

The Roles, Opportunities, and Challenges of PAI Teacher's Leadership in Senior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the role of PAI teacher leaders in leading students to achieve their best achievements, opportunities and challenges for them to become PAI teacher leaders. The researchers used interviews, documentation, and observations to collect data. This qualitative research was conducted at several State High Schools in Central Java. They were SMAN 3 Semarang, SMAN 1 Demak, SMKN 4 Kendal, and SMKN 1 Salatiga. The data analysis model used by the researchers was the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. It involved data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawings. The research results show that PAI teacher leaders in several high schools play a role in leading their students to achieve the best achievements in student competitions. Apart from that, PAI teacher leaders have the opportunity to develop their leadership abilities if they are supported by a school principal who distributes his leadership roles well and has a democratic leadership style in leading the school so that teachers are involved in decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources is an essential factor in determining the quality of education. Therefore, the progress of an educational institution can be determined by the quality of its human resources. Schools can develop significantly if the human resources have high-performance quality and competence as teachers with high competencies will be able to manage the teaching-learning process well to produce a high standard of student output. Thus, the competence of a good teacher is closely linked to the success of the learning program, which, in the end, directly impacts student performance, achievement, and school progress.¹

Teachers are less able to innovate in learning. Most do not prepare a learning process focused on a well-organized goal.² Leonard meant that the teacher's competence is very urgent to be further enhanced. Meanwhile, there are still problems related to the quality of teachers, such as self-development programs available from both the government and schools, not seen by teachers as something that can add value for them. The minimum awareness of teachers to share knowledge, skills, and experiences with their colleagues, and to strengthen each other and successfully develop the learning process in the school, the low interest of teachers to write and develop and advance the practice of teaching-learning in the study room with continuously running Classroom Action Research, as well as not a few teachers who are still mentally easy to find or think instantly.³

Those are the series of problems related to the competence of teachers.⁴ Besides, some teachers in various Islamic schools have not met the standards of academic competence and qualification. Some of them do not have good skills in IT or digital technology. Although there are Google Meet or Google Classroom, there are Zoom Meeting, and there is YouTube, most of them have not been able to take advantage of the variation of technology in online learning properly. Thus, some teachers in Indonesia still have not met the established standards of competence.

Given that teachers' competence in Indonesia is still low, as seen above, according to the UKG in 2023, they only predicted to grow, which means they only scored below 51 (maximum score of 100). Not many in every educational unit scored in the 60s, 70, and above. From the results of these pedagogical competence tests, many teachers still teach boringly and have not mastered the proper learning methods. It can be caused by a disorderly condition, such as teaching that does not correspond to its field of expertise because it meets the quota and teaching subject matters that differ from the academic background. For example, a teacher from a social science academic background, teaching

¹ Wahyu Hidayat Badrudin, Ari Irawan, and Angwar Romdoni, "Teacher Competency and Online Learning Management as Exploration of Factors Affecting Strengthening Student Character Education," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 3 (2021): 157–168.

² Ach Saifullah et al., "Dimensions of Transformational Leadership in Improving the Competitiveness of Islamic Education Institutions," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2023): 163–179.

³ Leonard Leonard, "Kompetensi Tenaga Pendidik di Indonesia: Analisis Dampak Rendahnya Kualitas SDM Guru dan Solusi Perbaikannya," *Formatif: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA* 5, no. 3 (2015): 192–201.

⁴ Aldo Redho Syam, Achmad Supriyanto, and Mustiningsih Mustiningsih, "Democratic Leadership and Decisions Making on Education in Islamic Perspective," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 18, no. 1 (2020): 33–47.

English subject matter. So, the teacher's pedagogical competence still needs to be enhanced.

