

## LEADERSHIP STRATEGY IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PAUD MANAGEMENT IN MUSI RAWAS DISTRICT, SOUTH SUMATERA

Dwi Puji Hastuti<sup>1</sup>, Siti Inganah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Program Studi Magister Pedagogi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

<sup>2</sup>Program Studi Magister Pendidikan Matematika, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

Email: [dwipujihastuti020890@gmail.com](mailto:dwipujihastuti020890@gmail.com), [inganah@umm.ac.id](mailto:inganah@umm.ac.id)

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### Abstract

Overall, this study confirms that leadership strategies play a crucial role in improving the quality of PAUD management. The implementation of transformational, participatory leadership, focus on professional development, effective communication, and efficient and accountable resource management are key factors that contribute to the creation of a quality PAUD environment that is conducive to early childhood development. This study aims to fill the gap in leadership strategies in an institution and contribute to the understanding of effective leadership practices in improving the quality of PAUD management. The research was conducted in Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra with the research subjects being the Principals of TK Aisyiyah 8 Musi Rawas. The things explored in this study were leadership strategies in improving the quality of Early Childhood Education management. The research techniques used in this study were observation, document studies, and in-depth interviews. The data analysis used was descriptive analysis, namely an analysis that provides an overview of the things that have been studied. While the method used in this study was a qualitative analysis method. The analysis was carried out through several stages, namely: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, to obtain data validity, the researcher used triangulation techniques, namely by using various methods to collect the same data from various data sources. The data was obtained from the TK PAUD Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal institution, Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra Province. In Musi Rawas Regency, Tugumulyo District, the Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Teachers Association has strategies in its leadership, namely by conducting parenting activities, regular meetings every 2-3 months with the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership, Aisyiyah Regional Leadership, IGABA (Head, Educators, Educators), holding joint activities, namely holding Hajj Manasik for Early Childhood, Learning outside of school, namely in the Library, Police Station, learning with the Outing Class practice method and aligning the vision, mission and goals of the school, so that the achievement of the learning objectives provided is in accordance with the goals and ideals of the Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah Organization itself so that it can be achieved adequately for the progress of the nation and provide quality Early Childhood Education.

Keywords: *Strategy, Leader, Improving Quality*

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for holistic child development. During this period, children experience rapid growth and development in various aspects, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. Quality learning experiences in PAUD will shape children's ability to learn, adapt, and interact with their environment in the future. (Rokhadi, 2019). Therefore, the provision of quality PAUD services is very important to ensure that every child gets the optimal opportunity to develop.

The quality of PAUD management refers to the entire process of organizing and managing PAUD programs that include various aspects, such as curriculum, teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, administration, and parental and community involvement. Good management quality will create a conducive, safe, and stimulating learning environment for children, thus supporting the achievement of PAUD education goals effectively. Conversely, poor quality management can hinder child development and reduce the effectiveness of PAUD programs. (Yusutria, 2019). Thus, the quality of PAUD management is closely related to the quality of education and child development.

The current condition of the quality of PAUD management in Indonesia still faces various challenges. Nationally, there is still a significant gap in the quality of PAUD services between regions, especially between urban and rural areas. Many PAUD institutions operate with limited resources, both in terms of funding, facilities and infrastructure, and available educational facilities. (Widiarto, 2020). These limitations often have an impact on the quality of the learning programs provided. In addition, another challenge faced is the lack of adequate qualifications and training for PAUD educators. Many PAUD teachers do not have a relevant educational background or have not received sufficient training to develop their competence in managing effective learning. The existing PAUD curriculum also still needs to be optimized to be more relevant to the needs of child development and local context. (Patandung & Panggua, 2022).

Data or statistics related to the quality of PAUD management in Indonesia can be obtained from various sources, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Central Statistics Agency, and the results of research and evaluation conducted by related institutions. This data can include information on the number of accredited PAUD institutions, the percentage of PAUD teachers who have certain qualifications, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and the learning outcomes of PAUD children. Leadership plays a key role in determining the quality of PAUD management. An effective leader is able to mobilize and direct all resources in the PAUD institution to achieve common goals. Good leadership will create a positive work climate, motivate educators to continue to improve their competence, and build good cooperation with educators, education personnel in the institution, parents and the community around the institution or school.

