

Department Head Leadership Style Strategy In Complex Management (Case Study of the Head of the Department of Teacher Education Leadership Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Walisongo)

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the leadership strategies of department leaders in complex management. This qualitative research uses a case study approach as the main research design. The main research subject is the Head of the PGMI Department of UIN Walisongo Semarang Campus. The data collection techniques in this study used were in-depth interview techniques, participatory observation, and document analysis. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, displaying data, drawing conclusions, and verifying data. The results of this study are the leadership style strategies of department leaders in complex management: 1) Application of Transformational Leadership Style to Inspire and Encourage Innovation 2) Development of Expertise and Skills to improve communication skills and conflict management skills for lecturers and staff; 3) Use of participatory style. Deliberation in decision-making and adopting shura principles in overcoming conflicts; 4) Facilitating Open Discussion, i.e., Encouraging lecturers and staff to participate in open discussions to identify and respond to conflicts early; 5) The application of Islamic leadership ethics; 6) Recognize the appropriate leadership style in conflict resolution; 7) Educational approach, 8) Continuous evaluation and update.

Keywords: strategy, leadership style, complex management

INTRODUCTION

In an era of uncertainty and rapid change, leadership in education plays a crucial role in shaping a dynamic and effective environment. One of the key roles in higher education is the Head of Department, who bears great responsibility in guiding, managing, and leading academic units. This research focuses on how the leadership of the Head of Department can effectively manage and handle conflicts in the educational environment. The world of higher education has unique characteristics, with a diversity of stakeholders, academic missions, and diverse educational goals. Conflicts, as an inevitable part, can arise from a variety of sources, such as differences in educational philosophies, inequalities in resource allocation, or differences in the interpretation of institutional policies. In this context, the role of the Head of Department is very crucial in determining the effectiveness of conflict management, which in turn affects the academic well-being and atmosphere of the organization.

This study aims to identify effective leadership strategies used by Department Heads in managing and resolving conflicts in higher education environments. In addition, this research will explore the factors that affect the effectiveness of leadership in conflict management, including organizational dynamics, institutional values, and

the specific demands inherent in the world of higher education. In the process, this research will analyze the challenges and complexities faced by Department Heads in handling conflicts and how they can overcome these challenges with constructive policies and approaches.

The expected benefits of this study include providing deeper insights into the role and responsibilities of Department Heads in conflict management in higher education settings. This research also aims to provide practical guidance for academic leaders in developing more effective leadership strategies to deal with conflicts constructively. In addition, the contribution to academic literature on conflict management and leadership in higher education is expected to be a foothold for continuous improvement in the management of educational organizations. By describing the challenges and complexities in conflict management faced by department heads, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the effectiveness of leadership in conflict management. The results of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for leadership development in the world of higher education and encourage continuous improvement in conflict management in the academic environment.

METHOD

Method This research method uses a qualitative approach with a case study design as the main framework. This approach was chosen to explore complex and contextual phenomena in depth, especially related to the leadership style of the Head of the PGMI Department at UIN Walisongo Semarang Campus. The main subject of this research is the Head of the PGMI Department, which in this case is Mrs. Zulaihah, M.Ag., M.Pd. In addition, this research also involves various other stakeholders, such as department staff and PGMI students, to obtain diverse perspectives on the impact of women's leadership styles in department management. The data collection process begins with an in-depth interview. An interview was conducted with Mrs. Zulaihah to explore her views on the leadership style she implements, communication practices in the department, and efforts made to improve the performance of the department. After that, the research continues with participatory observation, where the researcher is directly involved in the day-to-day activities of the department.

This observation aims to directly understand the interactions and dynamics that occur in the daily academic environment. In addition, document analysis is also conducted, where official and unofficial documents such as departmental performance reports, correspondence, and policies are analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership context in these departments. Once the data is collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, the data is compiled and organized. Data from interview transcriptions, observation notes, and documents are arranged in the form of matrices or tables according to the categories relevant to this study. The next step is data sorting, where data is grouped based on specific themes or categories that emerge from the results of data collection. This sequencing aims to identify patterns and trends in existing leadership responses and practices. The next process is data reduction, i.e. the selection of the most relevant and significant data for further analysis. The selected data is then simplified to focus on the most important aspects and are directly related to the research question. Once the data is selected, the next stage is the presentation of the data, which is done through the organization and visual representation of the data in the form of tables, graphs, or matrices. This aims to make it easier to identify patterns and relationships between data