Some literature from journals discusses the roles of PAI teachers in leading their students. However, very little of the literature discusses the roles, opportunities, and challenges of Islamic Education (PAI) to lead their students to achieve their best in competition, in Central Java, Indonesia secondary schools. This article aims to analyze the leadership roles of PAI teachers for their pupils, and the supporting and hindering factors of PAI teachers to lead their students in the outsides of the classroom, secondary school. Given that PAI teachers teaching in secondary schools are still limited in their roles, whether it is mutual support of teachers, learning management, alternating curricula, or preparing students to enter the multi-national competition that must also be coupled with the circulation of an ideal learning model, transportation funding that is very important to sustain smoothness in the process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a qualitative approach. In this context, the research was analyzed from a sociological perspective within the boundaries of the school educational environment. Data required are the data of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, students, and principals, as informants of this research, from several secondary schools in Central Java, Indonesia, as the primary data source. The informants were selected by snowball sampling because it is more effective for finding, selecting, and taking them from their network. The data were the key informants. Other data is also needed, from observations to feedback, as well as the impact of the field research processes in the acquisition and data collection. Secondary data sources are written documents such as scientific journals, books, and applicable law.

This research was qualitative, with a multi-location approach at some Central Java State High Schools, SMAN 3 Semarang, SMAN 1 Demak, SMKN 4 Kendal, and SMKN 1 Salatiga. The data collection techniques are done through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies. The interviews are conducted with 4 selected Islamic Education teacher leaders (one PAI teacher from each school, student, and their principals) to explore the roles of PAI teachers in leading the students to reach the best achievement in the competition. The data analysis model used by the researchers was the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, covering data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawings.⁵

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teacher leadership can be defined in various meanings. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, teacher leadership is teacher leadership inside and outside the classroom, joining and contributing to the teacher professional learning community and leader, influencing other teachers through improved educational practices. Furthermore, Muijs and Harris stated that teacher leadership refers to the collective attitudes and practices carried

⁵ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (Singapore: SAGE Publications, 2014), 12-14.

out by teachers. They argue that teacher leadership involves a group of teachers and Teachers leaders who work together in teams.⁶ They stated that teacher leadership is related to their leadership role and power to make decisions without leaving the classroom. The Center for Total Reform and School Improvement defines teacher-led as a process in which teachers, individually and collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices to improve the quality of education. Muijs quoted Wasley and Harris defines teacher leadership as the ability to encourage colleagues to change, and do something they had not previously thought of doing. Meanwhile, in the view of Danielson, teacher's leadership can be formal (i.e., instructional coaches and department chairs) and informal (i.e., taking the initiative to solve a problem). So, teachers can become formal and non-formal teacher leaders. Examples of formal teachers are trainers and institutional leaders. Meanwhile, examples of informal teacher leaders are any teacher who takes the initiative to solve problems at school. Furthermore, teacher leaders are also defined as teachers who want to make things different. A teacher encourages his/her peers to be motivated and contributes to improving the teaching and learning process at school.

The teacher's leadership style in the learning process focuses on relationships and creates a classroom environment that supports achieving goals. Learning depends on the teacher's ability to manage and lead the classroom. Teacher leadership style is crucial in the learning process because it serves as a facilitator that affects the interaction between the teacher as a leader and the student as the receiver of the leader. Teachers with a good leadership style can provide guidance, give advice, influence, direct, advise, guide, motivate, and motivate their students to achieve high results and a specific goal.⁷

The way teachers manage learning is essential.⁸ The attitude and behavior of students can be influenced by responsible teachers and encourage them to learn well—the ability to lead the teacher and guide his pupils toward the goal of learning. Leading teachers is crucial to learning success.⁹ Teachers become the center where students learn, and they are called the center because the role of teachers is crucial to learning success. Teacher's teaching style is a term that refers to the way a teacher leads or supervises a student during the learning process. Teacher leadership styles also influence how students can speak and make decisions.¹⁰

As a leading teacher in the learning management system in the classroom, teachers have a strategic role in ensuring a good quality of classroom learning. It is because it is the

⁶ Ashif Az Zafi, Partono Partono, and Tasallia Nima Kamil, "A Learning Model of Religious Moderation: Learning from Islamic Schools," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2023): 197–208.

