



## Leadership Ethos and Trust Deficits in Indonesian Education: An Analytical Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper critically assesses the implementation of educational policies at Madrasah Darul Amin and emphasizes that effective leadership is key to improving the quality of education. Through qualitative case studies, data was obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings show that education policy is not merely oriented towards compliance, but is shaped by the diverse needs of students and the demands of the national curriculum to create a relevant and quality learning experience. The principal acts as a facilitator of change by encouraging innovative teaching methods and the integration of educational technology to increase student engagement. A collaborative culture among teachers—supported by open communication and teamwork—emerged as an important prerequisite for successful implementation. Teacher participation in decision-making strengthened their sense of ownership and commitment to the policy, emphasizing the urgency of democratic leadership. In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation are necessary to make continuous adjustments to optimize policy effectiveness. This study concludes that proactive and collaborative leadership, accompanied by active teacher involvement, significantly improves the quality of education at Madrasah Darul Amin. To maintain and expand these achievements, it is recommended to strengthen communication with stakeholders, encourage pedagogical innovation, strengthen collaboration, and implement continuous evaluation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education in madrasahs plays a vital role in the character building and intellectual development of students (Alaloul et al., 2018). Madrasahs serve not only as institutions for imparting knowledge but also as centers for instilling moral and religious values that are essential for shaping the personalities of the younger generation (Latief et al., 2021). In this context, Madrasah Darul Amin exemplifies an educational institution that strives to integrate Islamic values with the demands of modern education (Erihadiana & Jahari, 2018).

The education policy at Madrasah Darul Amin is designed to enhance the quality of Islamic education, ensuring its relevance in contemporary society. This policy extends beyond the curriculum that encompasses religious and general knowledge; it also includes various supporting aspects that contribute to the overall educational process. Key focuses of the implemented policies include efficient and transparent management, competent human resource development, and the cultivation of a conducive learning environment (Newhouse & Suryadarma, 2011; Nuraini et al., 2019).

Leadership within madrasahs is crucial for directing and managing these educational policies (Idris & Mesiono, 2019). Effective leadership is necessary to ensure that the formulated policies are adequately implemented. The principal, as the primary leader, must act as both a driver and supervisor in the policy implementation process, ensuring that the desired educational objectives are achieved. Consequently, leadership at Madrasah Darul Amin transcends mere administrative functions; it plays a significant role in facilitating change, encouraging innovation, and fostering an educational environment that supports holistic learning for students (Kyriakides et al., 2020) (Pandza & Hrebatć, 2023).

The trust deficit manifests across multiple relationships within the education system. There often needs to be more mutual understanding between administrators and teachers regarding performance expectations and professional development needs (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Teachers may hesitate to voice concerns or suggest improvements due to cultural norms discouraging direct criticism of authority figures. Parents and community stakeholders sometimes express skepticism about the education system's ability to prepare students for contemporary challenges, particularly in rapidly evolving economic landscapes (Albar & Suhayria, 2021; Fajri & Umar, 2024).

The education system in Indonesia faces significant leadership challenges stemming from structural and cultural factors (Fajri & Sukatin, 2021). School leaders often operate within a hierarchical framework that can inhibit innovation and open dialogue. While deeply rooted in Indonesian cultural values of respect and harmony,

this traditional leadership model sometimes creates barriers to implementing necessary reforms and fostering transparent communication (Al-Sartawi & Hannon, 2024; Tan, 2024).

These leadership and trust issues directly affect educational outcomes (Kyriakides et al., 2020). When school leaders cannot establish strong bonds of trust with their staff, it becomes difficult to implement innovative teaching methods or respond effectively to student needs. The resulting environment can lead to reduced teacher motivation and decreased student engagement (Ali & Sethi, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of transparent communication channels often results in missed opportunities for collaborative problem-solving and community involvement (Prasetyo et al., 2025; Ritchey & Muchtar, 2014).

Recent studies on educational leadership have increasingly highlighted the importance of leadership ethos in shaping school culture and fostering trust among stakeholders. In the context of Indonesian education, existing literature emphasizes the need for effective leadership practices that align with the values and expectations of diverse communities. Scholars such as Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) have established that a strong leadership ethos positively influences organizational commitment and student outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2018). However, while there is a growing body of research examining leadership styles and their impact on educational effectiveness, there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific leadership practices contribute to trust deficits within the unique socio-cultural landscape of Indonesian schools (Mirvahedi, 2022). This gap is particularly concerning given the critical role that trust plays in facilitating collaboration, enhancing teacher morale, and improving student performance (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Chand, 2022).

