12) that: "Success in the process of forming the character of an educational unit graduates, will be determined not by the strength of the learning process, but will be determined by the strength of its management, which implies that the quality of graduates character has a strong dependence on the quality of school management. This is because the process of character formation should be integrated into various forms of school activities".

Similarly, Wibowo (2013:6) reveals that: "so that the implementation of character education can be effective and efficient, the right solution is to implement management, especially effective and efficient management of character education in schools. Effective management of character education is important so that all components of education in schools can synergistically support the application of character education". Zarkasi in Mulyasa (2013:6) also reveals that: "Character education is closely related to the management of the institution. In question, the institution's management is how character education is planned, implemented, and controlled in educational activities adequately. The management includes, among others, the values that need to be instilled, curriculum content, learning, assessment, educators, and education staff. Thus, institutional management is one of the effective media in character education".

It has become imperative for every school to be more severe in implementing character education through a management approach. However, good character education management is only possible if a visionary principal manages it.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

That the implementation of character education in schools is not enough to rely on a planned character education learning program, including well-defined program content, but more importantly, the existence of a visionary principal who has the foresight and can mobilize all educational resources to achieve character education goals that have been set, so, the visionary leadership of the principal is the key factor to achieving maximum results in the implementation of character education in schools.

The principal's visionary leadership can predict future changes and take appropriate actions to achieve progress, both with his intuition and analytical skills regarding the organization's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and threats facing the organization.

SMA Plus PGRI Cibinong has now become a national reference school in character education, thus becoming the object of comparative studies from various schools in Indonesia. This proud achievement is undoubtedly the result of the hard work of the entire school community. However, the core strength that has been able to make dreams come true lies in the visionary leadership of the school principal.

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