⁷ Zalik Nuryana, "Academic Reform and Sustainability of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia," *International Journal of Educational Development* 89 (2022): 102–134.

⁸ Asri Karolina, "The Implementation of Brain Based Learning to Improve Students' Critical Thinking Ability in Islamic Education Philosophy Course in PAI Study Program STAIN Curup," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 16, no. 1 (2018): 189–222.

⁹ Athok Fu'adi, "An Empirical Study to Evaluate the Measurement of Leadership Management in Superior Islamic Higher Education," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 1 (2023): 1–15.

¹⁰ Carina Schott, Henrico van Roekel, and Lars G. Tummars, "Teacher Leadership: A Systematic Review, Methodological Quality Assessment and Conceptual Framework," *Educational Research Review* 31 (2020): 100352.

responsibility of teachers to develop learning devices tailored to students' situations, conditions, and needs so that teachers can help students develop and understand what they are learning. In addition, teachers are also responsible for ensuring that learning devices fit students' needs.

The Role of Teacher Leadership in Creating Learning that is Multi-Functional and Ideal

The teacher's leadership style can influence the pupil. A good teacher must have some qualities, such as discipline, good teaching skills, a good understanding of the matter, motivation and innovation, and a good personality. Autocratic is the most common style of teacher leadership. This style can prevent students from sharing knowledge. In this way, the teacher rejects the student's criticism, input, and opinion.¹¹ They also become the sole owners in determining what is taught to students and setting learning goals based on individual goals. Besides, teachers rely too much on their formal authority as a source of knowledge.¹² Learning involves coercion and punishment of students. As a result, students only participate in activities when there are instructors; if there are no instructors, all learning activities will stop.¹³ Therefore, learning depends heavily on the role of the teacher.

A democratic teacher leadership style allows students to participate in the learning process and makes them have fun with the material they learn. Even when a teacher does not supervise them, students can learn productively, and this method helps create an ideal learning environment. There is a theory that a good leader is based on innate talent, education, and experience. For a teacher to succeed, they need to have some skills.¹⁴ The education experts from Stanford University and the University of Sydney have found 22 types of teaching skills, such as forming groups, creating appropriate benchmarks, achieving solutions, identifying and collecting existing behaviors, giving feedback, applying appreciation and punishment, controlling participation, reducing repetition and redundancy, providing illustrations and examples, asking basic questions, different directions questions, high-level questions, problem-solving questions, and problem-solving questions.¹⁵

The best method to measure a teacher's ability as a leader is to use the metrics of competence in his leadership.¹⁶ One way to measure a teacher's ability is to see how they can plan and create a good learning experience, especially in Islamic lessons, and encourage

¹¹ Héctor Moreno-Casado et al., "Teacher Leadership and Students' Psychological Needs: A Multilevel Approach," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 116 (2022): 103763.

¹² Cornelius Robert U-Sayee and Emmanuel Brenyah Adomako, "Supervisory Practices and Challenges Faced by Senior High School Principals in Greater Monrovia, Liberia: Implications for Quality Education," *Heliyon* 7, no. 4 (2021): 1–8.

¹³ Kazuaki Okubo et al., "Present Issues and Efforts to Integrate Sustainable Development Goals in a Local Senior High School in Japan: A Case Study," *Journal of Urban Management* 10, no. 1 (2021): 57–68.

¹⁴ Mimpin Sembiring et al., "Measurement Model Data of Academic Resilience for Students in Senior High School of Middle Seminary," *Data in Brief* 34 (2021): 106669.

¹⁵ Vonda Haria Ningsih and Wiwik Wijayanti, "Teacher Leadership in Building Student Character: Educational Challenges in the 21st Century" (3rd International Conference on Current Issues in Education (ICCIE 2018), (Atlantis Press, 2019): 519–522.

