



Characteristics of Servant Leadership in Islamic Educational Institutions

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Abstract. This research aimed to identify leadership concepts in Islamic educational institutions, examine indicators or characteristics covering servant leadership, and find the most dominant indicator in building servant leadership in Islamic educational institutions. This research was conducted in two interrelated steps. The first step is the conceptualization and construction process of servant leadership. In this step, the researchers used a qualitative approach and phenomenological method. The second step analysis is based on the results obtained from the first step. In this step, the researchers used a quantitative approach by testing the servant leadership scale and analyzing the servant leadership scale factor. The technique of data sampling was accidental sampling with the total of research subjects in FGD of 25 principals of Madrasah consisting of 15 principals of MTS and 10 principals of MA. In the next step, about 83 teachers from the educational institution were exerted in this research analysis. This research result was referred to put in detail, and the groups agreed in FGD that servant leadership was an effective leadership that could be implemented in Madrasah. Moreover, some indicators that indicated the highest response from the respondents were the implementation of decision and responsibility (5,12), communication (4,30), and transparency (4,60). This finding pointed out that to improve servant leadership, the leader must implement the decision consistently and be responsible, communicate with subordinates, and be transparent in performing the leadership.

Keywords: Teacher Performance · Servant leadership · Educational Institutions

1 Introduction

An organization is a social unit that consists of two or more participants to achieve mutual goals. The goals should be formulated in such a way, that the participants within the organization can achieve the goals together. One of the organization types is an educational organization or school. Among many types of schools is the school under the support of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The schools are also known as Islamic educational institutions. One of the significant components in the educational institution is the teacher. Teacher plays a decisive role in achieving the organization's goals (educational institution). This teacher's role should be concerned continuously to result in quality graduates. According to the Law 14th 2005 about a teacher:

A teacher is a professional educator with the main tasks of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating the students in early childhood education programs through formal education, basic education, and secondary education (Nurchasanah, 2012, p. 296). The teacher is one of the elements of the educational field that must play an active role and put the position as a professional, so the teacher can increase the performance in supervising and directing the students (Sutarsanah, 2011, p. 93). The success of national education is measured by teacher performance. Teacher performance is the level of teacher achievement in performing tasks and education according to the responsibility and authority based on the predetermined performance standard during certain periods in the framework of educational goal achievement (Arifin & Barnawi, 2012 p. 14).

Based on the research done by Imran & Rizka (2012), for the leadership style on teacher performance ($X - Y$), R-value of 0,745 indicated a strong and positive correlation value between leadership style and teacher performance. The positive Value directly relates to the leadership style of the principals of the Madrasah and teacher performance. The preliminary research has proven the significance of leadership style in improving subordinates' performance. The task of the leader is to serve the subordinate. The characteristics of leadership that prioritize the service and always intend to perform service are proven to affect the organizational commitment to subordinates and employee engagement (Purwaningtyas, 2016).

In line with that result, Laub (1999; Patterson, 2003; Miers, 2004) has argued that servant leadership is highly concerned with the service aspect to others and often followed by self-sacrifice, so the servant leadership behavior will direct the leader to oppose his desire and put more priority on the subordinates' interest. Gary Yukl (2001) has defined how to value the effectiveness of leadership through three (3) relevant variable types: (1) characteristic of leadership, (2) characteristic of subordinate, and (3) characteristic of situation. Those factors have confirmed that the leader cannot achieve the goals alone because the leader must cooperate with the followers or subordinates and find the importance of an approach to contextual factors (Purwaningtyas, 2016). According to Yukl (2001), an effective leader is an individual who can cooperate and empower subordinates. This statement shows that the subordinate also plays a big role in succeeding in the program the leader plans. The perception of a subordinate on the running leadership characteristic is one of the determinant indicators.

Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) first introduced the term of servant as a leader in an essay. He then named servant leadership, which explains that a leader will be effective when he can prioritize service and is always willing to serve. The characteristics of servant leadership are formulated in these ten points: (1) ability to listen well to what the followers want and feel, (2) empathy, (3) healing, (4) self-awareness, (5) persuasive, (6) ability to conceptualize something well, (7) farseeing by adhering to the wisdom of past events, (8) stewardship, (9) commitment to individual growth (tangible and intangible), and (10) community formation (Laub, J.A., 1999).

