Analysis of Leadership Styles in Islamic Education Institutions: Tracing the Typology and Practice in the Midst of Crisis and Global Trends

Nikmatul Hikmah[1], Siti Aimah[1]

[1]Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat, Indonesia

✉ nikmatulmenik22@gmail.com *

Abstract

Educational leadership plays a strategic role in managing transformation amid the global crisis and changing trends. This study aims to analyze authoritarian and participatory approaches in educational leadership. The research approach used is qualitative with a case study type. The data collection technique used in-depth interviews with 23 informants, consisting of headmaster, educators, student guardians, school committees and the community. All data were analyzed using Miles and Hubermen's interactive analysis technique. This study found that both authoritarian and participatory leadership styles were applied flexibly by the head of the Islamic education institution according to the situation at hand. In emergency conditions, the head of the institution uses an authoritarian approach by making quick decisions without broad consultation. Meanwhile, in more stable situations, the participatory approach is more dominant. The head of the institution involves teachers, staff and parents in decision-making, especially in curriculum planning and character-based education programs. The flexibility in applying these two leadership styles has proven effective in dealing with various challenges and dynamics, enabling the institution to adapt and achieve optimal educational performance.

INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership plays a crucial role in managing transformation amidst global crises and rapidly changing trends (Prasad et al., 2025). The two main approaches to educational leadership are authoritarian and participatory, each with different strengths and weaknesses. Global crises such as pandemics, climate change and economic instability have changed the educational landscape, requiring adaptation and innovation in leadership methods (Bushuyev et al., 2023; Green et al., 2020; Zaidan & Ehsan, 2024). Authoritarian approaches can provide quick and coordinated decisions, while participatory approaches can increase engagement and adaptation over the long term (Bruun & Rubin, 2023; Helbing et al., 2023; Teicher, 2023). Understanding when and how to apply

these two approaches is essential for effective education management in the modern era.

Authoritarian approaches are often associated with quick decisions, efficiency in policy implementation, and the ability to maintain control and stability in crisis situations (Gallo, 2022; Mittiga, 2022). Participatory approaches emphasize the importance of collaboration, engagement and empowerment of various stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents and communities (Dara & Kesavan, 2024; Williams, 2024). Educational leadership is a key factor in managing transformation amidst global crises and dynamic trends (Mattiello et al., 2024; Moravec & Martínez-Bravo, 2023; Reilly & Turcan, 2023). With the increasing complexity and dynamics of global challenges, it is important to explore how authoritarian and participatory approaches can be effectively applied in educational leadership.

Transformation in education requires leadership that is able to respond quickly to global crises and changing trends (Moravec & Martínez-Bravo, 2023). Authoritarian and participatory approaches are the two main methods in educational leadership, each having advantages and disadvantages. Authoritarian approaches are effective in urgent situations as they allow for quick and centralized decision-making, (Kurt Özman & Taşan-Kok, 2024; Lathabhavan et al., 2024; Liang et al., 2024), whereas participatory approaches are superior in encouraging engagement, innovation and long-term adaptation (Cembranel et al., 2024; Edjah et al., 2024; Karatzogianni & Matthews, 2023; Mockevičienė & Vedlūga, 2024; Salehi et al., 2022) Educational leaders need to combine these two approaches flexibly to face global challenges and lead change effectively.

Research on authoritarian and participatory approaches in managing transformation amid global crises and trends has been conducted by many previous researchers, including (Arar et al., 2023; Buranelli, 2020; Cabestan, 2021). Participatory decision-making in educational leadership is based on the role of the leader and the perceptions and aspirations of subordinates. found that in emergency situations, such as natural disasters or pandemics, an authoritarian approach allows for quick and coordinated decision-making, which is essential for maintaining the stability and continuity of school operations. Directive leadership is positively related to organizational commitment and team role performance, with organizational commitment mediating the relationship (Cheng et al., 2022; Lux et al., 2023; Mustafa et al., 2022). Participative leadership is positively related to teacher empowerment and team innovation, with empowerment mediating the relationship. Managing the tension between directive and participative leadership approaches may be the key to achieving high teacher performance.

Authoritarian leadership is more transactional, effective in situations that require compliance and control, while participatory (transformational) leadership is more successful in creating innovation and increasing engagement that successful leaders are those who are able to adapt their leadership style to the needs of the situation, including combining authoritarian and participatory approaches to deal with organizational crisis or transformation (Farhan et al., 2024; Karatzogianni & Matthews, 2023). Leaders in education should consider the crisis situation and global trends as important variables in determining the appropriate leadership style (Collins et al., 2023; Jinga et al., 2024; Radtke & Renn, 2024). Managing transformation in the midst of crisis and global trends requires flexibility to combine the strengths of both approaches.