¹⁶ Norma Ghamrawi and Hessa Al-Thani, "Wellbeing Leadership: Perceptions of Pre-Service School Leaders," *Heliyon* 9, no. 11 (2023): 1–11.

ethics as part of the learning process. In addition, they need to organize components dynamically and systematically to support students' learning experiences at school.¹⁷ Moreover, teachers must be able to encourage, guide, help, and enhance the student's learning experience. Furthermore, they must be able to direct, control, maintain, and create beneficial experiences, especially experiences that have a positive spiritual impact on pupils.

Teachers must create an active, creative, and flexible learning environment. They also have a vision, a purpose, and a mission to help students achieve their best.¹⁸ The teachers must have a variety of experience for this task, teachers should have a deep understanding of the theory of effective leadership. In addition, they must be able to plan, control, and implement education effectively. Besides, making decisions and setting academic goals is the responsibility of teachers too. They must be able to encourage the collaboration of parents and students toward academic objectives.¹⁹ Through their daily interactions, students can witness and understand how teachers lead. Teachers must have the expertise to comply with the regulations and professionals discussed earlier. There is a strong correlation between the competence of teachers and students' achievement.

Based on the interviews of PAI teachers in several secondary schools in Central Java, Indonesia. These are the roles of PAI teachers to lead the students to reach the students' achievement especially in the competition.

Table 1. The Role of PAI Teachers

No	Informants' Statements
1	I guide students to the national champion level. National championship achievements have been achieved by the children I guide. National scientific work won 2nd rank nationally, continued the National Spiritist Camp, and alumni said, "Thank you, sir, sir, in student affairs our aspirations are accommodated; what do we want to be facilitated?" It finally turned into a national achievement in pencak silat. Then twice in Cibubur, then Bangka Belitung, up to the national level. ²⁰
2	In the PAI quiz competition, we won as the First winner at the district level and the winner in the PAI debate and quite often won in the PAI competition. Our student also won as the "1st winner in reading and reciting Qur'an (MTQ) district then took part in competitions in the province as the first winner too". ²¹
3	I build children's character by being a role models in terms of punctuality in congregation and the teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, the more

¹⁷ Sanni Kahila, Johanna Heikka, and Nina Sajaniemi, "Familiar and Comfortable vs. Unfamiliar and Demanding—Students' Discourses on Teachers' Responsibility and Leadership in Finnish Early Childhood Education," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 140 (2024): 104495.

¹⁸ Piret Oppi and Eve Eisenschmidt, "Developing a Professional Learning Community through Teacher Leadership: A Case in One Estonian School," *Teaching and Teacher Education: Leadership and Professional Development* (2022): 1–10.

¹⁹ Tasha Riley et al., "Weaving Stories of Strength: Ethically Integrating Indigenous Content in Teacher Education and Professional Development Programmes," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 142 (2024): 104513.

²⁰ Siti Asiyah, the Headmaster of SMAN Demak, Central Java, Interview on December 22, 2022, 08.30-11.30 AM.

²¹ Yuwana, the Headmaster of SMAN 03 Semarang, Central Java, Interview on January 26, 2023, 09.30-12.00 AM.

children I observed, the more they improved their character and mentality, and the better they were at studying and achieving at school.²²

- 4 I am a spiritual advisor and an OSIS and MPK supervisor, so I automatically do general studies as the spiritual advisor, specifically for MPK religions. I usually do it for debate competitions long beforehand; for example, for the 2023 competition, I already formed a group of candidates for the PAI debate competition in 2022. Then, for example, this tambourine I created a tambourine group, so in preparation for the competition, I had prepared it long beforehand. Thus, by being well-prepared, they can be the winner.²³
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The leadership of teachers of Islamic Religious Education requires some competence. According to Article 39 (2) of the RI Act No. 20 of 2003, educators are considered to be the powers of professional teachers responsible for carrying out the planning on the learning side and helping with the guidance and training process to the community. Therefore, teachers should not only tell students what they know but also be able to build students' mental skills and attitudes. Law No. 4 of 2005 Article 10 (1) on the staff of educators and teachers or lecturers states that teachers must have four competencies: pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. Whereas based on the regulation of the religious minister of the Republic Indonesia, number 16, 2023, stated that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers must have leadership competencies besides those four competencies.

