

The Strategy of Instructional Leadership towards the Advancement of Graduate Competitive Quality: A Case Study at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 5 Jakarta Utara

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the strategy of instructional leadership implemented by the school principal of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara in elevating the quality of graduate competitiveness. The approach used in this study is qualitative research employing a case study design. Result of this study reveals that the strategy of instructional leadership executed by the principal of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara encompasses the followings: a). Literacy-based learning innovation which integrates the competence of academic writing (scientific) into the entire courses by emphasizing on English, Indonesian language and Science; b). Carrying out an annual merit-contract with the regional office of Ministry of Religious Affairs, division of *Pendidikan Madrasah (PENMAD)* either from the quality of teacher or student; and c). Providing reward to the best teacher and the excellent student as well as the use of effective time allocation. In a nutshell, the instructional leadership practiced by the principal MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is somewhat-implemented. Nevertheless, it is crucial to pay attention to a strategy in building parents awareness on the importance of pursuing further study to higher education and strengthening a foreign language literacy to enhance the quality of graduate competitiveness.

Key words: Instructional Leadership, Graduate Competitive Quality, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara

Background

The existence of Islamic education institutions in Indonesia has been increasing a great deal ranging from elementary schools to higher education. Particular for state Islamic schools at secondary level (*Madrasah Aliyah Negeri*), the number of the schools has reached over 9.131 schools scattered through out Indonesia (*Ditjen Pendis*). Unfortunately, the increasing number of Islamic institutions does not fit to the quality of its graduates. Based on the data of *UTBK* rank, only a few which are able to compete with other secondary schools at national level (Republika, 2022). Among others are: *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (MAN) IC Serpong and Labschool Kebayoran Jakarta. This clearly indicates that the graduate competitive advantage of Islamic schools at secondary level is simply low.

Generally speaking, *UTBK* rank (university admission test in Indonesia) is nationally admitted as the main indicator for successful academic performance of the school. Of which graduate competitive advantage is the importance factor in promoting the school quality. Therefore, the quality of educational institutions is determined by the quality of the competitiveness of the graduates produced. Achieving superior competitive quality of graduates is greatly influenced by educational leadership factors in an educational institution. Therefore, the success of school management is highly dependent on the leadership model that is

undertaken. According to Afzal Sayed Munna (2022), Leadership influence is a crucial characteristics in learning leadership. Similar view also emphasized by Djunawir Syafar (2017) on the importance of leadership as it has a strategic role in promoting the school vision for the school quality improvement, human sources including the graduate competitive quality. For this reason, leadership approach in managing the schools for the sake of quality improvement is imperative to be take into account.

In this sense, instructional leadership which is a part of educational leadership model offers a solution for the school leaders to be able to enhance the quality of academic leading to the quality of graduate competitiveness. This model is introduced by Phillips Hallinger and Murphy (1985) in America for their concern on advancing the school performance. The fundamental basis in instructional leadership model, it particularly focuses on learning achievement. Thus, all dimension of this instructional proses from planning, implementation, to evaluation is entirely driven to the quality of academic performance aiming at promoting graduate competitiveness quality of the school.

In fact, the model of instructional leadership has been widely practiced by school leaders either in Europe, America, Middle East, and Asian Countries including Indonesia. Therefore, in this regard, it is imperative to examine the practice of this model at schools in Indonesia, mainly Islamic institutions. Therefore, research on educational leadership, especially instructional leadership in State Madrasah Aliyah is very appropriate and necessary for the development of Islamic

education in Indonesia, especially at the secondary school level. Ongoing leadership practices require evaluation. However, there has not been anything that specifically examines instructional leadership practices in Islamic education institutions with Islamic principles and values, especially at the secondary school level. Therefore, this research is strategic in order to improve academic quality in Islamic education institutions in Indonesia.

The secondary level Islamic educational institution used as a case study here is *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 5 Jakarta Utara*. Used as a case study because the author found several interesting things about MAN 5 Jakarta Utara which can be used as a reference for other institutions. In terms of vision and mission (<https://man5jkt.sch.id/profil/profil-school/>), this school offers a vision and mission that is in line with educational goals and philosophy. Education is the process of fostering a human personality to become more optimal and better, where all the potential and natural talents they possess are developed as good as possible. (Mortimer J. Adler, 1962).

In terms of Socio-economically, the population of North Jakarta is categorized into a low-income community. Likewise geographically, it belongs to industrial areas that are less conducive to an educational environment. Despite these conditions, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara has sufficient competitiveness where there are approximately 85 students who graduated and joined State Universities (PTN) spreading throughout Indonesia. Apart from that, there are still other achievements earned. This is the major reason why MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is selected as a research object. Further study is required regarding what kind of instructional leadership strategies are implemented at MAN 5 Jakarta Utara in

improving academic quality, especially the competitiveness of graduates.

