Managing Quality of Learning in Islamic Schools: An Analysis of Contributing Factors for Learning Toward Quality Improvement in Private Islamic Senior High Schools in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This study examines on how significant the contribution of the critical factors of learning in Islamic schools is which is cover to leadership, teachers’ competencies, infrastructures, and culture of the Islamic schools on learning quality and their impact on Private Senior High Islamic school students’ satisfaction in Yogyakarta. This study implements a quantitative approach with a method of survey. The object study is Private Senior High Islamic school teachers in Yogyakarta with inclusion criteria of non-Civil Servant and has not qualified for teacher’s certification. The questionnaire is implemented in the data collection and analyzed with path correlation). The results of the study show that transformational leadership model becomes a key factor in the development of Islamic schools. Mastery of four teachers’ competencies—pedagogy, professional, social, and personality—through various training have become key for the learning quality of the Islamic schools. Adequate Infrastructures, Islamic values-based of Islamic schools ‘culture, and focusing their orientation on quality achievement and customer satisfaction have become the deciding factor for Islamic schools’ service quality.

Keywords: Leadership, Teachers’ Competencies, Learning Quality, Customer Satisfaction

Abstrak

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Introduction

People’s interest in Islamic schools is relatively high. Statistics show that there is a high number of Islamic schools in Indonesia. However, on a national scale, people’s interest in Islamic schools is lower than their interest in other general schools. The central problem due to some issues by Islamic schools. First is the problem of Islamic school management. Most of the Islamic schools arrange under the so-called traditional management. The functions of management, such as planning, institutional management, implementation, and evaluation, have not been systematically and well implemented.¹

Second is the leadership quality of Islamic schools. The education level of the principal’s Islamic schools are mostly bachelor’s degree and has not met the qualification and competencies of a good Islamic school principal. Some of them have even only completed secondary school education—either general or vocational. Data show that the background of the Islamic Kindergarten principal with a bachelor’s degree is 18, and a master’s degree in three people. For the level of Islamic Primary School, there are 84 principals with a bachelor’s degree, 25 with a master’s degree, and 2 with only a Diploma 2 certificate.

On the level of Islamic Junior High School, data show that there are 31 principals with a bachelor’s degree, and 21 with a master’s degree. For the

level of Islamic Senior High School, data show that there are eight principals with a bachelor’s degree and 12 with a master’s degree.

On the other hand, there are 205 private Islamic Kindergarten principals. One hundred sixty-eight of them have a bachelor’s degree, and 6 have a MASTER’S DEGREE, the others have a lower classification from a bachelor’s degree. For the level of Islamic Primary School, the number of Islamic school principals with a bachelor’s degree is 57 and 6 with a master’s degree, while there are 2 Islamic school principals with only a General and Vocational High School Diploma. Data show that for the private Islamic Junior High Schools, there are 40 principals with a bachelor’s degree and 5 with master’s degree. For the level of private Islamic Senior High School, the number of principals with a bachelor’s degree is 20 people and 11 with a master’s degree. There is one private Islamic Senior High School with a Doctorate Degree, although there is also 1 Senior High school graduate.2

Besides the low qualification of education and competencies of these Islamic school principals, the charismatic leadership takes for a model of a leader on Islamic school management, so it hampers the efforts of development, innovation, and Islamic school transformation.3

The third is the resources of Islamic schools. The low quality/qualification of the teaching staff has become an issue for the development of quality and trust in Islamic schools. Data show that the average education qualification of the Islamic school teachers is under the level of a BACHELOR’S DEGREE and there are still many of them. The detail is the following: 49 State Islamic Kindergarten teachers do not have a bachelor’s degree certificate; 29 State Islamic Primary School teachers; and 21 State Islamic Junior High School teachers. However, for the level of Islamic Senior High School, there is only one teacher who does not have a bachelor’s degree certificate.

Fourth is the problem of funding. The funding for Islamic schools mostly relies on a donation from students’ parents, institution foundations in kiyai tenure, and alms donor for the need facilities into education

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3 Ibid.
management not yet effectively fulfilled. The government’s aid is not sufficient, and most Islamic schools do not receive any funding aid from the government. Data also show that in 2006 through 2007, there were less than 25% of the Islamic schools received government’s aid.