Teachers of Islamic Education must have leadership skills to lead, educate, and influence students and entire school citizens to implement and practice Islamic values and culture. Since they are expected to provide good service to their students, PAI teachers must have a strong leadership spirit. Teachers give students what they know in the learning process and act as trainers, encouraging students to reach their best potential.²⁴

PAI teachers play an essential role in providing moral education to their students. They have a greater responsibility to teach students the values of spirituality and morality. Therefore, spiritual principles should be taught to the students so that they can implement them in their daily activities. Religious lessons and relevant activities strengthen their understanding of Islamic Education subject matters and should be given to encourage the students to apply morality. To begin cultivating these values, schools can create programs that integrate Islamic values into the material. They can also oversee activities, especially those related to teaching in Islamic Education, and motivate them by participating in student competitions.²⁵

Islamic Education is an education of Islamic religion. Consequently, it is an

²² Siti Asiyah, the Headmaster of SMAN Demak, Central Java, Interview on December 22, 2022, 08.30-11.30 AM.

²³ Yuwana, the Headmaster of SMAN 03 Semarang, Central Java, Interview on January 26, 2023, 09.30-12.00 AM.

²⁴ R Roro et al., "E-Learning as Education Media Innovation in the Industrial Revolution and Education 4.0 Era," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government* 27, no. 1 (2021): 2868–2880.

²⁵ Fakhrol Rijal, Tasnim Idris, and Darmiah Darmiah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Multikulturalisme dalam Pembelajaran PAI di Sekolah Dasar," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 17, no. 1 (2019): 99–117.

educational process in which teachers give their leadership, and students can examine the understanding and practice of Islamic Education concerning the way of life to obtain well-being both in the world and the Hereafter.²⁶ Religious teachers should be good examples for their students. They will be acceptable examples for others and themselves by following the *ibda' binafsik* principle.

The principle of leadership of teachers of Islamic Education (PAI) is more inclined towards Islamic Education, especially regarding policy and integrity. An Islamic Education teacher should perform with integrity in every activity and become a role model. Then, the responsibility for what he leads will increase. They have double responsible, especially in giving Islamic knowledge, because every wrong deed or word will be responsible in the Hereafter.²⁷ A good PAI teacher can set an example for his pupils. Teachers must be respected and imitated by students and the community around them. The morality and ethics of a teacher towards his pupils and the way an educator can behave and act can influence the determination of a good morality for each student according to the various purposes desired of a perfect human being.²⁸

In the Qur'an, surah Al-Mujadilah, verse 58, verse 11, it is explained that Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who are given knowledge in a degree. Allah is All-Knowing of what you do. Teachers are the most essential factor in determining the success of learning processes in educational institutions. Teachers serve as examples and models for their students and are responsible for developing and choosing learning materials, resources, and media. Therefore, a teacher must understand the character's experience, ability, and competence as it will positively impact. Without a good teacher, education will not work. Teachers affect all aspects of education, including the quality and success of teaching and learning processes and achieving the goals of effective and organizational learning for students.²⁹ Based on the research data, it can be explored that one of the essential roles of a teacher is to lead the students to achieve student's learning achievement.

²⁶ Irzhal Fauzi and Rofiatu Hosna, "The Urgency of Education in Islamic Boarding Schools in Improving the Quality of Islamic-Based Character Education," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 1 (2022): 63–76.

²⁷ Dudiyo Dudiyo, Dedi Djubaedi, and Nawawi Nawawi, "The Role of PAI Teacher Practices in Strengthening Student Religious Moderation in Banyumas District," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 06, no. 01 (2023): 143–53.

²⁸ Calits Mumbahij Bahi and Achadi Budi Santosa, "Pengembangan Kepemimpinan Guru melalui Strategi Kepala Sekolah yang Efektif," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 8, no. 4 (2022): 2597–2603.