Methodology

The approach used in this research is qualitative with a case study design. The data was collected using in-depth interview techniques with school principals, teachers and Deputy Head of Student Affairs. Participatory observation techniques are used to observe the teaching and learning process and co-curricular activities. Meanwhile, the documentary study technique is used to collect written data such as curriculum, website pages, flyers, etc.

Primary data sources were obtained through purposive sampling technique. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from online and offline sources. The data analysis in general refers to the Miles & Huberman model; where the data analysis process is administered in stages which include: data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this research begins with a discussion of the concept of leadership in education (instructional leadership) which refers to the theory of Phillips Hallinger (2005). Apart from that, the concept of graduate competitiveness is also discussed in this study. Lastly, the profile of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is also described.

1. Instructional Leadership

Phillips Hallinger and Joseph Murphy are prominent figures in the field of educational leadership, particularly known for their work on instructional leadership. Their theory of instructional leadership emphasizes the critical role of school leaders, particularly principals, in promoting and sustaining effective teaching and learning practices. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model proposes a principal instructional leadership framework that is believed to influence the teaching organization and school climate. Based on theoretical and empirical analysis, these experts formulated an instructional leadership framework with three dimensions. These three dimensions are defining the mission, managing instructional programs, and building a positive school learning climate as described below (Donnie Adams, et al. 2018).

The first dimension of instructional leadership is defining the school's mission. In this framework, there are two special functions, namely framing and communicating school goals. Having a clear mission regarding student learning is essential for every principal. Additionally, this mission should be shared widely among teachers in schools. This is the basis for establishing schools that focus on student learning (Hallinger 2010; Hallinger and Wang 2015).

The second dimension, namely managing instructional program, is a specific plan to carry out the school's mission. Three additional functions are outlined in this dimension: supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. This requires intensive involvement of school principals in core areas

of education. This means that to maintain effective teaching and learning activities, school principals must keep their foot in the curriculum, evaluation of learning and teaching, and student learning progress.

The final dimension in Hallinger's instructional leadership model is developing a school learning climate. Schools must focus their attention on students and learning. This dimension contains five functions, among others are; protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and providing incentives for students. It is possible to map the instructional leadership function of the principal in terms of the distribution of the technical core and the development and maintenance of the learning environment through the PIMRS instrument used in measuring the practice of instructional leadership by the school principals. In short, the three dimensions explained above can be summarized in the table below: Elements of Murphy & Hallinger's Model of Instructional Leadership (1985)

Defines the School Mision	Manages the Instructional Program	Promotes the School Learning Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing school goals • Communicating school goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising and evaluating instruction • Coordinating curriculum • Monitoring student progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting Instructional time • Promoting professional development • Maintaining high visibility • Providing incentives for teachers • Providing incentives for students

2. Graduate Competitive Advantage for Senior High Schools

Graduate competitive advantage for senior high school students can be defined as equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences that provide them access universities, colleges, and future employers. According to Leticia Oseguera (2013), this concept refers to students who possess the academic, extracurricular, and personal qualities that make them eligible candidates for admission to colleges and universities. Thus, it involves a holistic way to promote strong quality of graduate competitiveness. He further asserts that to increase their chances of gaining

admission to their desired colleges and universities takes a combination of several aspects as discussed later.

Firstly, strong academic performance such as strong grades in core subjects and advanced placement or honors courses. Also, a well-rounded education that includes STEM, humanities, and arts is highly suggested. Secondly, practical experience should be encouraged like joining internships, apprenticeships, or part-time jobs that provide real-world experience. At the same time, the school should provide programs dealing with projects engagement that simulate real-world challenges and problem-solving. Thirdly, the school must provide extracurricular activities in many aspects; sports, clubs, student government, and others that demonstrate leadership, teamwork, and time management skills. Participation in competitions (e.g., science olimpyad, debate tournaments) is simultaneously encouraged. Literacy in technology and foreign language as well as understanding global culture is also required. Lastly, broadening networking and building partnership with alumni, industries, and social organization will complete the access for the school graduate. Additionally, Bengser (2008) adds to include the role of state-level policies and initiatives in enhancing high school students' readiness for college and careers.

Referring to the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 41 of 2007 concerning Process Standards, it states that: "competitiveness is the ability to show better, faster or more meaningful results". As stressed by Sumihardjo (2022), competitiveness includes the following aspects: 1) Ability to establish an advantageous position, 2) Ability to improve constant performance, 3) Ability to strengthen its market position, 4) Ability to adapt with the environment.

