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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PRINCIPAL'S ROLES IN IMPROVING ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOLS' EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN BANDAR LAMPUNG, INDONESIA

Elvy Risdalina, Siti Patimah, Zulhannan, Erlina and Koderi

Post-Graduate Program of Islamic Education Management Study Program, Raden Intan State Islamic University of Lampung, Indonesia.

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Abstract

The principals' roles in leading educational institutions are very important, especially in determining the direction and educational policies. The principal is a leader who encourages the school to realize its vision, mission, goals, and programs in a planned manner to establish a high-quality school. Therefore, this research aims to describe and analyze the roles of principals in improving the quality of Islamic education in Bandar Lampung. The approach of this research was descriptive qualitative. In collecting the data, observation, interviews, and documentation were employed. The researchers then analyzed the collected data through data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion. The sources of data were the principals, vice-principals, teachers, employees, and students. It can be concluded that the principals' role is first, formulating competency standards for graduates to compete in leading universities, both public and private. Second, special class students must memorize chapter 30 of the Quran and at least 1 chapter for general class students. The graduates are required to master three languages: English, Arabic, German / French. Third, monitoring the learning process through CCTV makes it easier to observe students and teachers during the teaching and learning activities. Fourth, the implementation of varied assessment standards between subjects and grades by referring to the 2013 curriculum.

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Introduction:-

Education is essential for humankind. It is an effort to improve the quality of life and human dignity. Education aims to prepare students to become human beings who believe and fear God the almighty, have a noble character, tough, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible [2]. High-quality education and strong and credible principal leadership are needed to achieve these national education goals. It will not be easy to create virtuous human beings without high-quality educational management and principal leadership. Principal leadership can be seen from their performance when leading the school [3].

Improving the quality of human resources needs to be prioritized by the government is facing the rapid development of technology and information in the globalization era. The main problem of education in Indonesia is performance management. This performance management is considered one of the factors influencing education,

Corresponding Author:- Elvy Risdalina, Koderi

Address:- Post-Graduate Program of Islamic Education Management Study Program, Raden Intan State Islamic University of Lampung, Indonesia.

which covers a wide range of educational resources related to output quality. Improving the quality of education is a development target in national education and is an integral part of quality improvement efforts. Based on the efforts to improve the quality of learning in schools, students' main demands are students' formation as ideal human beings. Education plays a very important role in shaping individuals according to the theoretical standards or paradox. To realize this goal, the government is seriously handling the education sector because a proper educational system fosters the emergence of qualified future generations qualified and able to adapt to society, nation, and state [4].

The principals' roles can be seen from their performance. The performance or work achievement can be interpreted as the work achievement based on a certain organization's rules and standards [5]. Simamora states that performance is a certain requirement that directly reflects the produced output, both in terms of quantity and quality [6]. The output can be physical or non-physical. An assessment is used to determine teachers' performances. The assessment is carried out to oversee the organization's resources, measure the resources' efficiency, and identify things that need to be improved. Performance assessment is an important factor in improving teachers' performance and job satisfaction. It can show the teachers' inadequacy to be identified so that strategies can improve their performances. [7]. Allah entrusts the human being to become the caliph of Allah (representative of Allah) on earth as written in Surah Al Baqarah verse 30 [8]:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً ۗ قَالُوْۤا اَنْتَ جَعَلُۭۤا فِىْهَا مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ فِىْهَا وَيَدۡسِفُكَ
الۡدِمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ

Meaning: "And [mention, O Muḥammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority."1 They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?"2 He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."

This verse explains the duties and responsibilities of humans on this earth as the caliph or the leader. They are tasked to realize their holy mission as the bearer of mercy for the universe. At the same time, as Allah's servants who are always obedient, they are called to devote their dedication to Allah's path. Humans are given the mandate. Thus, to maintain this mandate, Allah has equipped humans with conceptual abilities or potentials (*fitrah*). The low managerial ability of educational organizations is due to the lack of educational management skills that reflect educational leadership, both conceptual and practical levels. The life components outside of educational organizations have developed rapidly and demand-responsive, accommodative, and appreciative attitudes to respond to the times' challenges. The challenges can be overcome by utilizing strengths and opportunities and analyzing weaknesses and threats to be turned into strengths to formulate the vision, mission, and goals of National education.

The principals as leaders need to have future insights. Soebagio states that educational leadership needs to be made as the main attention because thinkers and workers who can ultimately improve human resources' quality can be made. The most important thing is that education prepares skilled, qualified, and ready-to-use personnel to meet the needs of the business and industrial communities and other communities [9]. The principals perform the following three functions: helping teachers understand, select, and formulate educational goals to be achieved, mobilizing teachers, employees, students, and community members to succeed in educational programs in schools, creating harmonious, healthy, dynamic, and comfortable schools as a work environment so that all members can work with full productivity and get high job satisfaction [10].

