



Altruistic Leadership Style in Education: Implications for Policy and Practice

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ABSTRACT

This study critically examines how altruistic leadership shapes the school environment and students' character development in a madrasah context. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the principal, teachers, and student representatives from MAN 1 Bekasi. Findings indicate that altruistic leadership creates a supportive institutional climate, increases students' intrinsic motivation, and strengthens collaboration between educators and parents. The study also identified implementation challenges—such as aligning values with daily practices and maintaining stakeholder commitment—and proposed strategic interventions to improve efficacy, including structured professional development, shared decision-making, and parent-school engagement programs. These findings provide practical and relevant insights for educational leaders and policymakers seeking to apply altruistic leadership principles to improve standards in madrasah institutions. This study contributes to the educational leadership literature by providing evidence-based recommendations that can be adapted to various madrasah contexts to improve overall educational effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

This study rigorously analyzes altruistic leadership at MAN 1 Bekasi. This leadership style is crucial for profoundly shaping organizational culture and enhancing the performance and efficacy of both students and staff (Xie et al., 2022) (Rahmawati, 2018). Its influence permeates the institution, fostering an environment that cultivates growth, collaboration, and excellence (Luxmi & Yadav, 2011). Altruistic leaders inspire, motivate, and guide individuals to achieve their full potential (Smith, 2019), nurturing talents, empowering others, and creating a positive atmosphere conducive to creativity, innovation, and productivity (Kurum & Cinkir, 2019; Prasetyo, 2022). Furthermore, it promotes a culture of inclusivity, diversity, open communication, trust, and respect, fostering a cohesive, supportive, and collaborative community (Wiyono, 2017).

Altruistic leadership transforms organizations into hubs of knowledge exchange and growth, critically impacting student and staff performance by fostering continuous learning, academic success, excellence, and accountability (Shestakova et al., 2022). These leaders act as mentors and role models, significantly shaping organizational culture and overall efficacy (Sudibjo et al., 2022). This leadership style cultivates a thriving, inclusive environment for collaboration and excellence, serving as a cornerstone for institutional success (Namatovu et al., 2024). Within Islamic education, particularly madrasahs, altruistic leadership is paramount, catalyzing the establishment of inclusive and service-oriented environments (Jez et al., 2022). Therefore, meticulous study into its multifaceted dimensions within the madrasah context is imperative to uncover its true essence and elevate educational quality (Nadlifah et al., 2020).

MAN 1 Bekasi was chosen as the study location because of the role played by this educational institution in developing students' character and integrity following Islamic values. With strong altruistic leadership, it is expected that this madrasah will be able to create a conducive educational environment that is oriented toward social care (Karim et al., 2023). In addition, the background of this study is based on the need for more empirical evidence related to altruistic leadership styles in Islamic educational institutions, which can be an important contribution to the development of leadership theory and practice in similar institutions.

This study elucidates altruistic leadership characteristics and behaviors within madrasah contexts, evaluating its influence on institutional performance

and member well-being through common-good decision-making, justice, cooperation, and responsiveness to member needs (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2018). However, at MAN 1 Bekasi, leadership implementation encounters complex situational dynamics, generating uncertainty in planning and execution, particularly as students approach the final stages of high school. Notably, from 2014-2017, data indicated low teacher competency in achieving learning objectives and suboptimal outcomes from classroom voting processes, prompting critical discussions on leadership efficacy within the Merdeka Belajar framework.

The Merdeka Belajar program, aimed at fostering a more flexible and student-centered educational approach, necessitates a re-evaluation of existing leadership practices to enhance teacher performance and student engagement (Purwanti, 2021). The identified issues not only reflect the challenges faced by educational leaders but also underscore the need for a thorough investigation into the characteristics of effective leadership within this context (Komariah et al., 2024). Consequently, this study aims to explore and clarify the leadership styles adopted by educational leaders at MAN 1 Bekasi, focusing on how these styles influence the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar initiative. By examining the interplay between leadership characteristics and educational outcomes, the study seeks to provide insights that can inform future leadership practices, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of teaching and learning experiences in the institution.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing grounded theory methodology to thoroughly explore the practices and implications of altruistic leadership. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in leadership dynamics. This robust methodological framework aims to ensure the richness and validity of the collected data, providing a solid foundation for analyzing the implementation of altruistic leadership within the context of madrasahs. The study adopts a case study design, with MAN 1 Bekasi serving as the primary unit of analysis. This specific selection aims to deeply understand altruistic leadership within an Islamic educational environment. Data will primarily be gathered through interviews with leaders, teachers, and administrative staff, supplemented by