If adopted into the concept of education, the way of educational

institutions compete is faced with the goals of each educational institution so that it can run in the long term. Thus, Aneducational institution that can maintain quality constantly and entirely will produce excellent quality once it is carried out with the trust of the community and a good image earned from the awareness of the community itself.

Competitiveness advantage in Madrasah context can be seen from the excellence proven by the various achievements attained at both national and international levels. The Madrasah also provides quality educational services in terms of science and technology used as well as the superior character education that is instilled. In this sense, Tholkhah in Arwildayanto (2020), concludes that Madrasah competitiveness is the ability of Madrasah educational institutions to implement management aspect to improve the quality of education so that it has excellent competitive advantage with other educational institutions.

Factors contributing to competitiveness is the creating of competitive advantage itself that is not only able to sell products and services but also dominate the market. Competitive advantage is created by having various comparative advantages. The task of company or institution leaders is how to create comparative advantages. According to Danang Sunyoto(2015) there are several factors that influence comparative advantage in competitiveness, among others are:

- a. Management and leadership are required to carry out various steps of improvement, change and adjustment in order to increase organizational competitiveness as a critical management analysis and strong leadership in accordance with the goals to be achieved.
- b. Precise competitive advantage planning must be taken into account because the conception of strategic planning is not standard. This

requires changes and modifications in planning in accordance with environmental changes regarding priorities, strategies and policies as well as organizational patterns. Accurate planning can help achieve organizational goals.

- c. Entrepreneurship based Development Human resources is required such as high self- confidence, high performance, self-control, risk-taker, adaptive, competitive spirit.
- d. Mastering and selecting the best technology in the process of implementing organizational activities can ensure the lasting existence of an organization, even in global competition.

It can be concluded that the role of educational leaders in driving educational institutions is very strategic, especially in the context of improving the quality of the school which accordingly can promote outcomes who are well-competitive. And the quality of graduates' competitiveness determines the performance of the existence of Islamic Education Institutions, in this case Madrasas in Indonesia.

3. Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 5 Jakarta Utara

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 5 Jakarta Utara can be described below which is directly accessed from official website of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara as well as offline sources. MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is one of two MANs in the North Jakarta area. The address is located at Jl. Marunda Baru III No.30, RT.4/RW.6, Marunda, Kec. Cilincing, North Jakarta, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 14150. This madrasah is one of the favorite madrasahs chosen by the people of North Jakarta to send their children to school. Below is the vision and mission of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara:

Vision: The realization of a generation that is religious, superior, independent, competitive, national in character and environmentally-minded.

Mision:

1. Instilling social-spiritual behaviors and attitudes in accordance with the order of Islamic teachings
2. Developing active, innovative, creative, elaborative and fun learning methods and strategies (what's so called *PAIKEM*)
3. Developing life skills through co-curricular and extracurricular activities
4. Organizing education optimally in promoting the quality of students' competitiveness
5. Developing the spirit of patriotism and national values to safeguard the Republic of Indonesia
6. Instilling a friendly and caring attitude towards environment

Further Profile of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara can be depicted through a wide range of the school activities and achievement as detailed below:

- 1) One Man One Prestige
- 2) MAMA Day (MAN Lima Market Day)
- 3) Socialization & Technical Guidance (*BIMTEK*) Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (*IKM*)
- 4) Launching of *Takhosus Tahfidz* Program of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara
- 5) *Istighosah Qubro*
- 6) Habitual Activities of Flag Ceremony
- 7) Seminar on Motivation Class of 12 of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara
- 8) Jakarta Madrasah Digital Award (JMDA) 2022

- 9) Celebration of the 77th Charity Day of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
- 10) MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is the location point of CAT IPMB ASN Kemenag RI
- 11) Student council of extracurricular jamboree MPK MAN 5 Jakarta Utara
- 12) MAN 5 Jakarta Utara selected as National Literacy Active School
- 13) MAN 5 Jakarta Utara students won 11 medals in the 2019 National Science Competition (*KSM*)
- 14) 36 Educators of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara participated in In House Training (*IHT*) Supervision and Assistance for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in 2023

The implementation of teaching-learning process at MAN 5 Jakarta Utara still refers to two curricula, namely the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. Those who still follow the 2013 curriculum are grade 11 and grade 12. While grade 10 follows the latest curriculum, namely the Merdeka curriculum.

