

DIROSAT
Journal of Education, Social Sciences & Humanities
Journal website: https://dirosat.com/

ISSN: 2985-5497 (Online)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58355/dirosat.v4i4.263

Vol. 4 No. 4 (2026)
pp. 644-657

Research Article

The Role of Principal Leadership in Building Effective Culture in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Received : July 17, 2026
Revised : August 13, 2026
Accepted : September 19, 2026
Available online : October 01, 2026

How to Cite: Deden Heryanto, Shohibul Faroz, Muhammad Hijrah M. Saway, & Apin, A. (2026). The Role of Principal Leadership in Building Effective Culture in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. *DIROSAT: Journal of Education, Social Sciences & Humanities*, *4*(4), 644–657. https://doi.org/10.58355/dirosat.v4i4.263

Abstract. The leadership of a madrasah principal plays a crucial role in shaping an effective madrasah culture. A strong culture fosters the improvement of educational quality, the development of student character, and the motivation of teachers and educational staff. This study aims to analyze the role of the madrasah principal's leadership in building an effective madrasah culture and to identify the strategies employed. This study utilized a qualitative descriptive approach, employing in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection techniques. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the madrasah principal fulfills the roles of educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator in shaping the madrasah culture. The applied leadership style is adaptive and situational. The strategies implemented include: (1) strengthening relationships among the madrasah community, (2) creating a safe and comfortable learning environment, and (3) fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. This study underscores the importance of collaborative and transformative leadership in building an effective madrasah culture to support the enhancement of educational quality.

Keywords: leadership, madrasah principal, madrasah culture, educational quality.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in improving the quality of human resources. However, educational success is not solely determined by the curriculum or infrastructure; rather, it heavily relies on the leadership role of the madrasah principal in creating an institutional culture that supports the learning process (Yahdiyani et al., 2020). Based on the national Madrasah Self Evaluation (EDM - *Evaluasi Diri Madrasah*) by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*), the average quality score for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) only reached 72.37 (categorized as "Good" but approaching the lower limit), with learning facilities and self-development culture indicators standing out as its weak points. Although many madrasahs received a 'Good' predicate, the latest EDM data indicate that several aspects, such as learning facilities and teachers' self-development culture, remain below 70%, indicating that the academic culture and madrasah management have not functioned optimally (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025).

This phenomenon highlights the importance of the madrasah principal's leadership in building an effective madrasah culture. This research is grounded in the fact that a madrasah principal does not merely serve as an administrator but also as an agent of change who must be capable of instilling values, building systems, and acting as a role model in fostering an academic culture.

Academic culture plays a significantly important role within the school environment. By implementing an academic culture, students can feel motivated in their learning. The established norms aim to assist students in the learning process. However, building a strong academic culture does not occur spontaneously; instead, it requires effective planning, organizing, operations, and management. An ideal academic culture creates an atmosphere where educators are not the absolute holders of truth, but rather position students as partners in the learning process. Consequently, they can collectively discover scientific courage gained through the process of open inquiry and discussion (Rolan, 2020).

There are several prior studies regarding the leadership of madrasah principals. First, research by Taufan et al. (2021) emphasizes that the madrasah principal has a strategic role in improving educational quality through visionary and collaborative leadership. Second, a study by Permana & Karwanto (2020) examines the participative leadership style as an effective approach to enhancing teacher professionalism. From these two studies, there is still a lack of literature that explicitly investigates how the role of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah principal systematically shapes institutional culture through an adaptive leadership approach. Therefore, this study fills the research gap regarding adaptive leadership practices in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah within the context of shaping an academic culture.

Based on the background outlined above, this study aims to analyze the role of the madrasah principal in shaping an effective madrasah culture, as well as to identify the leadership styles and strategies employed in fostering a positive learning environment. Specifically, the research questions can be formulated as follows: How does the leadership of the madrasah principal play a role in building an effective

madrasah culture at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level? Furthermore, what strategies are employed by the principal to realize a positive learning environment?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe the role of the madrasah principal's leadership in building an effective madrasah culture (Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted at MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek, with the research subjects comprising the madrasah principal, educators, and students.

Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, which are standard procedures for capturing comprehensive qualitative data in natural settings (Sugiyono, 2017). Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This approach allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon holistically in accordance with the social reality occurring in the field (Bogdan, R., & Biklen, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Principal Leadership

Leadership is a key element in determining the direction, goals, and success of an educational institution, including madrasahs. According to Thoha (2012), leadership style is the pattern of behavior used by a leader to influence their subordinates. In the educational context, the leadership styles of madrasah principals are highly diverse, encompassing authoritarian, democratic, participative, delegative, and even transformational styles. Participative and delegative leadership styles are preferred in shaping an academic culture because they encourage the active involvement of teachers and staff in the decision making process (Hasibuan, 2011). Through these styles, the madrasah principal does not merely direct, but also inspires and empowers.