The fifth problem for the Islamic schools is the quality of the Islamic schools, of which the problem an accumulation of the various problems faced by the Islamic schools—management, leadership, Human Resource, and funding—leading to the education quality of the Islamic schools. The Indicator for the education quality is the fulfillment of the eight National Education Standards, which are the following: Graduate Competence Standards, Content Standards, Teacher and Education Staff Standards and Education Staff, Process Standards, Infrastructures Standards, Funding Standards, Management Standards, and Education Assessment Standards. The efforts for those eight standards appear to be in need of continuous development to achieve quality Islamic school education.

With the ratification of UUSPN No. 20 of 2003, it is the time for Islamic school education to raise, revise, and improve its quality, and to better introduce itself to the society and to take a more significant role in improving the quality of people’s education in Indonesia. Therefore, the Directorate General of Islamic Education has performed its strategical efforts for the development of Islamic schools based on the 5 (five) fundamental strategies. First is the strategy to improve the service of Islamic school education. The effort to always develop the Islamic schools on any situation continuously performed. The strategy focuses on the effort to prevent the drop-out rate of the students and to maintain the education quality from decreasing. The performed nuclear policy is by maintaining the growth rate

education participation by readjusting the absolute growth rate target of education participation in all levels and types of Islamic schools.

Furthermore, by continuing the scholarship program and funding aid for education operation in all types of Islamic schools, and then gradually decrease the amount of aid along with the improving economic crisis and parents’ ability in paying for their child’s education. Besides, another effort can also be made by gradually integrating the education operation funding aid into the regular budget to support education operation in Islamic schools. Furthermore, another effort can also be made by conceptually and progressively improving and developing alternative education program, especially targeting low-income students. In addition, increasing society’s participation is in their education with related decision making.

Second is through widening the equal opportunity for Islamic school education which focuses on the 9 Year Compulsory Primary Education. The third is the quality improvement and Islamic school education relevance strategy, which covers 4 (four) aspects: curriculum, teacher and other education staff, education Infrastructure, and Islamic school leadership. Fourth is the management for development strategy in the Islamic School Private School. This strategy uses the effort of developing an Islamic school management system, so the institutionally the Islamic schools will have the following abilities. There is the improvement of initiative and creative competencies in managing education, but still within the frame of vision, mission, and the institutional objectives of Islamic schools, the improvement of education institution in the Islamic schools, which is more oriented in professionalism instead of hierarchy, and a quicker, open, fair, and equal education service. The fifth strategy is by emphasizing on the institutional empowerment of the Islamic schools like the Centre for learning, education, and culture. The indicators for success are that is more varieties of Islamic schools provided by the vision, mission, and objectives of Islamic school education supported. The Second is Islamic schools’ improving quality and

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infrastructures and a more conducive learning environment for the students. The third is a higher level of Islamic schools’ independence.

Islamic school as an education institution faces the following obstacles: on the one hand an Islamic school has to try to improve its quality as standardized in the National Education Standards, so it can fulfill the expectations of the stakeholders; fulfill the expectations and needs of the parents, society, work field, and the government. On the other hand, the Islamic schools still describe as a second-class education institution, the favoritism level is still under the general school institution, and it appears that the society has not known Islamic school institutions well enough. Islamic schools also have a particular obstacle, of which they have to adjust themselves to the cultural patterns of the society. The problem provides economic benefit for social habits. The benefit of society is the emergence of reading habits, research culture, critical thinking, and the emergence of a creative and humanist individual.

For the Islamic school institutions to fulfill the needs and expectation of their customer, which can lead to their students’ satisfaction, Islamic schools have to progressively improve their learning quality, apart from their effort to fulfill the National Education Standards. The other important factors that can lead to the decision of learning quality are the Islamic school principal leadership, teachers’ competencies, infrastructures, and Islamic school culture. The Islamic school principal is the most influential person and the decisive figure for the Islamic schools’ policies in the effort to improve learning quality. The teacher is the professional resource with a primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating the students. Teachers have an essential role in the process of learning quality improvement. Infrastructures are all factors related to the direct and indirect tools and equipment used in the learning process. Islamic

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school culture is the pattern of faith and institutional values of Islamic schools that are understood and practiced, so the values can give meaning and become the foundation for the regulations in Islamic school institution education attitude.