²⁹ Abdul Muid, "Internalization of Tolerance Value: Strategies and Innovations of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Senior High Schools," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (2022): 105–114.

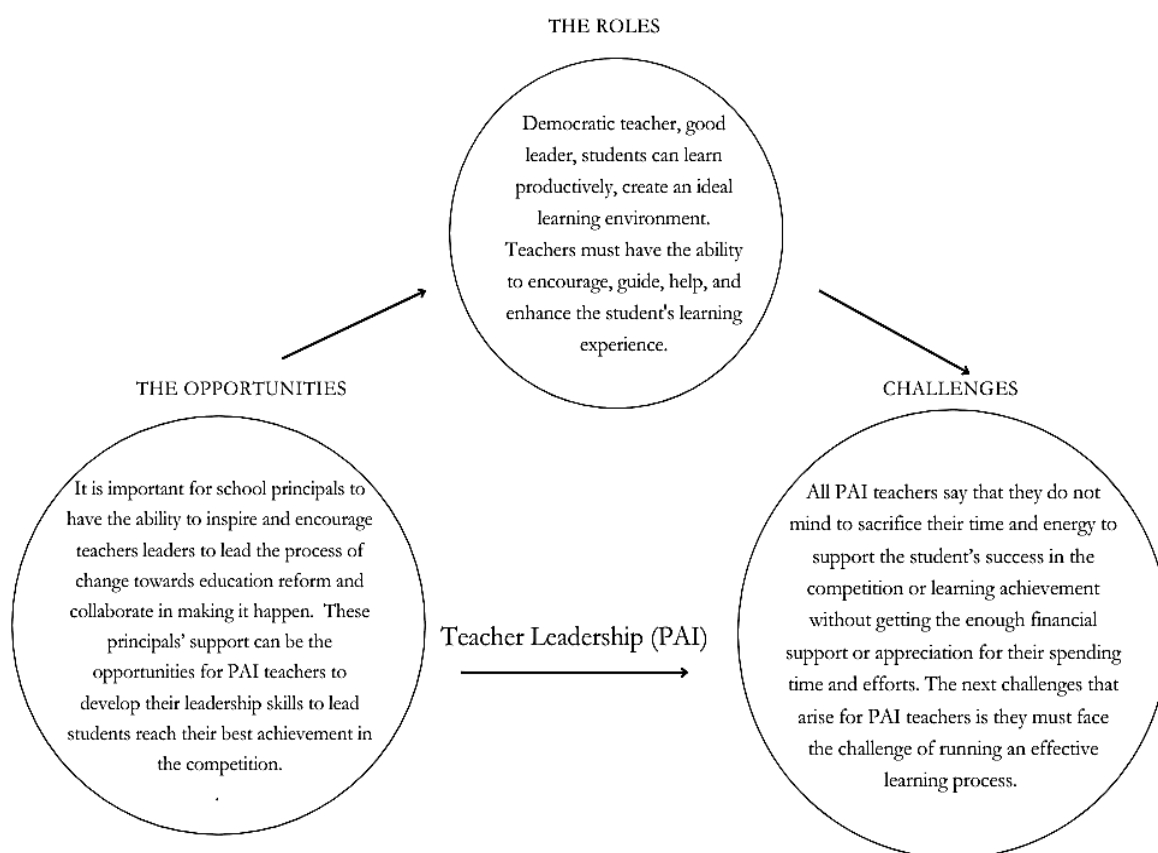


Figure 1. The Roles, Opportunities, and Challenges of PAI Teacher's Leadership

The Opportunities of PAI Teachers to Lead Students to Reach the Best Achievement

Academic reference studies found that the factors that support teacher leadership. These include teachers supported by the principal, a culture of collaboration in schools, schools as learning organizations, and teachers involved in decision-making as learning organizations. Besides, mutual support among teachers is also essential to teacher leadership. School principals need to be able to inspire and encourage teacher leaders to lead the process of change toward education reform and collaborate in making it happen.³⁰ The principal's leadership style and actions significantly influence teacher leaders' motivation to perform their roles. Moreover, one of Cowdery's principal roles is to develop teachers to become leaders. In addition, Mangin and Stoelinga also have stated that school principals are a very influential source of support for teacher leaders. Furthermore, headmaster support is critical to successful teacher leadership development.