The role of a madrasah principal goes beyond that of a mere administrator; they must act as a motivator, innovator, manager, and role model. Mulyasa (2013) states that an effective madrasah principal acts as a transformational leader capable of fostering a collective spirit, building positive relationships, and maintaining a productive work culture. In building an academic culture, the madrasah principal is tasked with guiding the entire school community to share visions, values, and attitudes that align with educational goals. They become the central figure in instilling scientific values, discipline, and a learning ethos into the daily life of the madrasah.

Important factors in building an academic culture include the integration of the institution's vision, the leader's exemplary behavior, effective communication, teacher empowerment, and a system of rewards and discipline. According to Azizah (2021), school culture is shaped through shared values, symbols, traditions, and routine practices that are continuously internalized by the entire school community. If the madrasah principal can successfully orchestrate these factors, an academic

culture will be created that is not only normative but also genuinely alive and deeply rooted.

Furthermore, effective madrasah principal leadership involves the ability to read situations and adjust the approach contextually. This concept aligns with the contingency theory (Ghufron, 2020), which emphasizes that there is no single ideal leadership style; rather, its effectiveness depends on the fit between the leadership style and the situation. In the madrasah context, the principal is required to be flexible, capable of being decisive in addressing issues while simultaneously fostering collaborative relationships on a daily basis.

Thus, the leadership of the madrasah principal in building an academic culture is not only structural but also cultural. Leaders who successfully build an academic culture are those capable of moving the hearts and minds of teachers, students, and other school community members to love knowledge, appreciate the learning process, and build a community of learners. Recent studies (Cornelissen & Smith, 2022; Taufan et al., 2021) also affirm that the success of an academic culture is heavily influenced by exemplary behavior, consistency, and a leadership system that is open to innovation.

The Various Leadership Styles of the Madrasah Principal

Based on the research findings, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek does not employ a single, specific leadership style. Instead, the applied leadership style is contingent upon the prevailing situations and conditions. This leadership style is evident in the principal's daily behavior when carrying out their duties. For instance, the principal acts not only as a conceptualizer but also as an executor who consistently participates in madrasah programs and agendas, particularly in creating a positive madrasah culture.

Creating an effective madrasah culture cannot be accomplished individually; it inherently requires the involvement of the entire madrasah community. In building an academic culture, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek implements several stages. First, formulating all programs, starting from planning, objectives, values, and policies. These activities are not decided solely by the principal but always involve stakeholders, including educators, educational staff, and parents. Second, the implementation stage of the established policies and their dissemination to the entire madrasah community through circular letters, joint meetings, and information media, ensuring they are well understood and executed. Third, the evaluation stage. This stage is conducted collaboratively with stakeholder's educators, educational staff, and parents in routine forum meetings. This stage serves as a follow-up to the implemented programs.

Judging from the situation described above, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek utilizes a participative leadership style. This aligns with Thoha (2012), who explains that leadership can be considered participative if its implementation involves the active participation of all team members, including subordinates, in sharing ideas and formulating decisions to achieve school goals. Building an academic culture using participative leadership is a systematic method, encompassing planning, policy

setting, dissemination, implementation, and the evaluation stage, which acts as a follow-up to the implemented policies. These stages resonate with Torrington and Weighman, as cited in Torrance (2022), who state that developing a school's quality culture should not be separated from three critical levels: (1) the development of the spirit and values level, (2) the development of the technical level, and (3) the development of the social level.

At the first level, this is achieved by identifying the various values, school climate, and school culture. At the second level, it involves developing school work procedures, development management, and a school climate that reflects the values intended to become the school culture. At the third level, the development of the social aspect within the context of school climate development is a process of implementation and instructionalization so that it can become a habit both inside and outside the school.

The participative leadership of the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek is reinforced by Thoha's (2012) statement that in a participative leadership model, a leader must strive to seek and utilize suggestions and aspirations from their members, although the final decision remains in their hands. By adopting a participative leadership approach, a belief emerges that all problems can be resolved collectively and that every individual has a responsibility to continue contributing. Ultimately, this will build a strong culture of collaboration by empowering existing elements, such as educators/teachers and staff, in implementing madrasah programs.

Empowering subordinates to execute school programs proves that the principal does not work alone but delegates tasks to subordinates to run programs according to their respective main duties and functions. This refutes the notion that the principal's leadership utilizes a 'one-man show' style in managing madrasah programs; rather, it involves subordinates for the succession of the madrasah. The situation described above indicates that the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek employs a delegative leadership approach. As stated by Hasibuan (2011), a leader can be considered delegative if they are capable of empowering subordinates by delegating authority clearly and appropriately. Consequently, subordinates will have the flexibility and discretion to make decisions or policies in carrying out their duties.

By implementing delegative leadership, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek provides opportunities for all madrasah elements be it educators, educational staff, or other employees to express their creativity and innovation in improving their professional skills. The principal also establishes clear duties and authorities for their members in accordance with their respective main duties and functions. This is evident in the madrasah's structural organization, where the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek divides their leadership duties among several vice principals who serve as the vice principal of curriculum, vice principal of student affairs, vice principal of finance, vice principal of facilities and infrastructure, vice principal of administration, and vice principal of public relations.