Based on these studies, the novelty of this research is to combine and compare the effectiveness of authoritarian and participatory approaches in

educational leadership. Although previous research has highlighted that authoritarian leadership is effective in maintaining operational stability and continuity during a crisis, and participative leadership is positively associated with empowerment and innovation in teams. This study therefore aims to analyze authoritarian and participatory approaches in educational leadership: managing transformation amidst crisis and global trends. As well as Identify the situations and conditions in which authoritarian and participatory approaches each show excellence in the educational context. This research also hypothesizes that a combination of authoritarian and participatory leadership approaches will result in better performance of educational institutions in the face of global crises and changing trends compared to the exclusive application of one approach. This combination is expected to capitalize on the strengths of both approaches to create a more adaptive leadership strategy.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study approach (Chen et al., 2024; Damri et al., 2020; Engkizar et al., 2024; Eriyanti et al., 2020). This research aims to explore more in-depth data related to the perceptions, experiences and views of the parties who play a role related to the Authoritarian vs. Participatory Approach in Educational Leadership (Seakhoa-King et al., 2020; Storm et al., 2022). Data sources were obtained from headmaster, educators, students, student guardians, school committees, education supervisors, policy providers, communities, quality assurance institutions totaling 23 informant. The following is a table of research informants.

Table 1. Research informants

No	Informant	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Headmaster	2	1	3
2	Teaching staff	3	3	6
3	Student parents	3	3	6
4	School committee	2	1	3
5	Supervisor	2	0	2
6	Community	2	1	3
Total		23		

This research paradigm uses post positivism which emphasizes objectivity, measurement, and generalization. Data collection in this study uses in-depth interview techniques with informants, namely educators, student guardians, quality assurance institutions and their experiences, observation by directly observing while being involved in school activities such as meetings, discussions, or training, Observing from the outside without being involved, such as monitoring the course of daily activities, communication processes, or decision making (Given et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2024). Documentation includes photos related to the leadership meeting process, the decision-making process at the meeting. Data analysis in this study uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model which consists of data reduction, data presentation and conclusion making (Biagioni et al., 2024; Gu et al., 2025). Data validity utilized data sources and theories. This stage was chosen to ensure that this research can provide a deep and valid understanding of how leadership styles are applied in Islamic educational institutions, taking into account the context, social dynamics and challenges faced in the world of education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Adaptation to global trends

In the fast-changing era of globalization, educational institutions around the world face great challenges to adapt to global trends, such as digitalization and increasing international standards. This research explores how authoritarian and participatory leadership approaches play an important role in the adaptation process. The findings suggest that flexibility and the ability to combine elements of both approaches are crucial for educational leaders in managing sustainable transformation. The results of this study can provide valuable insights for leaders in dealing with the evolving global dynamics. In accordance with the results of the following principal interview.

We involve teachers and staff in every stage of decision-making regarding the implementation of new technologies. This helps us find solutions that are more creative and fit the needs of the students. Although the process takes longer, the results are much more satisfying because the whole team feels involved and responsible (informant 1)

Statements from school principals indicate that a participatory approach to decision-making, especially when it comes to implementing new technologies, has a positive impact on the creativity and relevance of the resulting solutions (Paesano, 2023; Pagani et al., 2023; Trujillo-Cabezas, 2024). Involving teachers and staff in every stage of the process allows schools to identify more specific needs and challenges, making the solutions more appropriate to the real conditions on the ground (Götz & O'Boyle, 2023; Seifert et al., 2023). Although it takes longer, this approach yields more satisfactory results because the whole team feels involved and responsible, which ultimately improves implementation effectiveness and education quality (Banai & Nirenberg, 2024; Seifert et al., 2023).

Broad participation in decision-making not only improves the quality of decisions made, but also strengthens the commitment and involvement of all parties involved. The application of participatory approaches in decision-making related to new technologies (Lappalainen et al., 2024; Reilly & Turcan, 2023; Wilson, 2020). Leaders involve teachers and staff at every stage, resulting in more creative solutions that meet students' needs (Mirvis, 2023; Sliwka et al., 2024). Theoretically, authoritarian and participatory approaches to educational leadership have fundamental differences in various aspects. The speed of response in the authoritarian approach is higher because decisions are made directly, while the participatory approach is slower because it involves discussion (Sanches et al., 2023; Savvides, 2021). In terms of adaptation flexibility, authoritarian approaches tend to be rigid and maintain existing structures, while participatory approaches are more responsive to innovation (Lo, 2024; Zhang & Mora, 2023). Staff engagement in authoritarian approaches is low as decisions are centralized, whereas participatory approaches involve staff actively, creating a collaborative atmosphere (Elkomy & Elkhaial, 2022; Glavovic, 2024).