There are various leadership styles and strategies that can be applied in the context of PAUD, including transformational leadership, participative leadership, and situational leadership. Each leadership style has its own characteristics and advantages, and its effectiveness can vary depending on the context and situation faced. (Rifa'i & Hudrat Efendi, 2016). However, in general, effective leadership in the context of PAUD is leadership that is able to: a) Establish a clear vision and goals and communicate them to all relevant parties, b) Build a solid and collaborative work team, c) Provide support and motivation to educators, d) Encourage innovation and creativity in developing learning programs, e) Build effective partnerships with parents and the community, f) Conduct continuous evaluation and improvement.

Although the role of leadership in education management has been widely studied, research that specifically examines leadership strategies and their impact on the quality of PAUD management is still relatively limited. Previous studies tend to focus on aspects of PAUD management in general, such as curriculum, teaching staff, or facilities and infrastructure, without linking them in depth to the role of leadership. Therefore, there are several specific aspects of leadership strategies that need further study in the PAUD context. For example, how do certain leadership strategies affect the motivation and performance of PAUD teachers? What leadership strategies are effective in overcoming the challenges faced by PAUD institutions with limited resources? This study aims to fill this gap and contribute to the understanding of effective leadership practices in improving the quality of PAUD management.

## Research methods

The research was conducted in the Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra, with the research subjects being the Principals of Aisyiyah Kindergarten in Tugumulyo District, Musi Rawas Regency. The things explored in this study are leadership strategies in improving the quality of Early Childhood Education management. Research techniques used in this study are observation, document study, and in-depth interviews. The data analysis used is descriptive analysis, namely analysis that provides an overview of the things that have been studied. While the method used in this study is a qualitative analysis method. The analysis is carried out through several stages, namely: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2022). Therefore, to obtain data validity, researchers use triangulation techniques, namely by using various methods to collect the same data from various data sources. Data obtained Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal PAUD Kindergarten institution, Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra Province.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quality Early Childhood Education is a school that is awaited by the community, because the community wants to provide quality schools, so that their children get the best education from these schools. (Rokhadi, 2019). Sallis also stated that there are 13 criteria for quality schools, namely: (1) customer focus (2) Problem Solving, (3) Resources Quality (4) Strategy Quality, (5) Feed back on Customer Complaints, (6) Planning and Policy Strategy, (7) Improvement Process, (8) Creativity, (9) Responsibility, (10) Evaluation Strategy, (11) Maintaining Quality (12)

Culture Work Quality, (13) Continuous Quality Improvement. The criteria for quality schools above are a quality management system that is often used as a reference by educational institutions to improve the quality of their institutions. (Sallis, 2014) Based on the results of in-depth interviews with several principals at Aisyiyah Kindergarten, Tugumulyo District, Musi Rawas Regency, Aisyiyah Kindergarten 1, Aisyiyah Kindergarten 4, Aisyiyah Kindergarten 6, Aisyiyah Kindergarten 8 and Aisyiyah Kindergarten 16, agree and strongly agree with the strategy of transformational leadership, participatory leadership, leadership focused on professional development, effective communication and efficient and accountable resource management. Because with these strategies can improve the quality of management in early childhood education, which can make the quality of quality in the management system in an institution, especially in the Kindergarten institution at Aisyiyah Kindergarten, Tugumulyo District, Musi Rawas Regency.

The results of the study show that there are several leadership strategies that significantly contribute to improving the quality of management of Early Childhood Education in Musi Rawas Regency, Tugumulyo District, especially Aisyiyah Kindergarten at the Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Teachers Association:

1. Transformational Leadership

The principal/manager of PAUD (Kindergarten and Playgroup) who adopts a transformational leadership style, which is characterized by a clear vision and mission in the school or institution where in Tugumulyo sub-district itself the Principals agree that the Vision and Mission in Aisyiyah Kindergarten are the same so that the objectives of the learning provided are in accordance with the objectives and ideals of the Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah Organization itself so that they can be achieved well for the progress of the nation and provide quality Early Childhood Education.

