MANAGING RESISTANCE IN SCHOOL/MADRASAH MANAGEMENT TOWARDS THE GLOBAL ERA

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Abstract

This study aims to identify attitudes and factors influencing resistance to change within educational organizations, as well as to formulate effective strategies for managing such resistance so that changes can be accepted and successfully implemented by all stakeholders in schools or madrasahs. This research employs a library research approach. The results indicate that school or madrasah management must be sensitive and continuously improve their ability to understand and control resistance to change. Furthermore, school or madrasah principals play a strategic role in guiding the organization toward positive transformation.

Keywords: Resistance, School/Madrasah Management

INTRODUCTION

Change is an inevitable phenomenon in every organization, whether it originates from internal or external factors. Organizations must continuously adapt and evolve in order to survive in an ever-changing and dynamic environment. In the context of organizational change, external factors such as technological advancement, social transformation, and globalization serve as the main drivers that demand innovation and transformation (Burnes, 2017). The principle of change in Islam is also emphasized in Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 11, which states that change will only occur if there is an effort from the individual or group itself, underscoring the importance of awareness and concrete action in the process of transformation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017). The era of globalization presents complex challenges, particularly in the education sector. Cultural shifts, changes in values, and rapid advances in information and communication technology compel educational institutions to innovate in order to remain relevant and capable of producing competitive human resources (Marginson, 2016). Globalization and free trade have intensified competition in the global labor market, requiring education quality to be enhanced so that graduates are prepared to compete internationally (Altbach, 2018). However, an OECD (2019) report indicates that the quality of education in Indonesia still lags behind that of neighboring countries, posing a serious challenge to national education development. In addition, the low level of social capital, which includes elements of trust and cooperation, serves as an obstacle to implementing change in schools (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2021). Field observations show that schools in rural areas, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels, have not yet fully accepted or optimally implemented the 2013 Curriculum. Fear of leaving the comfort zone and uncertainty about change have led to significant resistance among teachers and school staff. Attitudes toward change vary from acceptance and rejection to neutrality and apathy which slows the pace of adaptation and innovation in schools (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). Therefore, this study focuses on understanding and managing resistance to change within educational institutions, particularly schools located in rural areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of modern Islamic boarding school (pesantren) education in Indonesia has existed long before the arrival of the Dutch, continuing the legacy of the traditional madrasah system (Steenbrink, 1986). The main difference between madrasahs and pesantrens lies in their educational systems. Furchan (2004) explains that madrasahs implement a formal education system with a national curriculum, structured class schedules and examinations, and facilities such as desks and blackboards similar to Western-style schools. In contrast, pesantrens

apply a non-formal education system, relying on local curricula, unstandardized lessons, and often no examinations for student evaluation. Historically, the organizational structure of madrasahs has followed a traditional model an organization composed of groups of people connected within a defined hierarchy, acting according to directives to achieve managerial goals. Rice Jr., George, and Bishoprick (1971) suggest that scientific management can assist managers in designing subordinates' work more effectively and productively. In Indonesia, madrasahs play a crucial role, especially in regions with strong Islamic communities. The number of madrasahs, particularly private ones, even surpasses that of general schools at the secondary level. In efforts to improve educational quality, the School-Based Management (SBM) system has long been implemented to grant greater autonomy to schools. However, in practice, rural schools still face challenges in quality management, both in institutional governance and graduate competence. Many school principals remain unable to anticipate, respond to, accept, and adapt to change, even though they are expected to act as agents of change (Robbins, 1991; Winardi, 2009).

Resistance to change is a common phenomenon, as individuals generally seek security and comfort. Fear of threats, punishment, and economic impact often leads people to reject change. Robbins (1991) explains that individuals form perceptions that are difficult to alter and tend to ignore information conflicting with their existing beliefs. Maxwell and Kasali (2010) identify several causes of resistance to change, including changes that do not originate from within the individual, disruptions to routine, fear of the unknown, unclear objectives, fear of failure, large-scale transformation, negative mindsets, and a lack of appreciation from followers. Research by Tarsan (2012) reveals that factors contributing to resistance in schools include educators' and staff members' fear of using English in international-standard contexts, limited technological skills, disorganized administration, and reluctance to abandon old habits. Schools also resist transitions from national to international standards due to funding limitations, workforce shortages, inadequate facilities, low community participation, and government pressure.

According to Supriyanto (2009), the sources of organizational reluctance toward change include structural inertia, group inertia, threats to established expertise and power, and competition over resource allocation. This reluctance tends to be stronger in long-established organizations. Winardi (2005) adds further factors such as structural stability encompassing hierarchy, subgroups, and rules that maintain order self-centered functional orientation, and a deeply rooted organizational culture that is resistant to transformation. To overcome resistance to change, Kusdi emphasizes the importance of communication and socialization. Comprehensive and accurate information is essential to dispel misunderstandings and fears. Although the process of socialization requires time, it is vital to ensure that change is accepted and effectively implemented. In conclusion, this literature review highlights the complexity of challenges surrounding change in madrasah education particularly in rural areas along with the underlying factors contributing to resistance and the strategies necessary for effective management.