Results and Discussion

Based on the instructional leadership theoretical framework suggested by Phillips Hallinger & Murphy (1985) as well as the concept of competitive advantage, the strategic implementation of instructional leadership of the Principal of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara in increasing the quality of Graduates can be analyzed as follows:

1. Instructional Leadership Strategy of the Principal of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara in improving the quality of graduates' competitiveness

Based on the results of field research both interviews, observations, and documentation studies, the strategies implemented by the Head of Madrasah MAN 5 Jakarta Utara can be described according to the framework of Murphy and Hallinger's instructional leadership as follows:

Dimension A; Formulating the Mission & Objectives of Madrasah

In formulating the mission and objectives of the school, the head of the madrasah involves all relevant stakeholders as all teachers and education personnel. The goal setting of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is to build academic awareness to achieve superior achievements to increase the competitiveness of graduates and win science Olympiads, and improve religious abilities and values as well as environmental-minded. The target goal must be explained and communicated to all stakeholders not only to teachers, staff, students, and school committees but also to parents. So that all parties, including parents, understand the goals and profiles of graduates to be achieved. Specifically for parents, communication is carried out through formal channels coordinated by the class coordinator (*KORLAS*) as part of the school committee structure. In addition, communication is also carried out through events such as the Madrasah Science Competition (*KSM*), national events such as teachers' day, and events that are celebratory in nature. This is feedback accommodated by the school committee based on community interest, in this case parents

who prefer activities or associations that are celebration. This is done in order to encourage the enthusiasm of parents to attend and participate optimally. So that even though it is a celebration, the core message of the school's mission and goals can be delivered effectively. However, this effort has not been able to fully build public awareness, especially parents of students, about the importance of having education up to the university level. Some parents only have a pragmatic target, namely that their children can work after graduating from MAN5 Jakarta Utara

In fact, based on the data found in the field, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is able to produce a competitive graduate profile, where there are approximately 86 students who can pass PTN scattered throughout Indonesia. Unfortunately, there are still many parents whose children have graduated at PTN do not encourage their children to continue. This is influenced by the socio-economic, cultural and geographical people living in North Jakarta. Economically, the people of North Jakarta are areas with low-income people who do not even work. Hence, this raises a society culture that tends to be pragmatic. Also, geographically, the North Jakarta area is surrounded by industrial area (the results of an interview with the head of a madrasah).

Regardless of the picture of the people of North Jakarta who are not yet fully aware of the importance of higher education, the role and initiatives of the committee as previously explained, show that not only the availability of a school committee body but even the existing school committee can function optimally.

With regard to the mission and objectives of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara, the head of the madrasah carries out his instructional leadership with the

following strategies:

- 1) Innovative in learning, namely literacy-based learning by integrating the ability to write scientific papers (*KTI*) in all subjects with an emphasis on Indonesian, English, and science subjects.
- 2) Contracting achievements with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion for Madrasah Education (*PENMAD*) both from the quality of teachers and students every year that has lasted for 3 years (in the competitiveness of graduates and recognition of the Science Olympiad championship).

Dimension B: Organizing Teaching Programs

This dimension is the implementation of 2 instructional leadership strategies of the head of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara as targets or goal settings that have been set. Therefore, the managing of teaching programs requires solid cooperation between the head of the madrasah and the teacher. Two strategies as described in Dimension A (mission and objective) have implications for strengthening teachers and students in scientific writing ability.

On the teacher aspect, to improve teacher competence:

1. Internally teachers are given training three times a year. The training includes the ability
2. of educators in writing scientific papers. In addition, teachers are also given training in teaching methods so that they can develop various techniques and methods with a student-centered approach.

Then, the learning process is not only administered in the classroom, but also brought directly to the object being studied, for example for history subjects, students make visits to museums. As for externally, participating in activities is supported by the Ministry of Agriculture's Training and Development Center (*BALITBANG*)

3. The Head and Supervisor of the madrasah directly monitor Teaching and Learning Activities process (*KBM*) by visiting classes. In addition, the head of the madrasah supervises with colleagues. This is done to control and improve the quality of instructional planning and implementation. However, teachers are also given freedom and space for creativity in developing instructional planning and implementation in achieving better school quality. Because the trust of the head of the madrasah toward the team of educators (teachers) is the key to the school of quality.