direct observations of leadership interactions within the school setting. This integrated study design is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of the leadership phenomenon in madrasah aliyah settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study's theoretical foundation delves into altruistic leadership, defined as a style prioritizing the welfare of others over personal gain (Zheltoukhova, 2016). This selfless approach fosters an inclusive environment, cultivating trust, respect, and loyalty, thereby enhancing organizational performance. The study will explore its key dimensions, benefits, and transformative impact on individuals, teams, and the organization (Xie et al., 2022).

Within the madrasah context, altruistic leadership is characterized by its prioritization of learners' needs, their development, and the overall welfare of all madrasah members. This leadership paradigm integrates elements of empathy, cooperation, and genuine concern for others, actively promoting a supportive and inclusive environment where every individual can thrive and excel (Campbell et al., 2016). Altruistic leaders transcend personal interests and ambitions, ensuring the well-being and growth of others are consistently nurtured. By instilling compassion, understanding, and teamwork, they cultivate a community that values diversity, promotes mutual respect, and champions collaboration. These leaders are actively engaged in listening to the concerns and aspirations of learners and madrasah members, ensuring their voices are heard and needs addressed. They establish platforms for open dialogue and exchange, welcoming and exploring diverse perspectives. Through their mentorship, altruistic leaders not only shape the academic and personal growth of learners but also inspire them to become compassionate, responsible, and socially conscious individuals. This leadership style in madrasahs is anchored in the belief that education is profoundly transformative, imposing a moral responsibility on leaders to support and uplift others, thereby contributing to a more harmonious, compassionate, and equitable society (Noor, 2015).

Leaders embodying altruistic leadership consistently exhibit fairness, transparency, and high responsiveness to the evolving needs of the madrasah community. These leaders prioritize empathy, demonstrating genuine care for

the welfare and progress of each individual. Their dedication fosters an environment where trust and open communication flourish, cultivating unity and a collective purpose among members. Furthermore, their unwavering commitment to fairness ensures that all decisions are made with integrity and impartiality, affording equal opportunity for all to contribute. Through this selfless leadership style, they inspire others to embrace altruism and become active agents of positive change within society.

Concept of Altruistic Leadership

Altruistic leadership is defined as a leadership style characterized by a genuine concern for the well-being of others, prioritizing collective needs over personal interests (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2018). This approach is rooted in principles of empathy, service, and ethical conduct, aiming to cultivate a supportive and collaborative environment. Within educational settings, altruistic leaders focus on fostering positive relationships with students, teachers, and the broader community, thereby promoting an inclusive culture that values participation and shared goals (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2018). This leadership style encourages open communication, trust, and collective problem-solving, which are essential for a productive learning environment (Campbell et al., 2016; Karim et al., 2023).

This concept will be thoroughly analyzed from a deep religious perspective, specifically within the context of Islamic religious education at MAN 1 Bekasi. This comprehensive examination will encompass the rich theological and philosophical dimensions inherent in Islamic teachings and practices. Furthermore, it will include an in-depth analysis of the historical development and evolution of religious education at MAN 1 Bekasi, illuminating the unique and multifaceted approach employed in imparting Islamic knowledge and values. By delving into these intricate religious and contextual nuances, the study aims to achieve a profound understanding of the impact and significance of religious education in shaping the students' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development at MAN 1 Bekasi.