The strength of character of the servant leadership model indicates a virtue of service to the followers. As those have been exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW, in which the Prophet always gives the best service to the followers. Although, it is said that the Prophet SAW was abused until spat on by his follower who did not believe in the

vision of holy teaching that he conveyed at that time. Even on the eve of his death, the Prophet Muhammad SAW still thought about the followers. The strength of character of the best leader in this universe, Prophet Muhammad SAW, as has been stated by Bosworth Smith (1874, in Antonio, 2010), "He is a union between Pope and Caesar, but Pope without demand and Caesar without the legion: no line of soldiers standby, no guards, no palace, and no fixed income. If anyone has the right to say that he ruled with real divinity, he was Muhammad SAW since he has all abilities without any weapon or support (Kurniawati, 2012).

One unique organization it has amazing power is an Islamic educational institution. Islamic educational institution is an educational organization that organizes learning and teaching process based on the values of the teachings of Al-Qur'an, Al-Hadiths, scholars' thought, and the history of Islamic civilization development. In short, it can be understood that the Islamic educational institution carries out the organization through vision, mission, goal, teaching staff, curriculum, teaching method, culture, interaction pattern, and evaluation system with a basis of Islamic teaching values (Munifah, 2012). However, the Islamic educational institution with a basis of the noble Islamic teaching values until recently is still an alternative educational institution from the perspective of society. Islamic education is still the second option for society after public educational institutions.

Unfortunately, the Islamic educational institution should be an excellent example for other educational institutions. The values of Islamic teaching on management are complete and eminent. The leadership teaching in Islam is to serve the follower or servant he led. The uniqueness of Islamic educational institutions and the strength of servant leadership character attract the researchers to identify these themes deeper, "Characteristics of Servant leadership of Islamic Educational Institution."

2 Identification of Research Variables

The research variable to be analyzed is the perception of servant leadership. The perception of servant leadership is a leadership style that puts humans as the main factor of organization, involves subordinates, appreciates subordinates, sets an example, and is communicative.

3 Research Subject

The total of research subjects in this research taken from fgd subjects were 25 principals of madrasah consisting of 15 principals of mts and 10 principals of ma. In the following step, about 83 teachers from those educational institutions were involved in this research analysis.

4 Research Instruments

The instrument used to collect the data in this research was questionnaire. The researchers used a questionnaire in order to measure the variable of perception of servant leadership.

The type of data from the research variables is ordinal data. The researchers exerted the data analysis process from the beginning until the end of this research. Next, the data analysis technique in this research was an interactive model, according to Miles & Huberman, 1986 (Herdiansyah, 2012). That technique consisted of four steps that should be done by the researchers: a step of data collection, a step of data reduction, a step of data display, and a step of conclusion or verification.

5 Result and Discussion

In line with Spears (1995) and Laub's (1999) opinion, based on the result of FGD, groups 1–5 have agreed that the characteristics of servant leadership were as below: (a) The decision-making by involving subordinates through discussion and agreement, (b) providing direction and motivation to the subordinate, (c) ability to accommodate various opinions and different opinion, (d) implementing the decision that has been agreed by taking responsibility on that decision, (e) being communicative in conveying policies to the stakeholders, (f) transparency by raising work spirit and enthusiasm, and (g) empathy for a subordinate.

The decision with the subordinates' involvement refers to the making decision the organization should always listen to the opinion and ide of subordinates and involve them in making the decision. Commonly, the subordinate involvement was seen through discussion and decision agreement (K3, K4/FGD1). The ability to direct and motivate the subordinates was the second characteristic agreed upon by the group. It denoted that the leader should know where to go and act in front of the followers. The leader should also guide and show directions that would be taken and ways to reach that path. Moreover, the leader should encourage the subordinates who are not confident in their abilities to achieve the work target (K2, K3, K4/FGD 1). The third characteristic was the ability to accommodate many ideas and different opinions. This characteristic was realized with the ability to listen to other people's opinions. It was also an attempt to actively listen to what was said and not said by the subordinates by trying to understand what was being communicated through a deep reflection. Furthermore, willingness to accept criticism or advice from other people and respect individual differences (K1, K3, K5/FGD 1).