The four components are used to identify how far is their influence on the creation of learning quality and their impact on Islamic school’s students’ satisfaction. The Proses teaching-learning is important due to the reason for the existence of an Islamic school educational institution. The management takes on the learning quality which can affect the society’s trust in Islamic schools, and trust from the society’s satisfaction.

Private Islamic School’s Strategy to Achieve Learning Quality

The variables that decide for the learning quality and have an impact on students’ satisfaction in this study are Leadership, Teachers’ competencies, Infrastructures, and Islamic school culture.

First is the leadership, where Fiedler\(^{11}\) contends that, a “leader as the individual in the group given the task of directing and coordinating task-relevant group activities.” Robbins\(^{12}\) also concurs that a “leadership as the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals.” Meanwhile, Yukl\(^{13}\) argues that “leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives.” Therefore, leadership is the ability to move, influence, motivate, persuade, direct advice, guide, train, instruct, forbid, and even punish with the intention that individuals, as a part of an institution, is willing to effectively and efficiently work for themselves or the institution. This definition shows that there are three elements in a leadership—leader, followers, and situation.

In the context of the educational institution, the role of leadership sees performed by the Islamic school principal. Therefore, leadership

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13 Gary Yukl, Kepemimpinan Dalam Organisasi (Jakarta: Prenhallindo, 2001), hlm. 7.
education is the process of influencing all personnel who support the implementation of learning activity to achieve the objectives of education. The Islamic school leadership variables in this study follow what has been mentioned by Gary Yukl\textsuperscript{14} and Bennis and Nanus\textsuperscript{15}, which are personality integrity, proactive, resourceful, and managerial tool.

Second is the teachers’ competency. Competency is the skills and abilities. The term teachers’ competency has some definitions, Broke, and Stone mention that teachers’ competencies as descriptive of the qualitative nature of teacher behavior appear to be entirely meaningful. Meanwhile, Charles E. Johnson contends that competency as a reasonable performance which satisfactorily meets the objective for the desired condition.\textsuperscript{16} According to Barlow, he views that competency is the ability of a teacher to perform his or her duties appropriately responsibly.\textsuperscript{17} Gronczi and Hager further explain the definition of competency as “an integrated view sees competence as a complex combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values displayed in the context of task performance.” Teachers’ competency is a complex combination of knowledge, behavior, skills, and values shown by a teacher in the context of a task performance given to the teacher.

According to Spencer, there are five characteristics in a competency, which are motive, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skill.\textsuperscript{19} Whiddett and Hollyforde define competency as follows: “competencies are behaviors that individuals demonstrate when undertaking job-relevant tasks effectively within a given institutional context.” According to Lefrancois, competency is the capacity to a task, which yields from the process of learning. Cowell defines competency as an active skill/ability.

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\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., hlm. 61.
\textsuperscript{16} Rusyan Tabrani and ES. Hamijaya, Profesionalisme Tenaga Kependidikan (Bandung: Nine Karya Jaya, 1995), hlm. 11.
\textsuperscript{17} Muhibin Syah, Psikologi Pendidikan dengan Pendekatan Baru (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2005), hlm. 229.
\textsuperscript{19} Lyle M. Spencer, Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance (Canada: John wiley & Son, 1993), hlm. 9.
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In Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teacher and Lecturer, competency takes as a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors owned, understood, and mastered by a teacher or lecturer in performing their professional tasks. Teachers’ competency in this study covers pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency, and professional competency.20

The third is the infrastructures. Education infrastructure is anything that covers the tool and equipment that directly uses in the process of education in schools. Hadari Nawawi21 categorizes education infrastructures into two types; first is the educative infrastructure, which is anything that is physical, needed for an effective teaching-learning process. For examples are building, library, room for guidance and counseling, white/blackboards, and teaching aid. Second, non-educative infrastructure, which is anything that is physical, needed to support the implementation of the school program, either directly or indirectly related to the teaching-learning process. The examples are school’s cafeteria, co-op, infirmary, computers, and paper.