Profile and The Application of Altruistic Leadership in MAN 1 Bekasi

MAN 1 Bekasi, established in 1998, is a prominent senior high school in Bekasi, recognized as a leading educational institution. Spanning approximately 2 hectares, it boasts comprehensive facilities, including

laboratories, libraries, and multipurpose halls. The madrasah is staffed by highly qualified and committed educators dedicated to providing optimal education. With a student body numbering in the hundreds, MAN 1 Bekasi consistently produces highly capable graduates, prepared for both further education and professional careers.

Data analysis from MAN 1 Bekasi reveals distinct characteristics and practices of altruistic leadership. This style, defined by selflessness, empathy, and a profound focus on collective well-being, was identified as prevalent among the school's leadership. Leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to serving student and staff needs, consistently exceeding typical role expectations to provide support and upliftment (Martoyo & Amara, 2024) (Riddel & Zulfikar, 2024). They exhibited genuine concern for the personal and professional development of their team, offering mentorship, guidance, and opportunities for growth. These actions fostered a positive and inclusive school culture, promoting an environment of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect.

The significance of altruistic leadership lies in its capacity to cultivate a supportive and nurturing educational environment where students and staff can thrive (Sari Antoni et al., 2022). It not only benefits individuals but also contributes substantially to the overall success and well-being of the entire school community. The study underscores the critical importance of cultivating altruistic leadership qualities among educational leaders, given its potential for creating positive and lasting impacts on students, staff, and the institution.

The application of altruistic leadership is evident in practices designed to enhance the educational experience for both students and teachers. The leadership actively engages with the school community to understand needs and aspirations, ensuring decisions consider their impact on all stakeholders (Terzi et al., 2020). This participatory approach empowers both teachers and students, fostering a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the madrasah's mission.

This comprehensive study is anticipated to reveal in detail how the leaders of this madrasah exhibit profound caring, absolute honesty, unwavering loyalty, and deep empathy within their leadership practices. Through meticulous analysis, this study will illuminate how these leaders exemplify these qualities, offering valuable insights into effective leadership within this renowned institution.

These findings will establish a fundamental framework for accurately identifying and comprehensively analyzing the diverse strengths and weaknesses prevalent within altruistic leadership in madrasahs. The study at MAN 1 Bekasi underscores the importance of altruistic leadership in educational institutions. By prioritizing student needs and fostering inclusivity, the school empowers students and staff to reach their full potential, setting an example for other institutions. A thorough understanding of these findings reveals critical areas for attention at MAN 1 Bekasi, necessitating concerted efforts to enhance existing leadership practices and cultivate an inclusive learning environment conducive to student growth and maturation.

The independent learning program is significantly influenced by altruistic leadership, which prioritizes student and teacher needs to foster a collaborative and innovative educational environment. Leaders actively engage with the school community, creating a supportive atmosphere that enhances morale and aligns program objectives with stakeholder values. Recommendations for leadership development include fostering greater awareness and perceptiveness toward the diverse needs of students through a comprehensive approach. To meet this demand, madrasah leaders require training emphasizing altruistic values to cater to holistic student needs and elevate the educational experience. Continuous monitoring of these recommendations is crucial for ensuring sustained leadership improvements.

Altruistic leadership at MAN 1 Bekasi significantly fosters a positive school environment and a strong culture of empathy. The active involvement of leaders in social activities and their commitment to student welfare are crucial aspects requiring sustained maintenance and improvement. Consequently, to effectively address future challenges, it is recommended that altruistic leadership be continuously strengthened through targeted development programs, training, and coaching for leaders at MAN 1 Bekasi.

These leaders consistently demonstrate a strong orientation towards the common good and proactively cultivate robust relationships with both staff and students. This altruistic leadership style positively contributes to enhancing the quality of education and enriching the learning atmosphere. The findings thus underscore the critical importance of sustaining and further developing altruistic leadership within MAN 1 Bekasi to ensure a conducive and harmonious educational environment.