The leader should carry out the agreed decision by taking responsibility for that decision. The decision that has been agreed should be performed as an obligation with willingness. This behavior was based on self-awareness to carry out the agreement as a part of service. Also, the leader should not avoid being involved even if in the harder and tougher situation (K2, K3, K5, K5/FGD 1). The leader should have the ability of active communication by communicating the policies to the stakeholders. The communication was carried out to empower other people or subordinates in order to build their self-confidence, bring out the sense of belonging, so each subordinate would have an important contribution for the organization. Next, the leader should appreciate teamwork and admit equality. While speaking, the words should be polite and effective to be easily understood by other people. (K2, K3, K4, K5/FGD 1).

The sixth characteristic was transparency to generate work spirit. It referred that the leader should not hide other purposes within the leadership. This behavior was

Table 1. Indicators Respondents' Response were Decision Implementation and Responsibility, Communicativeness and Transparency

Mean Value (scale 1–5)	Category
> 4.2 - 5	Very High
> 3.4 - ≤ 4.2	High
> 2.6 - ≤ 3.4	Mediate
> 1.8 - ≤ 2.6	Low
1 - ≤ 1.8	Very low

practiced by providing complete, real, clear, and open information required in building collaboration and teamwork. This behavior was aimed to avoid the rise of nepotism, prevent corruption, and maintain trust between parties (K1, K2, K4/FGD 1). Empathy to subordinates was the seventh characteristic. The empathy was an ability to figure out what was felt and thought by other people. Also, it was an embodiment of concern for subordinates and affection. Love and caring were realized in the leader's behavior and action to fulfill the subordinates' need, welfare, and achievement.

The implementation of servant leadership in those characteristics would bring out a healthy organization. A healthy organization was led by exerting a servant leadership style. The term of healthy in this context referred that the organization was able to show characteristics of servant leadership in the organizational behavior (Laub, 1999). Servant leadership's goal was to optimally fulfill other people's needs, which should be the main motivation of leadership (Russel & Stone, 2002). Servant leadership would develop every individual around him and help every individual to achieve and succeed in life and work. So much leadership could bring the organization to long-term and sustainable success. Servant leadership was measured by using a servant leadership questionnaire arranged according to the previous characteristics agreed upon in FGD.

The questionnaire was shared to about 83 teachers of Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah in Malang. The result of data measurement showed three dropped items, each item from the indicator of decision through subordinates' involvement, decision implementation, responsibility and communicativeness. Next, it continued to the categorization analysis by using mean on each indicator. The mean categorization resulted from statistical calculation that aimed to place individuals within tiered groups according to a continuum. It was usually exerted to strengthen the discussion result in the research (Azwar, 2012). The categorization could use the following criteria: (Table 1).

Based on the table above, it was referred that the indicators that have the highest respondents' response were decision implementation and responsibility, communicativeness and transparency. This result showed a fact that in order to improve the servant leadership, the leader should carry out the decision consistently and take responsibility, be able to communicate with the subordinates and transparent in carrying out leadership. This research result indicated that to put in detail, it was agreed by the groups in FGD that

servant leadership was an effective leadership style to be practiced in Madrasah. Moreover, the indicators which showed the highest response from respondents were decision implementation and responsibility (5, 12), communicativeness (4, 30), and transparency (4, 60). This result referred to the fact that the leader should carry out the decision consistently and be responsible, communicate with the subordinates, and be transparent in carrying out the leadership to develop servant leadership. Furthermore, servant leadership places humans as the main factor in the organization, involves subordinates, appreciates subordinates, and sets a good example and communicativeness. Some factors that could be characteristics of servant leadership: a) making a decision that involves subordinates through discussion and agreement, b) giving direction and motivation to subordinates, c) being able to accommodate many ideas and different opinions, d) carrying out the agreed decision by communicating the result of policies to stakeholders, f) being transparent to bring out work spirit, g) empathy for subordinates. Next, the most dominant factors or indicators in establishing servant leadership: a) decision implementation and responsibility, b) communicativeness, and c) transparency. Meanwhile, the weakest indicator in forming servant leadership: decision making through subordinates' involvement. Based on the research results, the researchers suggest to the Islamic educational institutions: 1) To implement servant leadership in leading Madrasahs by carrying out the existing indicators because this leadership style is proven to be effective. 2) To form servant leadership, the indicator that should be maintained is to carry out the decision and take responsibility, be communicative, and be transparent. 3) The indicator that should be improved to form servant leadership is to decide by involving subordinates. This improvement can be realized through socialization, psychoeducation, or training.

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