The Vision, Mission and Objectives are:

**Vision**

"Preparing an Islamic Generation that is Intelligent, Characterful, Creative, Independent, Self-Confident, Physically and Spiritually Healthy, with Excellent Achievements and Blessed by Allah SWT"

**Mission**

- ☞ Equipping Children with Islamic Educational Values
- ☞ Creating an Islamic, Scientific and Natural Learning Environment.
- ☞ Providing Holistic-Integrative Education Services
- ☞ Instilling the Habits of Healthy Living Behavior and Good Morals from an Early Age
- ☞ Establishing Cooperation with Parents, Community and Related Agencies in Professional Kindergarten Management.
- ☞ Improving the Quality of Teachers and Education Personnel

**Objective**

- ☞ Planting the Seeds of Faith and Devotion to Allah SWT in Children's Lives According to Their Stage of Development
- ☞ Helping to develop all potential and physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and religious maturity optimally in a conducive, democratic and competitive educational climate.
- ☞ Educating Children to Have Good Morals, Be Competent, Skilled, Independent and Self-Confident as Provisions for the Child's Further Growth and Development
- ☞ Making 'Aisyiyah Kindergarten a Professional PAUD That is Popular with the Community

In addition, leaders have the ability to motivate and inspire staff, provide intellectual stimulation, and give individual attention to teachers and education personnel, and tend to have Early Childhood Education institutions, with better mutual management. (Sunusi, 2020). This is reflected in the leader always supporting educators for learning for children at school, be it learning activities in the classroom, outside the classroom, or outside of school. The following are school activities that support learning at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Musi Rawas Regency, including:

a. Hajj Rituals

Photos of Hajj Manasik Activities, Opening Ceremony and Briefing from the Hajj Manasik Tutor



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Photo of Hajj ritual activities for students and guardians of Aisyiyah Kindergarten



In the hajj manasik activity for early childhood, organized by IGABA Ikatan Guru Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra, is an annual program, which is held once a year where the hajj manasik participants are early childhood children of TK and KB Aisyiyah, and guardians in Musi Rawas Regency with a total of 800 participants, from 20 institutions, The activity was carried out at the Football Field and Tribune of B Srikaton Village, Tugumulyo District, Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra. The activity carries out the Mission "Providing Children with Islamic Educational Values" and aims to "plant the seeds of faith and devotion to Allah SWT in the lives of children according to their developmental stages."

### b. Learning in the Library and Police Station

Photo of Learning Activities at the Musi Rawas Regency Library with children from Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten, Tugumulyo District.

Photos of children's activities in the library, introduction to places and rules in the library



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Photo in the Library introducing story books, instilling reading books from an early age



The library is not only a place to store books, but also a learning center that can support the development of children from an early age. For PAUD (Early Childhood Education) and TK (Kindergarten) schools, the library has a very important role in supporting the process of child growth and development, especially in terms of literacy, creativity, and social skills.(Trimahika, 2024). Libraries can also build the foundation of early literacy, develop imagination and creativity, foster interest and reading habits, improve social skills, improve cognitive skills and critical thinking, encourage independence in learning, libraries as a place of educational recreation.

Photo of Visit Activities to Musi Rawas District Police



Photo introduction to traffic signs that must be known and obeyed in traffic



### c. Practical Learning at Allbaik Chicken and Cake Factory

Outing Class learning activities at Allbaik Chicken. to support development and learning in Early Childhood Education.

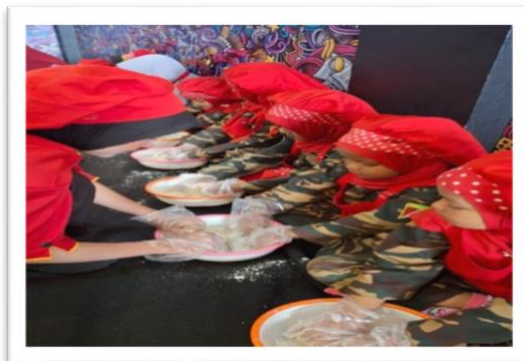


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Photo of children practicing making fried chicken at the Chicken Allbaik Factory



Photos of Activities at the Cake Factory.