Collaborative Professional Development

One of the key strategies employed by MAN 1 Bekasi to implement the independent learning program successfully is the emphasis on collaborative professional development for teachers. The leadership encourages continuous training and workshops that focus on innovative teaching methodologies, including student-centered approaches and the integration of technology in the classroom. By facilitating opportunities for teachers to share best practices and learn from each other, the madrasah fosters a culture of collaboration and mutual support. This strategic investment in teacher development not only improves instructional quality but also empowers educators to take ownership of their professional growth, thereby enhancing their commitment to the independent learning program.

1. Student-Centric Learning Environments

Another significant strategy is the establishment of student-centric learning environments that promote active engagement and critical thinking. MAN 1 Bekasi employs various pedagogical techniques that encourage students to take an active role in their learning processes. This includes project-based learning, peer-to-peer teaching, and the use of technology to facilitate study and collaboration. By creating spaces where students feel safe to express their ideas and explore their interests, the madrasah nurtures intrinsic motivation and fosters a deeper understanding of the material. Such an environment not only supports the objectives of the independent learning program but also aligns with the principles of Merdeka Belajar, which emphasizes autonomy and personalized learning.

2. Community Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement

The strategy of community involvement and stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the independent learning program at MAN 1 Bekasi. The leadership actively seeks partnerships with parents, local organizations, and educational stakeholders to create a supportive network that enhances the learning experience. Regular meetings and feedback sessions with parents and

community members ensure that the program remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the broader community. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the relationship between the madrasah and its stakeholders but also cultivates a sense of shared responsibility for the educational outcomes of students. By engaging the community in the educational process, MAN 1 Bekasi effectively reinforces its commitment to the independent learning program and fosters a holistic educational environment that benefits all participants.

Strategies for Implementation

The powerful strategy embraced by the leadership at MAN 1 Bekasi is the commitment to collaborative decision-making. By actively engaging teachers in the planning and implementation of educational programs, including the independent learning initiative, leaders not only recognize educators' expertise but also cultivate a profound sense of ownership in the educational process. This collaborative approach significantly elevates teacher morale and inspires innovative teaching practices, ultimately leading to exceptional student learning outcomes.

Moreover, the leaders at MAN 1 Bekasi prioritize professional development opportunities that embody the principles of altruistic leadership. They strategically organize workshops, training sessions, and peer mentoring programs designed to empower teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary for implementing impactful teaching strategies. This dedication to teacher development not only enhances instructional quality but also powerfully signals the leadership's unwavering commitment to supporting their staff, firmly believing that empowered educators are essential to driving student success.

The implementation of leadership in educational settings, particularly at MAN 1 Bekasi, reveals a complex interplay of various situations and conditions that often generate uncertainty regarding the planning and execution of initiatives. This uncertainty is compounded by the challenges faced by the institution, especially as it transitions students to the final stages of their Senior High School education. A significant issue identified during this period pertains to the voting process conducted in classrooms and common areas, where feedback from students and reports published in national media indicate suboptimal outcomes. Specifically, during the 2014-2017 school years, the

performance metrics highlighted a concerning trend: the low ranking of teachers' competencies in achieving their learning objectives. This shortfall has sparked a critical discussion regarding the effectiveness of leadership styles employed within the framework of the Merdeka Belajar initiative.

The Merdeka Belajar program, aimed at fostering a more flexible and student-centered educational approach, necessitates a reevaluation of existing leadership practices to enhance teacher performance and student engagement. The identified issues not only reflect the challenges faced by educational leaders but also underscore the need for a thorough investigation into the characteristics of effective leadership within this context. Consequently, this study aims to explore and clarify the leadership styles adopted by educational leaders at MAN 1 Bekasi, focusing on how these styles influence the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar initiative. By examining the interplay between leadership characteristics and educational outcomes, the study seeks to provide insights that can inform future leadership practices, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of teaching and learning experiences in the institution.

Building Community Relationships

Altruistic leadership at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Bekasi proactively extends beyond the school to cultivate robust relationships with the local community and stakeholders. This involves actively seeking partnerships with parents, local organizations, and educational authorities to establish a supportive network that significantly enhances the learning environment. Regular communication and feedback mechanisms are integral to addressing community needs and ensuring the madrasah's responsiveness to external expectations. This study offers several novel contributions to the existing literature on educational leadership, particularly within the context of Islamic educational institutions.