elements. Finally, this research reached the stage of drawing conclusions and verification. At this stage, the findings from the data analysis are confirmed with participants through triangulation of data from various sources. Constant reflection is also carried out to ensure that the conclusions drawn are in accordance with the data and the context of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Study Program of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Education Study Program (PGMI) FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang was inaugurated by the Director General of Islamic Religious Institutions on July 10, 2007, with the number of the decree for the establishment of the study program: No. DJ.1/257/2007. Located on Jalan Prof Hamka, Campus 2 Walisongo, Semarang, this department is committed to Islamic values and aims to produce outstanding and competitive scholars in the global era. Since 2019, the PGMI Department is led by Mrs. Hj. Zulaikah, M.Ag, M.Pd, and has achieved "Very Good" accreditation. Based on data from the 2022/2023 academic year, this department has 13 lecturers, consisting of 10 lecturers with civil servant status and 2 non-civil servant lecturers, as well as one operator, with a total of 620 students. In the face of complex dynamics in the world of higher education, the role of the Head of Department is not only limited to administrative tasks but also involves effective leadership in handling conflicts. The results of the study show that the Head of the Department of PGMI UIN Walisongo Semarang has succeeded in implementing several effective conflict management strategies, which support the achievement of a harmonious and productive academic atmosphere.

One of the prominent strategies is the implementation of a transformational leadership style, where the Head of Department inspires and encourages innovation among lecturers and staff. By encouraging creative thinking in conflict resolution, the Head of the Department succeeded in creating an environment that supports innovation in conflict management. This is in line with the findings of several previous studies (Aspi & Syahrani, 2022; Bariqi, 2018) which shows that transformational leadership can improve team performance through innovation and active participation in problem solving.

In addition, the development of expertise and skills among lecturers and staff is also the main focus. The Head of the Department conducts

periodic training to improve communication and conflict management skills, which has proven to be effective in reducing tension and increasing collaboration. The use of participatory leadership styles, such as deliberation in decision-making, is also applied to involve all parties in the conflict resolution process, in accordance with the principles of shura advocated in Islam (Arham, 2023; Hilal, 2023). In the context of applying Islamic leadership ethics, the Head of the Department applies the principles of justice and balance in conflict resolution. By upholding values such as patience, honesty, and fairness, the Head of the Department ensures that each party feels treated fairly and transparently, in accordance with previous research that emphasizes the importance of ethics in leadership (Maswandi, 2016; Syahrin, 2018). The importance of recognizing the appropriate conflict management style was also recognized, where the Head of Department encourages compromise in difficult situations and avoids unproductive confrontations. The establishment of a mediation or conflict resolution team, as well as an efficient conflict reporting system, have aided in early identification and prompt handling of issues as they arise, as supported by the relevant literature (Pinatih & Vembriati, 2019).

An educational approach in conflict management is also applied through periodic training and the promotion of a culture of open dialogue. By encouraging mutual understanding between lecturers and staff, conflicts can be prevented from escalating further. Continuous evaluation and updates on the effectiveness of leadership strategies are also carried out on a regular basis, by gathering feedback from all relevant parties to determine the necessary improvements. Overall, the strategy implemented by the Head of the Department of PGMI FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang has shown positive results in conflict management, which supports a harmonious and productive academic atmosphere, in line with relevant leadership references and theories.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of leadership strategies implemented by the Head of the Department of PGMI FITK UIN Walisongo Semarang in conflict management. By adopting a transformational and participatory leadership style, the Head of the Department has succeeded in encouraging innovation, improving

communication skills, and creating a harmonious academic atmosphere. An ethical approach to Islamic leadership that emphasizes justice, transparency, and the values of honesty also plays an important role in conflict resolution. The establishment of an efficient mediation team and reporting system aids in early identification and handling of conflicts, while an educational approach through training and the promotion of open dialogue prevents the escalation of conflicts. Overall, this study shows that effective leadership in conflict management in higher education environments requires not only careful strategy, but also a commitment to ethical values and a culture of open dialogue. The results of this study provide important insights for leadership development in the world of higher education, especially in the context of conflict management, as well as encouraging continuous improvement in the academic environment.

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