Previous research has focused on various aspects of educational leadership, few studies have comprehensively analyzed the interplay between leadership ethos and trust within the Indonesian context. The existing literature tends to overlook the nuanced ways in which cultural factors and local contexts influence leadership effectiveness and trust dynamics (Cahyadi et al., 2024; Willis et al., 2021). This study aims to fill this gap by conducting an analytical case study that examines how leadership practices at specific Indonesian educational institutions impact trust among teachers, students, and the community (Hastasari et al., 2022). By exploring the complexities of leadership ethos and its relationship with trust deficits, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of educational quality in Indonesia.

A transformational leadership approach is essential for addressing these challenges. Indonesian education leaders would benefit from adopting a more participatory leadership style that balances traditional cultural values with modern

educational needs. This study could include creating structured feedback mechanisms that respect hierarchical norms while enabling open dialogue and developing leadership training programs that specifically address trust-building in the Indonesian cultural context.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational policy refers to a set of rules, regulations, and guidelines designed to achieve specific educational goals. This policy covers various aspects such as curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and resource management. Educational policy is an important foundation in the education system that serves as a guide for all educational activities at various levels. This policy is designed to ensure that the educational goals that have been set can be achieved effectively and efficiently. As an instrument, educational policy not only serves as a guideline for educators and educational institutions, but also reflects the vision and mission of the government or institutions that have the authority to manage the education system. For example, according to (Winarno, 2007).

Education policy is a complex and dynamic process, where various components, such as curriculum, teaching, and evaluation, interact to achieve the desired results. The curriculum is one of the most important aspects of education policy that determines what should be taught in schools. The curriculum includes learning objectives, content, teaching methods, and evaluation methods that must be used by teachers in the learning process. The curriculum also reflects the values and competencies that are considered important by a country or educational institution to be developed in students. As a policy tool, the curriculum serves to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, receive quality education that is relevant to the needs of the times. (Supriyadi & Komara, 2020). In addition to curriculum, teaching is also an important component of education policy. Teaching involves various methods and strategies used by educators to convey subject matter to students. A good education policy should include guidelines on how the teaching process should be carried out, including training for teachers to improve their competence. According to (Arends, 2012), Effective teaching policies must take into account various factors, such as student needs, resource availability, and technological developments, to create an optimal learning environment.

Evaluation is another important aspect of education policy. Evaluation is carried out to measure the extent to which educational goals have been achieved and to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching methods used. Education policy should provide clear guidance on how evaluation should be carried out, including the criteria and methods used to assess student progress. Good evaluation not only provides feedback to students, but also to teachers and policy makers to

make necessary improvements in the learning process (Griffin & Care, 2014). In addition, resource management is also a major focus in educational policy. Resource management includes the allocation and use of human, financial, and material resources to support the educational process. Effective policies must ensure that all available resources are used optimally to achieve educational goals. For example, according to (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003), Good resource management is the key to improving the quality of education and operational efficiency in educational institutions.

Overall, education policy plays a vital role in shaping the direction and quality of the education system. By covering various aspects such as curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and resource management, this policy is designed to create an educational environment that is conducive to the development of learners. Therefore, education policy must be continuously evaluated and adjusted to the times in order to remain relevant and effective in achieving the educational goals that have been set. (Ball, 2008).

Although educational policies covering aspects of curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and resource management have been designed comprehensively, their implementation in the leadership management of Madrasah Darul Amin still faces significant challenges that require an effective and adaptive leadership approach to ensure that educational goals are achieved optimally. Educational policies covering curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and resource management, as described above, are key elements in leadership management at Madrasah Darul Amin, where leadership effectiveness lies in its ability to integrate these policies holistically in order to create a superior learning environment that is relevant to current developments. Leadership at Madrasah Darul Amin must be able to implement educational policies covering aspects of curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and resource management synergistically to ensure that comprehensive educational goals can be achieved effectively and sustainably.

### **Leadership Management in Madrasah.**

Leadership in the context of madrasah education involves the ability to manage resources, motivate staff, and ensure effective policy implementation. Leaders in madrasahs must have a clear vision and the ability to direct the organization towards achieving educational goals. Leadership in the context of madrasah education is a very crucial aspect in achieving the educational goals that have been set. Leadership in madrasahs is not only limited to administrative roles, but also includes strategic abilities to manage existing resources effectively. These resources include human, financial, and material resources, all of which must be optimized to support a quality learning process. From (Ghufron, 2020), An effective

leader must be able to allocate resources in a way that supports educational goals and allows for a conducive learning environment for students. In addition to resource management, leadership in madrasas also involves the ability to motivate staff, both teachers and other education personnel. This motivation is important because it has a direct impact on the performance and dedication of staff in carrying out their duties. Motivated staff will be more likely to innovate, work harder, and commit to achieving educational goals. (Hariyono, 2017) states that effective leadership is one that is able to recognize the needs and potential of each staff member, and encourage them to achieve their best performance through an inspiring and supportive approach.