1. **Emphasis on Altruistic Leadership in Educational Contexts** While altruistic leadership is a recognized concept across various sectors, its specific application and implications within madrasah settings, particularly in Indonesia, remain significantly underrepresented in scholarly discourse (Terzi et al., 2020). This study addresses this gap by providing a focused analysis of altruistic leadership within Madrasah

Aliyah Negeri 1 Bekasi. It delineates how altruistic leadership principles—rooted in empathy, service, and community focus—can effectively shape educational practices and enhance learning outcomes within religious educational environments.

2. **Cultural Contextualization of Leadership Styles** A novel contribution of this study lies in its integration of local cultural values and Islamic principles within the framework of altruistic leadership (Salabi et al., 2022). The study meticulously examines the interplay between altruistic leadership and the socio-cultural dynamics of the Bekasi community, illustrating how these contextual factors influence leadership efficacy. By situating leadership within local traditions and community expectations, this study enriches the understanding of how altruistic leadership can be adapted and operationalized in specific cultural settings, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on culturally responsive leadership in education.
3. **Impact on Stakeholder Engagement and Community Dynamics** This study further distinguishes itself by investigating the intricate effects of altruistic leadership on stakeholder engagement and community relations (Mayger & Provinzano, 2022). It explores how leaders at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Bekasi actively cultivate collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. The findings underscore the critical role of altruistic leaders in establishing trust and fostering a collective sense of responsibility, which are paramount for the successful implementation of educational initiatives. By meticulously documenting these relational dynamics, the study provides empirical insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of effective community engagement strategies within educational contexts.

The examination of altruistic leadership within Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Bekasi, its contextualization within local cultural and religious frameworks, its exploration of stakeholder engagement, its methodological rigor, and its practical implications. Collectively, these elements advance the understanding of how altruistic leadership can enhance educational practices and community relations in madrasah settings.

Finally, the study contributes to the field by offering practical

recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers based on the findings. By identifying the key attributes and practices associated with effective altruistic leadership, the study provides actionable insights that can be applied to improve leadership practices across madrasahs in [Indonesia \(Afla & Sugiarto, 2024\)](#). This aspect emphasizes the relevance and applicability of the study, making it a valuable resource for stakeholders involved in educational leadership and reform.

This study offers significant novelty by proposing a distinct altruistic leadership model explicitly tailored to the Indonesian madrasah context. Moving beyond general descriptions, it presents a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic values, local culture, and the unique challenges of madrasah institutions, thereby enriching existing leadership theories with a contextually relevant proposition ([Muhammad et al., 2021](#)). This model critically differentiates itself from Western altruistic leadership frameworks and established Islamic educational leadership, addressing a notable scholarly gap.

Further novel contributions stem from exploring how altruistic leadership uniquely facilitates or navigates national educational initiatives, such as "Merdeka Belajar," within madrasahs, directly linking leadership theory to contemporary policy implementation. Additionally, the study expands the understanding of "well-being" by detailing how this leadership style addresses not only academic and emotional development but also the spiritual growth of students and staff—a critical yet often underexplored dimension within religious education. The distinctiveness involves investigating the altruistic leader's role in conflict mediation and consensus building among diverse stakeholders within heterogeneous madrasah communities. This highlights the practical application of altruism in managing complex social dynamics. By encompassing these theoretical, practical, and social contributions, this study provides a robust and significant addition to the existing literature on educational leadership, particularly within the specialized domain of Islamic education.

This study presents significant novelty by proposing a contextually tailored model of altruistic leadership for Indonesian madrasahs, distinctively integrating Islamic values and local cultural nuances to offer a unique conceptual framework. It extends beyond theoretical application by exploring altruistic leadership's specific role in navigating national educational initiatives

and elucidating its impact on the holistic well-being of students and staff, including spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, the study contributes practical insights into how altruistic leaders mediate conflicts and build consensus within diverse madrasah communities, collectively advancing both leadership theory and its operationalization within the specialized context of Islamic education.