Based on the interview with the principals from several PAI teachers in secondary schools of Central Java, Indonesia. These are the ways that they do to support PAI teachers

³⁰ William Kofi Nkegbe, "A Logit Model Approach to the Examination of Parents' Willingness to Contribute Towards the Cost of Senior High School Education: The Case of Parents in Tamale, Ghana," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 9 (2024): 100832.

to develop their leadership skills for the improvement of students learning. These principals' support can allow PAI teachers to develop leadership skills to lead students to achieve their best in the competition.

Table 2. Data from the Leaders of Schools

No	Informants' Statements
1	Properly distributing school leadership tasks to teachers, distributing leadership tasks to teachers is one way for teachers to participate in the leadership of the school principal. School principals need to delegate leadership tasks to teachers so that they can develop their leadership skills. ³¹
2	Principal of M.U.S. Distributing his leadership duties by giving delegations as wide as possible to PAI teachers to prepare religious programs in schools and fully manage mosque activities so that the mosque is prosperous with various religious activities led directly by PAI teachers. ³²
3	Be democratic by allowing teachers to convey their aspirations, opinions, suggestions, and criticism to the school principal. Teachers can personally provide direct advice via the W.A., meet him in person, or put him in the criticism and suggestions box in the waiting room in front of the principal's office. ³³
4	The principal of M.U.S. stated that he created a daily morning meeting program for 30 minutes every day for teachers to directly provide suggestions or ask questions to the principal, which ended with prayer with all the teachers every morning. He said he was open to various teacher inputs and held this program. From here, he trained teachers to voice their opinions well. ³⁴
5	Motivate and facilitate teachers not to be reluctant to develop themselves by participating in various trainings, seminars, and workshops or professional learning, as well as getting out of their comfort zone, just teaching students at school, and feeling satisfied with the knowledge and skills they acquired during their bachelor's degree. ³⁵

Challenges of PAI Teacher Leader

The result of interviewing all PAI teachers and principals in several secondary schools in Central Java school usually voluntarily teachers' times supportts their students to reach their best achievement in the competition. Their leadership job is not rewarded for leading students outside the classroom. So, the challenge is from the school structure with no reward system to appreciate teachers leading their students outside the classroom, even

³¹ Siti Asiyah, the Headmaster of SMAN Demak, Central Java, Interview on December 22, 2022, 08.30-11.30 AM

³² Yuwana, the Headmaster of SMAN 03 Semarang, Central Java, Interview on January 26, 2023, 09.30-12.00 AM.

³³ Santosa, the Headmaster of SMKN Salatiga, Central Java, Interview on August 21, 2023, 09.00-11.45 AM

³⁴ Yuwana, the Headmaster of SMAN 03 Semarang, Central Java, Interview on January 26, 2023, 09.30-12.00 AM.

³⁵ Santosa, the Headmaster of SMKN Salatiga, Central Java, Interview on August 21, 2023, 09.00-11.45 AM.

though they often spend their own money for transportation and accommodation when accompanying the students to join the competition. The innovation can be done by improving communication between teachers and collaboration from all sides so that teachers feel well appreciated for their performance, improving the teacher's awareness on the other side of incentive costs, and providing learning resources adapted to the context.³⁶

Although all PAI teachers say they do not mind sacrificing their time and energy to support the student's success in the competition or learning achievement without getting enough financial support or appreciation for their spending time and efforts. However, it would be better if the principals make a reward system for teachers' leaders, and allocate the money to support the teachers financially if they are involved in leadership roles outside the classroom. Islamic Education (PAI) roles in leading the students are not easy because they are not only responsible for building students' morality, especially in the present era when a lack of moral discipline toward students has become a common problem in society, but also improving the ability to have a good understanding in PAI. Thus, more support from principal should be improved by giving more rewards for their leadership effort.³⁷

The following challenges that arise for PAI teachers is that they must face the challenge of running an effective learning process. The educational program known as Islamic Education aims to provide moral education based on religious values. The goal is to change the interaction between educators and students to create a good collaboration. It will produce a school or community with good wisdom and faith based on Islam. It is challenging to implement.