METHOD

This study employs a library research approach as the primary method for data collection and analysis. According to Mestika Zed (2003), library research is a series of systematic activities that include reading, note-taking, organizing, and processing literature or written materials relevant to the research topic. This approach was chosen because the focus of the study is to analyze and examine theories, concepts, and previous research findings related to Islamic boarding school (pesantren) education, madrasah education, and the dynamics of organizational change in educational institutions. Data collection in this research was conducted using the documentation method. Documentation, as described by Arikunto (2013), is a technique of collecting data through searching and gathering documents, archives, books, journal articles, research reports, and other written sources relevant to the research problems. These documents were analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of various aspects of pesantren and madrasah education, factors contributing to resistance to change, and strategies for managing change within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia.

The research process was carried out through the following stages:

a. Identification and selection of relevant and credible literature sources, including books, scientific journals, articles, official reports, and other related documents.

b. Data collection from these sources through in-depth reading and recording of important information that supports the research objectives.

c. Classification and categorization of data based on key themes such as the history of pesantren education, differences between pesantren and madrasah education systems, change management, and resistance to change in educational institutions.

d. Critical analysis of the existing literature by comparing various theories and previous research findings to identify gaps, consistency, and practical implications, followed by the systematic and structured preparation of the research report based on the results of the literature review.

This library research method enables the researcher to obtain in-depth and valid data without conducting primary field data collection. However, the accuracy and relevance of the findings largely depend on the quality and credibility of the literature used. Therefore, the researcher applied strict selection criteria in choosing the references to ensure that this study provides significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field of pesantren and madrasah education..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Resistance to change is a major challenge faced by organizations, including educational institutions such as pesantrens and madrasahs. Based on theoretical and practical reviews, several effective strategies can be adopted by change initiators and organizational leaders to manage such resistance. First, communication and socialization play a crucial role in overcoming resistance. Kusdi (2009) emphasizes that incomplete or inaccurate information can strengthen opposition to change. Therefore, comprehensive and continuous socialization is essential, even though it requires considerable time. The purpose of this socialization is to provide all stakeholders with clear and accurate understanding, thereby reducing uncertainty and fear arising from change. Second, active participation from all parties in the change process is highly recommended. When change initiators lack a complete picture or face resistance from influential individuals, involving them directly in planning and implementing the change can increase their sense of ownership and commitment. This participatory approach helps reduce resistance because those who initially oppose the change feel that their voices and interests are being considered.

Third, providing support and facilities for individuals who experience difficulty adapting to change is an effective strategy. Change often demands new competencies and skills; therefore, support in the form of training, resources, and mentoring is essential to facilitate smooth adaptation and minimize resistance. Fourth, negotiation and agreement serve as alternative strategies when certain parties express objections to change. By offering compensation or specific benefits, resistant individuals may become more receptive to the change. However, this approach requires significant time and financial resources, particularly if negotiations are prolonged or complex. Fifth, manipulation and coalition building can be used as a last resort when other methods fail. Although these tactics may effectively reduce resistance, they carry the risk of creating distrust and resentment among organizational members, and thus must be applied cautiously and with careful consideration.

On the other hand, leadership plays a vital role in dealing with resistance. A leader must act as a pilot, guiding all members of the organization toward shared goals despite numerous obstacles. According to Vanim (2010), leaders should perform several strategic functions, including: encouraging members to identify and solve problems collectively; establishing change agents who act as facilitators and motivators; transforming employees' mindsets to be more open to change; developing a clear and measurable strategic blueprint; mobilizing necessary resources, funds, tools, and skills; and ensuring active involvement of members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the change process. Field experiences indicate that a combination of these strategies can significantly reduce resistance and improve the success rate of change implementation in pesantren and madrasah educational institutions. Effective communication, active participation, continuous support, and visionary, inclusive leadership are key to managing the complex dynamics of organizational transformation. In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of resistance and the application of appropriate strategies form a strong foundation for promoting positive transformation in Islamic educational environments, particularly in facing the challenges of modernization and globalization.

CONCLUSION

Change occurs throughout all aspects of a school or madrasah organization. These institutions must remain resilient and continue to exist amid ongoing transformation. However, every effort to implement change often encounters resistance. There is nothing inherently alarming about such resistance; rather, it generally stems from a lack of understanding of the benefits that change can bring. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of organizational leaders to address and manage all forms of opposition to change. Consequently, school or madrasah management must remain sensitive and continuously enhance their ability to understand and control resistance to change. The principal plays a strategic role in leading the organization toward positive transformation and ensuring that change efforts contribute to long-term institutional improvement.

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