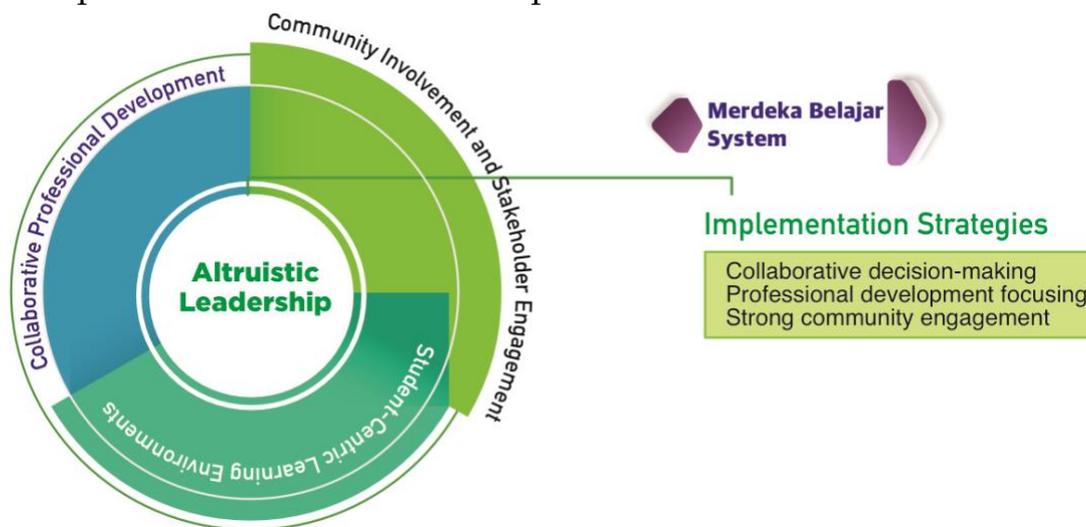


Figure 1: Altruistic Leadership Style in Education

The presented model emphasizes altruistic leadership as a central guiding principle within educational management. This leadership approach prioritizes collaborative professional development, the creation of student-centered learning environments, and active community involvement coupled with stakeholder engagement. Such a holistic framework underlines the importance of leaders who act selflessly and focus on the growth and welfare of all educational stakeholders, thereby fostering a culture of continuous improvement and inclusivity.

From an educational management viewpoint, the model demonstrates how leadership and organizational culture collectively facilitate the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar System. Collaborative decision-making, targeted professional development, and strong community engagement are highlighted as critical implementation strategies that operationalize this altruistic leadership. These strategies enable educational managers to effectively coordinate resources, promote teacher growth, and align student learning outcomes with broader community values and needs. By embedding these principles into management practices, the model supports systemic educational transformation grounded in participative governance and a shared

commitment to both educational excellence and social responsibility.

This model holds significant social implications as it facilitates the organic connection between educational institutions and society through innovative leadership adaptation, organizational culture enhancement, and community engagement within the education field. Specifically, it promotes social integration and inclusion by enabling leadership to collaborate with diverse stakeholders within the community to improve educational quality and resolve conflicts based on cultural sensitivity. Ultimately, this process positions educational settings not merely as places for knowledge transmission but as social spaces that contribute to community development and sustainable social change, thereby expanding the social responsibility and value of education.

CONCLUSION

The altruistic leadership style in MAN 1 Bekasi positively impacts the school environment and caring attitude towards others. Strengthening and supporting altruistic leadership through development programs, training, and coaching is recommended. Leaders at MAN 1 Bekasi prioritize the common good and foster positive relationships with staff and students. Altruistic leadership improves the quality of education and promotes a harmonious learning environment. Maintaining and developing this leadership style is essential for a conducive atmosphere. The concept of altruistic leadership at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Bekasi is implemented through collaborative decision-making, a focus on professional development, and strong community engagement. By prioritizing the well-being of students and teachers, the leadership fosters an inclusive and supportive educational environment that is conducive to achieving the madrasah's goals and enhancing overall educational quality.

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