The creativity of solutions is also higher in participatory approaches due to the contributions of many parties, compared to the standard solutions produced in authoritarian approaches. In terms of long-term effectiveness, participatory approaches are superior because they increase motivation and ownership, while authoritarian approaches are more effective for urgent situations (Glavovic, 2024). In terms of resistance to change, authoritarian approaches often face greater challenges, while participatory approaches are able to reduce resistance because they involve various stakeholders (Gong et al., 2023; Gverdtsiteli, 2023). Both approaches need to be adapted to the context and needs of the organization.

Digitalization is one of the major global trends affecting education, explaining that digital technologies affect not only the way learning is done but also how teaching materials are delivered and accessed by students, adding that the adoption of new technologies in education requires significant changes in policies, infrastructure, and teaching skills. Authoritarian approaches often show superiority in situations that require quick responses and decisive action (Ashokkumar et al., 2025; Roshid & Haider, 2024). Leaders using this style are able to implement changes immediately, which is critical in maintaining operational continuity when facing global pressures.

Authoritarian approaches tend to lack flexibility in the long run. Lack of participation from staff and other stakeholders can lead to resistance to change and lower the level of innovation in the organization. In contrast, participatory approaches provide advantages in terms of inclusiveness and innovation. By involving various stakeholders in the decision-making process, leaders can more easily identify specific needs and develop solutions that are better suited to field conditions. While this process takes longer and may be less efficient in the short term, the results show that adaptation to global trends is more successful when there is engagement and a shared sense of responsibility from the entire team. This approach also strengthens staff commitment and motivation, which are important factors in supporting sustainable transformation. In the context of adaptation to global trends, leadership effectiveness depends on the situation and context. Leadership is adaptive and flexible in the face of major changes. A more participative leadership approach can increase staff motivation and engagement, suggesting that an authoritarian approach may be more efficient in implementing rapid change.

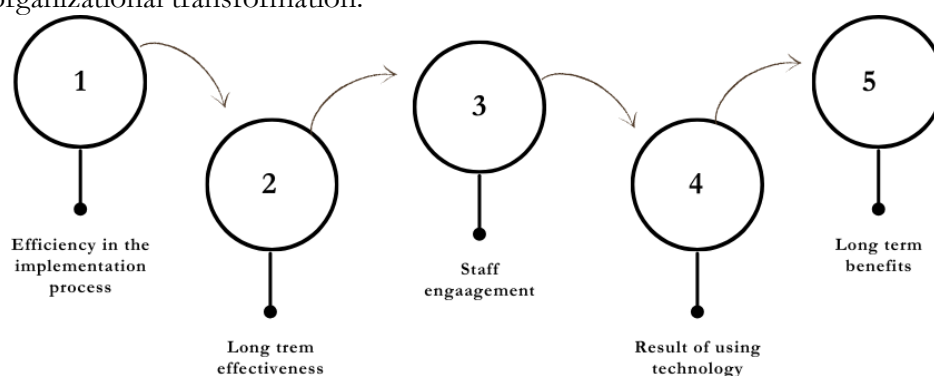### Efficiency and effectiveness in organizational transformation

Organizational transformation in education is a complex process that requires a balance between efficiency and effectiveness. In the face of evolving global demands, educational institutions are faced with the need to make changes that are not only rapid but also sustainable. This research explores two important aspects of organizational transformation: the role efficiency and effectiveness play in successful change. The participatory approach, while perhaps less efficient in terms of decision speed, showed greater effectiveness in creating innovative solutions and increasing the involvement of the entire team. This slower but inclusive process supports a more sustainable transformation and encourages better adaptation to change. Related to this is the following interview result.

We involved the entire staff in the process of selecting and implementing new technology. Although this makes the process slower and requires more coordination, we feel that the decisions made are more mature and have the full support of the team. We saw that although our efficiency was lower initially, the long-term effectiveness increased because the technology really met our needs and was well received by all parties (informant 2)

This statement from the principal shows that a participatory approach to decision-making on new technology brings significant benefits even if it requires more time and coordination. By involving all staff in the selection and implementation process, the school was able to reach more informed decisions and gain the full support of the team. This shows that, although the initial efficiency in decision-making may be lower, this approach improves long-term effectiveness. This is because the implemented technology not only matches the comprehensively identified needs but is also well accepted by all parties involved. A participatory approach enables more appropriate and more widely accepted solutions, which in turn improves the results and success of

technology implementation in the long term (Koutsovili et al., 2023). The following figure is related to indicators of efficiency and effectiveness in organizational transformation.

Fig 1. Indicators of efficiency and effectiveness in organizational transformation

Theoretically, efficiency and effectiveness are two key concepts in the process of organizational transformation, especially in the context of leadership change and adaptation to global trends. Efficiency refers to an organization's ability to achieve desired results with minimal use of resources. In organizational transformation, this means implementing strategies and policies that can reduce operational costs and maximize output. Meanwhile, effectiveness measures the extent to which organizational goals are achieved (Kenny et al., 2022). It includes the ability to achieve long-term goals, such as improved performance, adaptation to changes in the external environment, and success in implementing structural or cultural changes (Bag et al., 2023; Williams & Duff, 2024).