In the perspective of national education policy, according to Ahamad Sudrajat, there are seven roles of school principals: (1) educator; (2) managers; (3) administrator; (4) supervisor; (5) leader; (6) creator of work climate; and (7) entrepreneur [11]. Therefore, the principal is a caliph, ruler, or leader who is expected to realize the nation's hopes to carry out the mandate and be accountable for all of the leadership actions. Therefore, it is necessary to have a principal who has future insight and sufficient ability in moving the school organization. The idea is in line with the word of Allah in Surah Al-An'am verse 165 [8]:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

115

Meaning: And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but He is Forgiving and Merciful (QS. Al-An 'am 65).

The essential meaning of leadership in Islam is to realize the caliphate on earth for the sake of goodness and reformation. The verse above is one of the foundations of high-quality education. It is also related to Allah's command in Surah An Nisa'verse 65 [8]:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ
بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ
وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

16

Meaning: But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission (Surah An-Nisa: 65).

The principals, as educators, must instill, promote, and increase mental, moral, physical, and artistic values to teachers or other functional personnel, administrative staff, and students. To instill this role, the principal must show a persuasive and exemplary attitude [12]. This persuasive and exemplary attitude will color the leadership, including the coaching carried out by the principal to the schools' teachers. The verse above is one of the foundations for the standard process in learning. As an educator, supervisor, motivator, leader, and innovator, the principal must carry out coaching for employees and teachers because human factors are the central factors that determine the entire movement of organizations' activities. No matter how sophisticated the technology, it still needs the human factor. For this role, it is necessary to research the role of school principals in improving the quality of Islamic high school education in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia.

Research Method:-

This research employed the qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth picture of the principals' roles in improving the quality of graduate competencies at Al Kautsar Senior High School and Al Azhar Senior High School in Bandar Lampung. Data and facts were collected to obtain a holistic and in-depth picture of the principals' roles in improving the quality of graduate competencies in Islamic high schools in Bandar Lampung. The two research subjects had different characteristics in terms of the regulatory aspect and the activities.

The data were obtained from the primary and secondary data sources related to the focus of this research. The primary data were obtained from research subjects or the field and the laboratory. The primary data are data collected from observations, interviews, and notes from the research field [13].

The secondary data were obtained from other parties but not directly obtained by the researchers. It has its purpose and has categorization and classification according to research needs. The classification may not be suitable for the researchers' needs, so it must be rearranged according to the interests or the problem at hand. If the secondary data are deemed incompatible, then the researchers should collect the data by themselves because the data collected by other people has a specific purpose. The researchers must consider how to use the materials for research purposes. Secondary data of this research were documentation and data reports provided by two other research locations.

The research data collected were focused on the principals' roles in improving the quality of graduate competence at Al Kautsar Senior High School and Al Azhar Senior High School in Bandar Lampung and its implications for learning so that the schools could have good quality. Each focus of the research was described in the form of indicators and sub-indicators to facilitate the problem mapping and data collection. The data collection was carried out in natural settings (natural conditions) by utilizing non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

The data analysis used in this research adopted Miles and Huberman's theory. In principle, the data analysis activities had been carried out throughout the research activity (during data collection) by simplifying the data (data reduction), presenting the data (data display), and drawing conclusions [14]. To obtain validity, the researchers conducted data validation techniques based on four criteria, namely 1) credibility (degree of trust); 2) transferability; 3) dependability; and 4) confirmability. [15]

Results and Discussion:-

Research Findings

Based on the research focus, data exposure, research findings, and cross-case analysis, the results of the research on the principals' role in improving the quality of education in Al Kautsar Senior High School and Al Kautsar Senior High School are as follows:

First, the graduates' competence standards at SMA Al Kautsar aim to compete in leading universities, both public and private. The graduates and students of Al Kautsar Senior High School Bandar Lampung must memorize chapter 30 or at least one chapter of the Holy Quran to graduate. They are also required to master three languages, namely English, Arabic, and German/French. On the other hand, the graduates' competency standards of Al-Azhar Senior High School Bandar Lampung are having excellent academic standards and having excellent non-academic standards. The graduates must also memorize chapter 30 or at least one chapter of the Holy Quran to graduate from Al Azhar Senior High School. Also, the students are required to master two languages, namely English and Arabic.

Second, the content standards analysis result at Al Kautsar Senior High School is the analysis of Competency Standards (KD) developed in indicators by analyzing the need for face-to-face hours of each basic competency by paying attention to the complexity of the material on each indicator compiled in the syllabus. The syllabus developed for the Geography and History subjects incorporates the complexity of each indicator. The subjects require time that exceeds the mandatory hours stipulated in the national curriculum.