The infrastructure variable in this study covers the minimum criteria for the infrastructures. An Islamic school, based on the infrastructure standards, must have at least the following classroom, library, laboratory, managerial or teachers’ room, administration room, religious worship room, counseling room, School Infirmary, student’s organization room, toilet, warehouse, circulation room, sports hall, and school environment.

Fourth is culture. Stephen P. Robbins maintains that “Institutional culture is a common perception held by the institution’s members, a system of shared meaning.”22 Keith Davis mentions that “Institutional culture is the set of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms that share among members.” Hodge and William P. Anthony mention that “Institutional culture is the mix of values, beliefs, assumptions, meaning, and expectations, that members of a particular institution, group or subgroup hold in common and that they use as behavior and problem-solving guides.” Those views show that Islamic school culture is a pattern of values, belief, assumptions, behaviors, and

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20 Presiden Republik Indonesia, “Undang-Undang 5 Tentang Guru Dan Dosen” (2005).
habits of an individual or a group of individuals that influence work behavior and the way of working in an Islamic school institution.

Miller²³ states that institution culture has two values, which are the primary value and secondary value. The culture variable uses the value developed based on Miller’s²⁴ notion, which is the primary culture value consisting of eight components which are the following of objective value, consensus value of commitment on task on hand, strength value, unity in interest value, achievement-based compensation value, empirical-thinking value, solidarity value, and integrity value. Meanwhile, the secondary value consists of the following six, service-oriented value yang, control value, independence value, decision-making value, long and short-term planning value, and state-of-the-art technology value.

Building Quality for Private Islamic School Learning through Leadership

The contribution of Islamic school principal’s leadership in learning quality is 6.9% of the significant contribution to learning quality. Meanwhile, the correlation between Islamic school principal’s leadership and learning quality provides a coefficient value of 0.254 indicating a deep relationship. A positive coefficient indicates a positive relationship, which is if an Islamic school principal’s leadership increases, then the learning quality also increases.

The dimension that provides the lowest contribution in this Islamic school principal’s leadership is the original dimension. The low contribution of this original dimension indicates that the leader does not have a sufficient ability to direct and lead various resources owned by the Islamic school. Meanwhile, the role and function of an Islamic school principal are not only as a leader, but the principal has multiple roles and functions such as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator.

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²⁴ Ibid., hlm. 145.
Islamic school principal as a teacher (educator) cannot be separated from their primary task to educate. In this case, the function of an Islamic school principal as an educator is not only to educate students but also all of the staff and members of their Islamic school. As a manager and administrator, they have the task and responsibility to plan, institutionalize, coordinate, and control the Islamic school resources to perform an effective, efficient, and productive education program. This result also confirms the studies showing that the leader’s performance also has a positive and significant influence on the institution’s performance quality.25

As a supervisor, the principal serves to improve competency and teacher’s professional skills in the effort of creating a better learning process through better ways of teaching which lead to the improvement of students’ learning outcome. As a leader, the principal has a responsibility to motivate all existing resources in Islamic schools, to produce high work ethics and productivity in achieving the learning objectives. As an innovator, the principal is a dynamic and creative individual, always committing to self-development for the success of the Islamic schools. As a motivator, the principal always has to provide the motivation and support to all parties to move forward, to develop along with each’s the expectation, and to develop for the success of the Islamic schools.

Teachers’ Competencies: Effort to improve Learning Quality of Private Islamic School in Yogyakarta

The result of the quantitative calculation shows that the contribution of teachers’ competencies on learning quality is 6.4%, so there is a significant contribution to learning quality. Meanwhile, the correlation between teachers’ competencies and learning quality yields a coefficient value of 0.272 which means there is a deep relationship. A positive coefficient number shows a positive relationship, which means if the teachers’ competencies improve, then the learning quality also improves.

The dimension that yields the lowest contribution in teachers’ competencies is the dimension of competency pedagogy. The low contribution of this dimension of competency pedagogy shows that the teacher does not have the sufficient ability to professionally run and organize their educational tasks in the learning process. The education and training teachers are known to be the key factor in order to improve education quality. The more the teacher has a competency pedagogy, then the implemented learning process will have more quality in line with the results of the other studies shows that teachers’ competency pedagogy is still low. Therefore, then the teachers’ competency pedagogy still needs to be improved.