In the context of educational leadership, the combination of efficiency and effectiveness is critical. Authoritarian approaches may offer efficiency through quick decision-making and immediate implementation, but may reduce effectiveness if not accompanied by participation and support from all members of the organization (Liang et al., 2024; Sáenz-Royo & Lozano-Rojo, 2023). In contrast, participatory approaches tend to increase effectiveness because they involve various stakeholders in the decision-making process, but may require more time and resources, potentially reducing efficiency (Golestaneh et al., 2022). Therefore, in managing organizational transformation, especially in the education sector, it is important to strike a balance between efficiency and effectiveness. Leaders must be able to optimize resources while ensuring that the organization's strategic goals are achieved by involving all members of the organization in the change process. A hybrid approach, which combines elements of both authoritarian and participative leadership, may be the most ideal solution to achieve both efficiency and effectiveness in organizational transformation.

Effectiveness in crisis situations

Effectiveness of applying educational leadership approaches in crisis situations. Authoritarian leadership approaches, which allow for quick and clear decision-making, have proven effective in dealing with emergencies, where immediate action and close coordination are required. However, while this effectiveness depends on the leader's ability to adapt policies and actions to the dynamics of the unfolding crisis, participatory leadership plays a role in building support and a sense of engagement among stakeholders, which can strengthen the resilience of the education system in the face of a prolonged crisis. This finding shows that successful education management in crisis

situations does not only depend on the assertiveness of leaders. Related to this is the following interview with educators.

Speed of decision-making is critical in a crisis, but we also recognize the importance of flexible and inclusive policies. Participatory leadership gives us the opportunity to adapt quickly, as we can make suggestions and contribute to the decisions made. This is especially helpful when we face sudden changes in the field (informant 3)

Two important complementary aspects of educational leadership, particularly in crisis situations. On the one hand, speed of decision-making is considered vital, as crises often require quick action to deal with rapidly evolving situations (Lega & Castellini, 2022; Mishra et al., 2024). Quick decisions can help maintain stability and reduce the uncertainty that staff and learners may face. The importance of flexible and inclusive policies in leadership. While quick decisions are important, there is a need to consider inputs from various parties, such as staff, teachers, or other relevant parties.

Participative leadership, by opening up space for dialog and co-contribution, enables team members to adapt more easily to sudden changes. Participative leadership in this context not only facilitates problem solving by involving multiple perspectives, but also creates a sense of engagement and commitment from all parties (Guerrero-C et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024). This is particularly helpful in uncertain crises, where flexibility and collective responsibility can be key to responding to rapid and unexpected changes on the ground (Guerrero-C et al., 2024; Rindova & Petkova, 2023). In the face of crisis situations, the combination of quick decisions and flexible participatory approaches is key to maintaining leadership effectiveness and better adaptation to challenges.

Effectiveness in crisis situations is strongly influenced by three main aspects: decision-making speed, policy flexibility, and leadership approach. Speed of decision-making is a critical element in dealing with crisis dynamics, as these situations often require a quick and precise response (Bansal et al., 2024; Zakrzewski, 2022). This speed must be supported by flexible and inclusive policies so that solutions remain relevant to the needs and conditions on the ground. Participatory leadership in dealing with crises provides space for various parties to be involved in the decision-making process, allowing a variety of perspectives to emerge that enrich the resulting solutions (Brook & Hallerduff, 2020; Sørensen & Sandfort, 2022).

Respondents expressed that with the opportunity to provide input and contribute, they felt better prepared to deal with sudden changes in the field. This reinforces the view that participatory leadership can improve an organization's ability to adapt in a crisis. Policy flexibility also plays an important role in creating effectiveness in crisis situations. Policies that are not rigid allow organizations to adjust strategic steps in accordance with developing conditions. Leadership effectiveness in crisis situations depends not only on the speed of decision-making, but also on the extent to which the process involves the participation of various parties and the ability of policies to adapt to change. The combination of these three aspects creates a resilient framework for dealing with crises, especially in an educational environment that involves many stakeholders and complex dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This research has successfully analyzed authoritarian and participatory approaches to educational leadership. Authoritarian and participatory leadership approaches in the face of global trends, organizational transformation and crisis situations in the education sector. The authoritarian

approach offers efficiency through quick decision-making, while the participatory approach excels in improving long-term effectiveness by involving various stakeholders. Staff engagement leads to creative solutions, increases ownership and supports sustainable adaptation. In crisis contexts, the combination of quick decisions, flexible policies and collective participation is proven to maintain organizational effectiveness and adaptability. Therefore, balancing efficiency and effectiveness through a hybrid approach is key to successful transformation in education.

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