On the student aspect, to improve the quality of students can be described as follows:

1. Considering that in each school subject, students are required to reflect on literacy competence, the school organizes special learning outside the classroom about scientific writing coaching. Because this *KTI* ability is the main focus in learning outcomes. Students are required to keep writing scientifically to foster the culture of reading, writing, & criticizing in order to build ideas and bring up novelty. Because of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is highly concerned in literacy, and several works produced by teachers and students, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara earned recognition and appreciation on a national scale as an **“active national literacy school.”**

2. In addition to literacy, there is also special coaching according to the interests and talents of potential students including in the fields of art, science, sports, mathematics, economics. Technically, this coaching is grouped according to their respective fields and fostered by teachers who are experts in their fields. For example, 20 potential students in biology will be coached by teachers who are experts in biology. Likewise, 20 potential students in the tahfidz will also be coached by tahfidz teachers. Concerning this coaching, it has produced students who won 11 medals at the Madrasah Science Competition (*Kompetisi Sains Madrasah-KSM*) at the North Jakarta City level in 2019. The fields include: biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, economics and geography. In addition to science, in the field of sports, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara also won championship in the West Java Pencak Silat event in 2021. However, for English there is no special guidance so that this affects foreign language literacy skills.

3. With the improvement of teacher competence both from scientific, literacy and teaching methods aspects as well as the existence of special coaching outside the classroom, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara can compete well, this is evidenced by the number of graduates as many as 86 students at State Universities (PTN) spreading across Indonesia both through invitation channels and test lines (interview results with head of student affairs and teachers).

In general, all MANs in Jakarta are facilitated with digital learning applications, namely E- Learning. Especially in MAN 5 Jakarta Utara, is used as a space in assigning tasks, collecting tasks, assessment (sources of information, communication and evaluation). Moreover, it is a data bank of scientific papers from both teachers and students so that each student can access (accessed from the official website of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara <https://man5jkt.sch.id/>)

The control of student achievement development is also well-optimized. *First*, at the time of the Admission of New Students (*PPDB*), the average score of students is above 90% (criteria set by the Ministry of Agriculture). The technical admission of students is determined through several channels, such as: zoning paths, link paths for children whose parents work as Jaklingko drivers, DTKS lines (*KJP* recipients since elementary school), achievement paths and tahfidz paths who memorize the Quran as many as 5 *juz* and above. *Second*, MAN 5 Jakarta Utara always controls student achievement based on the number of students who graduated from PTN (related to the existence of an achievement contract with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs - *PENMAD*). In addition, graduating from PTN is an indicator of the competitiveness of graduates nationally.

Dimension C: Building a Conducive School Environment

From the teaching program organized and implemented above, the head of the madrasah strengthened by creating a positive and conducive school environment. The efforts made are as follows:

1. Giving appreciation to the best teachers who are assessed in pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies. This was held to award the best teacher on National Teacher's Day. Even the most amazing thing here, namely the leadership of the head of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara, at the award ceremony was supported by personal funding from the head of the madrasah himself. This shows the integrity and high concern of the head of the madrasah in encouraging the quality of teacher competence. Because educators or teachers are the spearhead in producing qualified students.
2. In addition to teachers, appreciation is also given to outstanding students who excel in academic grades and who have won the championship of the Olympiad of science, sports etc. Because many research results show that giving appreciation to teachers and students can significantly improve the quality of schools.
3. The use of teaching time allocation is very optimal. Apart from classroom learning, there is also learning outside class hours in order to strengthen academic competence and skills. Also, setting the time from the beginning of school entry to graduation according to the target academic calendar is concerned (field observation).

Conclusion

The instructional leadership strategy of the head of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is well practiced. To begin with, in the context of communicating the school's mission and goals, the principal invited all stakeholders:

teachers, staff, students and parents. This is supported by the function of the school committee in bridging the school and parents. Second, organizing a learning program for the head of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara to carry out literacy-based learning innovations. The existence of special guidance for potential students in various fields is an added value in strengthening knowledge and skills. Apart from that, the madrasa head and madrasa supervisors monitor Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) directly by visiting classes. And the head of the madrasah carries out supervision with colleagues. This is done to control and improve the quality of planning and implementation of learning. Another thing is that the achievement contract between MAN 5 Jakarta Utara and the regional office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs also controls the student achievement. Third, the Head of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara is able to create a positive and conducive school climate by giving appreciation to teachers and students and allocating maximum time in the instructional program.

Even though the strategy of instructional leadership is well-implemented, it is still

necessary to pay attention to strategies that are more effective in increasing parents' awareness of the importance of continuing their education to college. Apart from that, strengthening foreign language literacy needs to be accelerated immediately. Also, the use of E-Learning as a digital learning medium needs to be maximized. Hence, the competitiveness of MAN 5 Jakarta Utara graduates can be further improved and can compete nationally.

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Transformation of Educational Institutions in the Islamic World**

Volume 2, September 2024, pp 347-370

ISSN: 3026-7331