The content standards analysis at Al Azhar Senior High School revealed that the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) was applied to the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Meanwhile, the school was designated as a pilot in implementing the 2013 curriculum in the academic year of 2019/2020. Although the implementation of the 2013 curriculum has not been maximized, it is hoped that all the tools, guidelines, and implementation/technical instructions can be completed properly over the next three years. All school members are committed to implementing the 2013 curriculum properly.

Third, regarding learning process standards at Al Kautsar Senior High School, the school principal's role provides strict learning process supervision on both the teachers and the students. It is done to improve the quality of education. The principal does not tolerate teachers who have violated the rules more than three times. However, the teachers who always obey the rules, discipline, and have good achievements will be rewarded. The principal always monitors the state of the school during the teaching and learning process. CCTV technology is utilized to observe students and teachers in the implementation of teaching and learning activities.

The principal's role at SMA Al Azhar Bandar Lampung can be seen from the teachers that have carried out their duties and responsibilities properly according to the regulations. The principal always monitors the state of the school during the teaching and learning process. The school principal observes the students and the teachers in implementing teaching and learning activities by using CCTV technology.

Fourth, Al Kautsar Senior High School decides the criteria of minimum mastery (KKM) should be varied for each subject and each grade level regarding the assessment standards. The standard assessment system follows the system

from the government and the special assessment standard system proposed by the school itself. There is a remedial system for students who do not reach the KKM score.

Al Azhar Senior High School assesses the learning according to correct assessment rules. The efforts to improve teachers' professionalism continue to be improved. The curriculum staff continues to innovate to provide a guideline for teachers in carrying out the assessment process. The scoring standard system follows the government system and the school's unique assessment standard system. The assessment refers to the 2013 curriculum.

Discussion:-

Based on the research findings, the analysis of role behavior can be carried out through three approaches: 1) role provisions, 2) role descriptions, and 3) role expectations. Role provisions are formal and open statements about the behavior that a person must display in carrying out his role. The role description is a description of the behavior displayed by a person in carrying out his role. In contrast, role expectations are people's expectations of someone's behavior in carrying out his role. To strengthen the role theory in the perspective of national education policy (Depdiknas, 2006), there are seven roles of school principals, namely, as 1) educator; 2) manager; 3) administrator; 4) supervisor; 5) leader; 6) creator of work climate; and 7) entrepreneur. [16].

For decentralization and educational autonomy to be successful, the leadership of the principal needs to be empowered. Empowerment means improving ability functionally so that the principal can play an appropriate role with the duties, authorities, and responsibilities. With processes and program empowerment, they must finally have a professional and performance functional. The principal must act as a manager and a leader effectively. As a good manager, the principal must organize in order all of the school's potential can function optimally in supporting its achievement school goals. It can be done if the principal can do these good management functions, which include: 1) planning; 2) organizing; 3) briefing; and 4) supervision [17].

In terms of leadership, a principal may need to adopt a new theory to function optimally so that all the potential could exist in the school. The role of the principal prioritizes opportunities and encouragement for all school elements to work on the high-value system so that all elements in the school (teachers, students, employees, parents of students, and the community) are willing, without coercion, to participate optimally in achieving the ideal goals of the school. [18].

The results of this research strengthen the theory developed by Udrajat, who states that there are seven roles of school principals, namely, as 1) educator; 2) manager; 3) administrator; 4) supervisor; 5) leader; 6) creator of work climate; and 7) entrepreneur. The above opinion shows the principal's importance as the caliph or leader who is expected to realize the hopes of the nation, carry out the mandate, and be accountable for all of his leadership. Therefore, a principal who has insight into the future and adequate abilities in moving the school organization is needed.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also indicate that Al Kautsar Senior High School and Al Azhar Senior High School, in their Islamic education management, have contributed and have met educational standards based on the researchers' analysis on graduate competency standards, content standards, process standards, and assessment standards. The two schools have even become references for other schools, especially private schools in Lampung. In terms of practical implications, the two schools have met the quality standards of education or the Indonesian National Standard (SNI). The principals have played a good role in contributing to the schools they lead. Besides, the principal manages to make their schools be the references for other schools.

Recommendations:-

The following are some of the researchers' recommendations. 1) The principals always maintain the quality of education and always provide support and commitment to their subordinates to create excellent schools in all aspects. 2) The education managers should refer to the vision and mission and educational programs in schools directed towards education quality. 3) The relevant ministries should give full attention to private Islamic high schools in Lampung province to improve education quality. For other researchers, this research can be redeveloped to explore other aspects related to the role of the school principals in improving the quality of education.

Conclusion:-

It can be concluded that the principals' role is first, formulating competency standards for graduates to compete in leading universities, both public and private. Second, special class students must memorize chapter 30 of the Quran and at least 1 chapter for general class students. The graduates are required to master three languages: English, Arabic, and German/French. Third, monitoring the learning process through CCTV makes it easier to observe students and teachers during the teaching and learning activities. Fourth, the implementation of varied assessment standards between subjects and grades by referring to the 2013 curriculum.

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