Competency pedagogy is the skills of a teacher in managing students’ learning, which covers designing learning, organizing learning, designing and organizing evaluation, developing students to actualize their various potentials, and to understand students more comprehensively. Competency pedagogy, in general, is acquired through education and training. Therefore, to improve the quality of the learning system in the Islamic schools or Catholic schools, competency pedagogy then becomes a paramount factor for teachers to master, expecting that the core and deciding factor for education quality lie on the learning process. Meanwhile, the learning process is highly dependent on teachers’ competency pedagogy. Therefore, teachers become the irreplaceable deciding component in creating learning process quality.

Building Infrastructures for Learning Private Islamic School Quality Improvement

The contribution infrastructures on learning quality are 6% of the significant contribution to learning quality. Meanwhile, the correlation between Infrastructures and learning quality yields a coefficient value of 0.269, which means there is a deep relationship. A positive coefficient number shows a positive relationship, which means if the Islamic school culture improves, then the learning quality also improves.

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The dimension that yields the lowest contribution infrastructure is the dimension of the library. The low contribution of this dimension of library infrastructure shows that attention on the fulfillment of information related to knowledge, technology, culture and learning resources for the Islamic school’s society (students, teachers, and staff) is still low. Meanwhile, Bisker argues that the availability of infrastructures and its optimal use is one of the critical factors that lead to the success of Education organization.\(^{27}\)

The role activities of the library in the Islamic school takes in the world of education to serve the function as the center of teaching-learning activity as written in the school’s curriculum. The activities are as a center for pure research which enables the students to develop their creativity and imagination, as the center to read recreational books and for people to spend their leisure time, and as the center for students’ independent learning.

Therefore, Islamic schools’ library is to become an integral part of the learning system in order to improve education quality. A complete, comfortable, and interesting library infrastructure for the students becomes a part of the efforts to improve education quality. The better the Islamic school’s library facility is, then the improvement of learning quality becomes possible. On the other hand, if the library infrastructure and its service are bad, then the farther it is from the improvement of learning quality. Therefore, in the efforts of learning quality improvement, Islamic school’s library no longer becomes a “complement” for the existence of an Islamic school, it now becomes the essential central part in a learning process.

There are at least a number of functions and vital roles of a school’s or Islamic school’s library, which are for the needs of education, recreation, and research—in which “the main function of the public library, school, and other libraries is to provide reading facilities for education, recreation, and research”.

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The Contribution of Private Islamic School’s Culture on Learning Quality

The contribution of the Islamic school’s culture on learning quality is 5.8% for the significant contribution to learning quality. Meanwhile, the correlation between Islamic school culture and learning quality yields a coefficient value of 0.269, which means there is a deep relationship. A positive coefficient number shows a positive relationship, which means if an Islamic school’s culture improves, then the learning quality also improves.

The dimension that yields the lowest contribution to Islamic school culture is the dimension of secondary culture value. The low contribution of this dimension of secondary culture value shows that the people of an Islamic school do not pay enough attention to the dimension secondary culture value in creating culture, in which the dimension includes: the focus on service, discipline, independence, speed in decision-making, strategic control, and advanced technology.

The dimension of service is the most important, since Islamic schools is an institution where its activity is to serve the consumers, such as students and the normal general society and the “stakeholder.” The essence of an education institution aims for providing service. The party who is being served wishes for satisfaction from the service, since that have already made their payments such as in the forms of tuition fee, building investment, evaluation cost, tax payment, and government aid for the school to improve their education service for their member. Therefore, the consumers are entitled to receive satisfactory service.

This service can also be seen from various fields, such as from the physical server, to services in the form of the facility and qualified teachers. The consumers will demand better service when the existing one is unsatisfying; they will pay attention to the condition of the learning classrooms, the leaking roof, and any building condition that may endanger the students, cleanliness, sanitation availability, security, and lights. Furthermore, availability of the facilities, writing boards, chalks, markers, learning technology, library, polite and kind staff, and teachers who are qualified and have good mastery on their subjects, are willing to improve
their knowledge and willing to listen to new information, will lead to students’ and stakeholders’ satisfaction.\textsuperscript{28}

Sheila Kessler\textsuperscript{29} proposes that customer satisfaction has become a paramount part of marketing strategy, and it is stronger than a mere advertisement. Customer satisfaction can also become the indicator of the provided service quality, so the increase or decrease of the income can be seen from how high the customer’s satisfaction is.