There is also another challenge often faced by teachers and students in teaching PAI, and PAI teachers face different characteristics of students when teaching in the classroom. The behavior-forming process of religious teachers can cooperate with other teachers to help the diversity of student characteristics. The pupil's character tends to be challenging to regulate, and given input, either explicitly or indirectly, will be faced with various parties, which is a challenge for teachers.³⁸

The less positive view of PAI teaching is clearly due to many factors, both those coming from outside the school and factors in PAI's teaching practice that are still very weak. Among them, Amin Abdullah discussed the reasons for the success of PAI teaching in schools in the book *Islamic Education Paradigm* by Muhaimin et al. He stated that religious education focused more on cognitive religious theoretical issues than actual worship practices. Religious education does not understand how students internalize religious cognitive knowledge into "meaning" and "value" through various media, forums, and approaches. Religious education strongly emphasizes textual correspondence, emphasizing mastering existing religious texts.

³⁶ Abdul Haris Rasyidi and S. Abdul Jalil Al Idrus, "Exploration of PAI Teacher Challenges and Opportunities; Case Study of Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum, in East Lombok Elementary Schools," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2024): 506–514.

³⁷ Abdul Halik Nasaruddin and Suyatno Ladiqi, "Digital-Based Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Learning Model at Senior High School," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 6, no. 1 (2023): 79–92.

³⁸ Muhammad Racmatul Aziz, Dwi Esti Andriani, and Aris Suharyadi, "Indonesian Teacher Leadership Practices," dalam *2nd Yogyakarta International Conference on Educational Management/ Administration and Pedagogy (YICEMAP 2019)* (Atlantis Press, 2020), 142–146.

CONCLUSION

PAI teachers play an essential role in providing moral education to their students. They have a greater responsibility to teach students the values of spirituality and morality. Therefore, spiritual principles are taught to their students so that they can implement them daily. In addition, PAI Teachers create an active, creative, and flexible learning environment. They also have a vision, a purpose, and a mission to help students achieve their best. The research shows that PAI teachers have the role of leading their students, not only in the classroom but also outside of the classroom, to reach the best achievement in competition. Several PAI teachers can lead their students to be the winners, especially in the various competitions related to PAI subject matters, such as the debate in PAI subject matters, reading and reciting the Holy Qur'an (MTQ), and Quiz competitions in the field of PAI. Their leadership roles can be developed well if they are supported by the principal who can properly distribute school leadership tasks to teachers, delegate as wide as possible to PAI teachers to prepare religious programs in schools and fully manage mosque activities in schools, apply democratic leadership style by allowing PAI teachers to convey their aspirations, opinions, suggestions, and even criticism to the school principal, created a daily morning meeting program for about 20 - 30 minutes every day for teachers to directly provide suggestions or asking a question to the principal, motivate and facilitate teachers not to be reluctant to develop themselves by participating in various trainings, seminars, and workshops or professional learning.

The challenges of teaching PAI are an insufficient number of hours in PAI, poor readiness of students to study, a variety of learning through unattractive media as well as a lack of suitable facilities. The focus is still more on the cognitive domain than the affective one. PAI teachers can be hindered by the structure of the school, in which PAI teachers have to voluntarily give their time and effort to support their students to reach the best achievement outside of the classroom. So, their responsibility has been doubled by conducting leadership jobs outside of the classroom and by making sure their students not only have good morals and attitudes in this challenging era of moral degradation, and make sure that their students can reach the best achievement. Therefore, the principal needs to pay more attention and support PAI teachers by giving more rewards and appreciation who want to lead their students to achieve the best outside of the classroom.

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