Madrasah leaders must also have a clear vision and the ability to direct the organization towards achieving educational goals. This vision must reflect the long-term goals that the madrasah wants to achieve, as well as the strategies that will be used to achieve them. A clear vision provides direction for all members of the madrasah, so that all elements in it can work synergistically to achieve the same goal. Kotter (2012) emphasizes that successful leaders are those who can communicate their vision effectively, so that they can inspire others to work towards that vision with enthusiasm and high commitment. In addition to having a vision, leaders in madrasahs must also be able to implement educational policies effectively. Educational policies that have been formulated must be translated into real actions that can be implemented by all staff and students. Effective policy implementation requires proactive leadership in overcoming obstacles that may arise during the process. According from (Fullan, 2007), An effective leader must have the skills to identify problems, find creative solutions, and steer the organization forward despite challenges.

Overall, leadership in madrasah education requires a combination of strong managerial and leadership skills. A madrasah leader must be able to manage resources efficiently, motivate staff to achieve their maximum potential, have a clear vision, and be able to implement educational policies effectively. Thus, effective leadership in madrasahs does not only focus on achieving short-term goals, but also contributes to the development of sustainable and future-oriented educational quality. In the study above, leadership in madrasah education, as applied in Madrasah Darul Amin, requires strategic skills in managing resources, motivating staff, and ensuring effective implementation of educational policies to achieve a sustainable educational vision. Leadership that is able to integrate resource management, staff motivation, and policy implementation synergistically will lead madrasahs towards achieving higher educational goals.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the complex dynamics of leadership ethos and trust deficits in Indonesian education, specifically through an analytical case study approach. Data collection is conducted through multiple methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations within selected educational institutions. The interviews target key stakeholders, such as school leaders, teachers, parents, and students, to gather diverse perspectives on leadership practices and their impact on trust within the educational environment. Focus group discussions further enrich the data by facilitating dialogue among participants, allowing for the exploration of shared experiences and collective insights. Observational data are collected during school activities and meetings to provide context and enhance understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and communication patterns that influence trust among stakeholders.

Data analysis is conducted using thematic analysis, which allows for the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to leadership ethos and trust deficits. The process begins with coding the data to categorize responses and observations into meaningful themes. These themes are then analyzed in relation to the research questions, focusing on how leadership practices foster or undermine trust within the educational setting. The study also employs triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by comparing data from different sources. This comprehensive approach ensures a nuanced understanding of the interplay between leadership ethos and trust deficits, contributing to the broader discourse on educational leadership in Indonesia. Ultimately, the insights gained from this research aim to inform policy recommendations and practical strategies for enhancing trust and collaboration in Indonesian educational institutions.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Education Policy at Madrasah Darul Amin.**

The results of the study revealed that the educational policies implemented at Madrasah Darul Amin were formulated by considering two key factors: the needs of students and the demands of the national curriculum. In this case, the needs of students include aspects such as academic abilities, interests, and talents of different individuals. The formulation of this policy aims to create a learning experience that is not only in accordance with national standards but also relevant to the specific needs of each student. This includes adjustments in the curriculum, teaching methods, and the provision of resources and support needed to ensure that each student can reach their maximum potential. Meanwhile, the demands of the national curriculum provide a framework of reference and standards that must be met by educational institutions to ensure uniform quality of education across the region. This curriculum

sets out the competencies that students must master and covers various aspects of learning that are important for their development.

Therefore, the educational policies at Madrasah Darul Amin are designed to integrate the demands of the national curriculum with the specific needs of students, resulting in quality education that is in accordance with national standards. Leadership at Madrasah Darul Amin plays a very crucial role in this process. Madrasah leaders, including principals and other administrators, are responsible for communicating educational policies to all stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and students. Effective communication is key to ensuring that everyone understands the goals and implementation of the policy. Leaders also have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is implemented well in the field. This involves regular monitoring and assessment to evaluate the extent to which the policy has been implemented and its impact on the teaching and learning process.

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses in policy implementation. With regular evaluation, the madrasah can make necessary adjustments to improve the effectiveness of the policy and address any issues that may arise. This process also allows the madrasah to make data-based decisions and ensure that educational policies remain relevant and beneficial to all learners. Thus, the role of leadership in managing and overseeing educational policies is critical to achieving the educational goals that have been set and ensuring the success of education at Madrasah Darul Amin.