**The Contribution of Learning quality of Private Islamic School on Students’ Satisfaction**

The contribution of learning quality on students’ satisfaction is 27.8\% of the significant contribution to students’ satisfaction. Meanwhile, the correlation between learning quality and students’ satisfaction yields a coefficient value of 0.528, which means there is an adequate relationship. A positive coefficient number shows a positive relationship, which means if learning quality improves, and then students’ satisfaction also improves.

The dimension that yields the lowest contribution to learning quality is the dimension of students’ learning. The low contribution of this dimension of students’ learning shows that the process of the learning activity that supports the students to learn has not received enough attention. Successful learning is learning how to learn. Such kind of learning activity can support students to learn independently and with full self-confidence to uncover and improve the student’s self-potential, anywhere and anytime the student is—lifelong education. The learning, therefore, becomes meaningful and joyful.

Meaningful learning is a process of intertwining new information on the relevant concepts within an individual’s cognitive structure. Meaningful learning as a product of a teaching event put the formation of relationships between various aspects, concepts, new information or situation, and relevant components in the students’ cognitive structure. This learning process is not


merely memorizing the concepts or facts, but it is an activity that relates the concepts to create a holistic comprehension, so the well understood and learned concept would not be easily forgotten. Meaningful learning, therefore, is formed, then the teacher must always make efforts to identify and uncover students’ owned concepts and assist for the concepts and the taught new knowledge to be harmoniously combined.

Joyful learning is a fun and joyful teaching-learning approach. Learning is a lifelong activity that does joyfully and successfully. To support for a joyful learning process, then an environment has to be prepared for the students to feel that they are essential, safe, and feeling comfortable. Joyful education begins when the physical environment put existent more beautiful with plants, art, and music. The room has to be appropriate for the students to experience the most optimal learning activity. According to Gordon Dryden, learning is more effective when experienced is in a joyful situation.

The learning principle of meaningful and joyful learning) occurs when a student is happy and learning to know whether the student is learning. The factor to create meaningful and joyful learning, therefore, is the creation of a happy learning environment and stimulate the students to learn. A joyful classroom situation will lead to happiness and joy in learning.

This type of learning leads to the quality of learning. A quality learning not only from the cognitive values, but it is more than that, where the self-willingness of the students arises, and they become aware of the importance of the knowledge that they will forever learn and develop. The task of a teacher is then to make the students learn, to make the students have the determination, to make joyful learning, and make them motivated to learn in a classroom (school) or outside the classroom (society). This type of learning requires active, innovative, creative effective, joyful learning (PAIKEM in Bahasa Indonesia).

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Conclusion

The role and function of the Islamic school principals are not only as a leader, but they have other roles and functions of an educator, a manager, an administrator, a supervisor, a leader, an innovator, and a motivator. The leader is who consecutively made use to support and drive all the potentials and resources of the Islamic schools to reach for high-quality Islamic schools. The pedagogy competency becomes an essential factor that teachers have to master. The core and the pivotal key to education quality that is learning the process in turn defined by the teachers’ pedagogy competency. The completion of the sources of information is knowledge, technology, culture, and learning for the members of Islamic schools in the library. It is a supreme effort to improve the learning quality of Islamic schools. Education learning is that leads the students to learn how to continue to the learning process. This type will lead the learning students to become independent, motivated, on the self-confidence. Learning Process Student will to learn, to uncover and to improve their lifelong education self-potential. Learning becomes meaningful and joyful. A higher learning process quality put the headmaster of Islamic school function themselves not only as a leader, but also an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, innovator, and motivator. The principal focus of learning processes for student services is the key to quality improvement. A transformational Islamic school leadership by the teacher who has full prerequisite competencies, a supportive Islamic school culture, and adequate Infrastructures can lead to the improvement of the Islamic schools' education quality.

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