Photo of children's activities practicing making cakes directly in a bakery



## 2. Participative Leadership

The active involvement of teachers, education personnel, and school committees in the decision-making process has been proven to increase the sense of ownership and responsibility for the mutual management of PAUD.(Abdul Kadir Jaelani, 2024). Institutions that implement participatory policies show that activities carried out in Musi Rawas Regency in terms of Participatory Leadership carry out routine meetings every 2-3 months which are attended by the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership, the Aisiyyah Regional Leadership of Musi Rawas Regency, Principals, Educators and Education Personnel. Where discussing educational activities under the auspices of Aisiyyah Muhammadiyah.

Photo of Joint Deliberation Activity, PDM, PDA, IGABA, Principal, Educators and Education Personnel, in the Dakwah building



Routine Activity Photos Every 2-3 months, Aisiyyah principal and teacher meetings



## 3. Focus on Professional Development:

Leadership that encourages and facilitates continuous professional development for teachers and education personnel has a positive impact on the quality of learning and administrative management.(Eliza et al., 2022). It can be seen that from the IGABA data of Musi Rawas Regency there are 9 educators who have been certified, 10 educators in the PPG Administration process. For the welfare of educators, the principal management agrees that educators are budgeted to receive honorariums from the BOP allocation



and Compulsory Student Contributions. The principal also budgets teachers to participate in Parenting-parenting activities related to development in Early Childhood learning in order to improve teacher competence in using innovative learning methods.

4. Effective Communication

Open, clear and directed communication channels between the principal/manager and all elements of the Early Childhood Education institution create a conducive working environment and support the achievement of common goals.(Ihsan Maolana, 2023). Institutions with effective communication show that we can socialize the vision, mission and goals of an institution, for example by holding meetings to better understand the vision and mission of the institution, and responding quickly to problems that exist in an institution.

5. Efficient and Accountable Resource Management

Leadership that is able to manage resources (human, financial, infrastructure) efficiently and accountably makes a significant contribution to the management of PAUD.(Ainur Rofiq, 2017). This is reflected in how a leader or manager manages and makes transparent financial reports to educators and related parties, the use of targeted budgets, for example the budget for the procurement of learning facilities, procurement of learning tools, budgets for teaching and learning activities, and maintenance of good facilities and infrastructure.

The findings of this study are in line with leadership theories that emphasize the importance of vision, inspiration, participation, human resource development, communication, and accountability in achieving organizational goals. In the context of PAUD, transformational leadership creates a positive and innovative learning culture, where teachers feel motivated to continue to improve their quality and carry out learning. Participatory leadership empowers all elements of the institution, ensuring that decisions taken are the result of joint deliberations with related parties, educators, and educational staff within the institution. By considering various perspectives and increasing commitment to its implementation.

Focusing on professional development is an important investment in improving educator competency, which directly impacts the quality of early childhood interactions and learning. Effective communication ensures a shared understanding of goals and expectations, and minimizes the potential for conflict and misunderstanding. Finally, efficient and accountable resource management ensures that ECE institutions have a strong foundation for delivering quality programs.

The implication of this study is the importance for PAUD principals/managers to develop and implement holistic leadership strategies, which include transformational, participatory, focused on professional development, effective communication, and good resource management. The government and related parties also need to provide adequate support and training for PAUD leaders so that they are able to carry out their leadership roles effectively.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this study confirms that leadership strategies play a crucial role in improving the quality of PAUD management. The implementation of transformational, participatory leadership, focus on professional development, effective communication, and efficient and accountable resource management are key factors that contribute to the creation of a quality PAUD environment that is conducive to early childhood development.

In Musi Rawas Regency, Tugumulyo District, the Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Teachers Association has strategies in its leadership, namely by conducting parenting activities, regular meetings every 2-3 months with the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership, Aisyiyah Regional Leadership, IGABA (Head, Educators, Educators), holding joint activities, namely holding Hajj Manasik for Early Childhood, Learning outside of school, namely at the Library, Musi Rawas Regency Police Office, Tugumulyo District, learning with the Outing Class practice method and aligning the vision, mission and goals of the school, so that the achievement of the learning objectives provided is in accordance with the goals and ideals of the Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah Organization itself so that it can be achieved properly for the progress of the nation and provide quality Early Childhood Education



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