### **The Role of Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education**

The leadership at Madrasah Darul Amin demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the quality of education. This commitment is reflected in various initiatives undertaken by the principal and the management team to ensure that the educational process is carried out with the best quality. The principal functions as a facilitator of change, meaning that they not only lead, but also actively facilitate the changes needed to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. With this approach, the principal acts as the main driver in implementing innovations and new methods that can improve the quality of education in the madrasah. As part of their role as a facilitator of change, the principal encourages innovation in teaching. This innovation includes the application of more modern teaching methods, the use of educational technology, and the development of a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of students and the latest developments in the world of education. The principal identifies and implements new practices that can enrich students' learning experiences and improve their learning outcomes. By supporting and encouraging

innovation, they strive to create a learning environment that is dynamic and responsive to change.

In addition to encouraging innovation, the principal also builds a collaborative work culture among teaching staff. This collaborative work culture includes open communication, teamwork, and mutual support between teachers and the principal. By building this culture, the principal creates a harmonious and productive work atmosphere, where new ideas can develop and problems can be solved together. This collaborative culture also contributes to increasing professionalism and motivation among teachers, which in turn has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Teacher involvement in decision-making is also an important factor in the successful implementation of education policies in Madrasah Darul Amin. Involving teachers in the decision-making process allows them to provide valuable input, share practical experiences, and feel responsible for the results of policy implementation. This involvement increases their sense of ownership of the policies implemented and strengthens their commitment to implementing the policies effectively. Thus, active participation of teachers in the decision-making process is a key element that supports the successful implementation of education policies in madrasah.

### **Leadership Ethos at MAS Darul Amin**

At MAS Darul Amin, the leadership ethos plays a crucial role in shaping the educational environment and addressing trust deficits that may hinder effective learning. The leadership team emphasizes a vision grounded in transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior, which are essential for building trust among educators, students, and the community. This ethos not only fosters a positive school climate but also encourages collaboration and open communication, creating a foundation for implementing innovative educational strategies. By prioritizing these values, MAS Darul Amin aims to cultivate an environment conducive to academic excellence and character development.

#### **1. Professional Development and Teacher Empowerment**

One of the primary strategies employed by MAS Darul Amin is the commitment to ongoing professional development and teacher empowerment. The leadership organizes regular training sessions and workshops that focus on contemporary teaching methodologies and pedagogical practices. This initiative not only enhances the competencies of educators but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the institution. By encouraging teachers to engage in professional learning communities, the leadership at MAS Darul Amin ensures that educators feel supported and valued, which in turn leads to increased job satisfaction and commitment to the school's mission.

## 2. Student-Centered Learning Approaches

Another significant strategy utilized by MAS Darul Amin is the implementation of student-centered learning approaches that promote active engagement and critical thinking. The school adopts various pedagogical techniques, such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning, which empower students to take ownership of their educational journey. By creating a dynamic and interactive classroom environment, MAS Darul Amin fosters student motivation and enhances learning outcomes. This approach aligns with the broader goals of Indonesian education reform, which emphasizes the importance of developing students' 21st-century skills, including creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving.

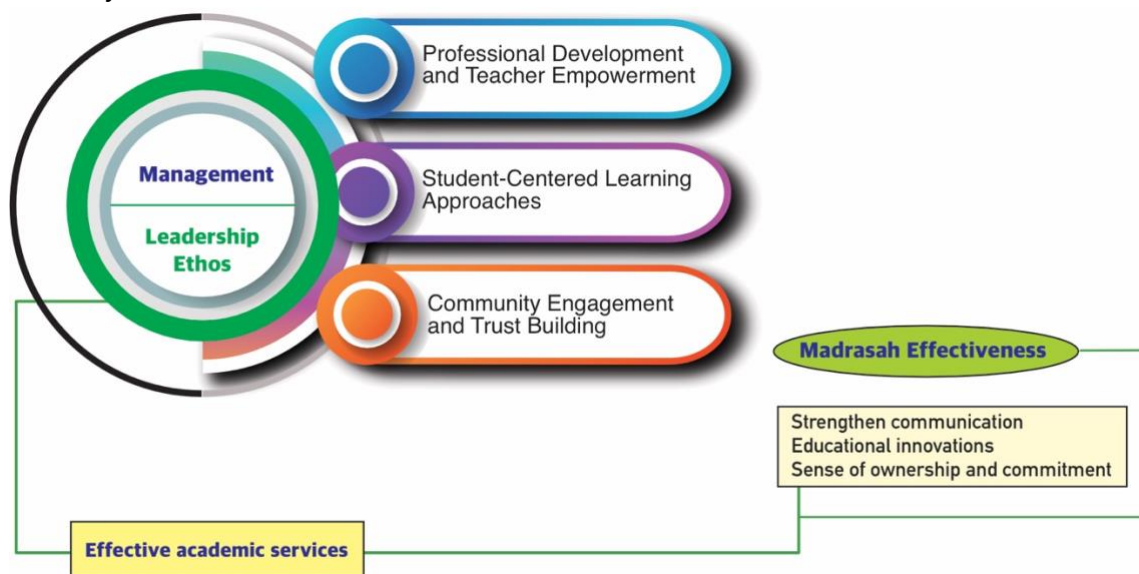
## 3. Community Engagement and Trust Building

MAS Darul Amin actively engages with the community and stakeholders to build trust and foster collaboration. The leadership conducts regular meetings with parents and community members to solicit feedback and involve them in the educational process. This transparent communication strategy not only strengthens the relationship between the school and its stakeholders but also cultivates a sense of shared responsibility for student success. By prioritizing community engagement, MAS Darul Amin addresses potential trust deficits and creates a supportive network that enhances the overall educational experience. This collaborative ethos is vital for sustaining the school's initiatives and ensuring that all parties are invested in the students' academic and personal development.

The following suggestions are proposed for the head of Madrasah Darul Amin (MAS Darul Amin) to enhance the implementation of education policies and improve educational quality. First, it is essential to strengthen communication and stakeholder engagement among the principal, teachers, parents, and students. Regular forums or meetings should be held to discuss educational policies, developments, and feedback, ensuring that all parties are informed and supportive of the initiatives. This approach will facilitate consistent policy implementation and garner necessary backing from all stakeholders.

Second, the development and implementation of educational innovations must be prioritized. Introducing new teaching methods and technologies will enhance the effectiveness of the learning process. Organizing training sessions for teachers to improve their skills in utilizing modern educational tools will foster a dynamic learning environment that meets students' needs. This commitment to innovation is critical for maintaining relevance in today's educational landscape.

It is important to strengthen a collaborative work culture among teaching staff. Creating opportunities for teamwork, sharing best practices, and discussing challenges will enhance communication and motivation among educators. Additionally, increasing teacher involvement in decision-making processes related to educational policies will foster a sense of ownership and commitment to their implementation. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of these policies will help identify strengths and weaknesses, ensuring they remain effective and aligned with learner needs. By adopting these strategies, the principal of Madrasah Darul Amin can improve the overall quality of education and achieve established goals more effectively.



**Figure 1: Integral Relationship Between Management Practices and Leadership Ethos**

Figure 1 illustrates the integral relationship between management practices and leadership ethos in advancing the effectiveness of madrasah institutions. Central to this framework are three core elements: professional development and teacher empowerment, student-centered learning approaches, and community engagement coupled with trust building. From an educational management perspective, these components function synergistically to foster a collaborative and responsive organizational environment. Professional development equips teachers with the skills and confidence needed to innovate pedagogically, while student-centered approaches ensure that learning is tailored to individual needs, thereby enhancing educational relevance and engagement (Ni'mah et al., 2023). Concurrently, actively engaging the community and cultivating trust strengthens stakeholder partnerships, creating a supportive network pivotal to institutional success.

These elements collectively contribute to madrasah effectiveness by promoting strengthened communication channels, fostering educational innovations (Prasetyo et al., 2023), and nurturing a sense of ownership and commitment among all

participants. Effective educational management, therefore, involves orchestrating these factors through strategic planning, resource allocation, and continuous dialogue among educators, students, and community members (Torsdottir et al., 2024). By embedding this comprehensive leadership and management approach, madrasah institutions can achieve sustainable improvements in academic services and holistic student development, aligned with both institutional goals and broader societal expectations.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of educational policies at Madrasah Darul Amin is centered on addressing student needs and complying with national curriculum standards, aiming to create a tailored and quality learning experience. Effective leadership plays a critical role by ensuring clear communication with stakeholders and conducting regular evaluations to enhance policy execution. Principals actively promote educational quality through innovative teaching methods and modern technology while fostering a collaborative work culture that encourages open communication and professionalism among teachers. Involving educators in decision-making is essential for successful policy implementation, as it empowers them and enhances their commitment. Overall, the proactive and collaborative leadership at Madrasah Darul Amin significantly contributes to improving the quality of education. MAS Darul Amin employs strategies centered around a strong leadership ethos, professional development for educators, student-centered learning approaches, and community engagement to foster an environment conducive to educational success. These strategies collectively address trust deficits and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the institution.

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