The delegation of these tasks constitutes the empowerment of school elements that can provide benefits for improving madrasah performance. This is in accordance with Ghufron (2020), who states that empowering subordinates in work matters will

have positive impacts, including the ability to improve skills in carrying out responsibilities, as it provides a sense of achievement to the staff, thereby increasing work motivation.

The leadership style applied by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek is not solely based on participative and delegative approaches. Under certain circumstances, the principal occasionally utilizes an authoritarian leadership style. As described by Hasibuan (2011), authoritarian leadership occurs when a leader makes decisions without involving team members, and these decisions are implemented firmly and bindingly. The leader holds full control over their subordinates.

This authoritarian leadership style is exercised by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek in highly urgent and crucial situations. In such conditions, the principal makes decisions or policies as quickly as possible. For example, regarding the submission of assignments from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*) that have reached their specified deadlines. The principal shows no compromise for subordinates who have been given tasks that have reached the deadline; in such situations, the principal even imposes severe sanctions as a consequence for those who do not follow the rules. This leadership style is very rarely applied by the principal, except in specific situations.

Based on the data above and the research findings, which are correlated with theoretical studies and analyzed in depth, it is evident that the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek does not employ a single, fixed leadership style, but rather adapts to the situation and conditions. This implies that the prevailing situations and conditions shape and determine the principal's leadership style. Judging from the data above, among the various leadership styles, the most dominant one used by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek is the participative leadership style. This style facilitates the development of a positive madrasah culture. As stated by Julaiha (2019), in developing a good organizational culture, a madrasah principal must uphold at least five principles, one of which is implementing participative leadership.

The Leadership Role of the Madrasah Principal in Building Madrasah Culture

The madrasah principal bears the responsibility for achieving all educational goals by mobilizing subordinates to attain the mutually established objectives; this means the principal must be capable of executing leadership functions and roles effectively. From the perspective of National Education policy, the madrasah principal has seven crucial roles: as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, work climate creator, and entrepreneur (Depdiknas, 2006).

Referring to the principal's leadership roles as outlined by the Ministry of National Education (*Depdiknas*) above, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek continuously strives to create a positive madrasah culture. Given that the principal's role as a leader is highly crucial, they must be able to influence subordinates to follow directives in carrying out their duties, with the aim of developing and advancing the madrasah, particularly in building a positive madrasah culture.

First, the Role as a Manager**.** The madrasah principal as a manager plays a vital role in creating a positive madrasah culture through various established programs,

inherently paying attention to the professional development of educators. Among the actions taken by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek is providing flexibility and facilitating educators for self-development through various educational and training activities, such as in-house training, professional discussions, and others. These programs are conducted through proper management stages, starting from planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. This role aligns with the statement by Huriaty et al. (2022) that as a manager, the principal is responsible for organizing the school's organizational structure and supporting various school activities. The principal provides opportunities and facilities for teachers to develop their pedagogical skills. This includes activities conducted both inside and outside the school, such as Teacher Working Groups (KKG - *Kelompok Kerja Guru*), official meetings, training, workshops, seminars, and educational or training courses aimed at improving teacher quality and professionalism.

Second, the Role as a Leader. As a leader, the madrasah principal plays a crucial role in building an effective madrasah culture. Among these roles is the implementation of a participative leadership style, which earns them the respect of the teachers and the entire school community. Furthermore, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek strives to enhance communication and foster good relationships with all madrasah elements, thereby creating a positive culture of collaboration and fostering high loyalty within the madrasah environment. Leaders with this style tend to focus on subordinate development, emphasizing motivation over strict supervision. They encourage team members to complete tasks by providing opportunities to participate in decision-making. Moreover, they create a friendly working environment and build mutually trusting and respectful relationships among group members (Permana & Karwanto, 2020).

Third, the Role as an Educator. In their role as an educator, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek plays a highly critical role in creating an effective school culture. The principal demonstrates discipline in both attendance and the completeness of instructional administration, thereby serving as a role model for other teachers. Additionally, the principal has implemented the latest curriculum based on habituation, practical application, and the inculcation of character values in the learning process, which supports the creation of an effective madrasah culture. As an educator, the principal consistently strives to improve the quality of the madrasah's human resources, both educators and educational staff, by involving them in various training and workshops, including those organized by Kualita Pendidikan Indonesia (KPI). This is in accordance with Mulyasa (2013), who states that the principal can enhance the performance of educational staff by involving teachers in training to broaden their perspectives. Consequently, in practice, they will not face difficulties starting from lesson planning, the implementation of the learning process, up to the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

Fourth, the Role as an Administrator. In their role as an administrator, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek strives to carry out administrative tasks effectively, thereby creating a culture of administrative order in the school. The principal demonstrates administrative management capabilities through various

activities, such as the preparation of the School Self-Evaluation (EDS - *Evaluasi Diri Sekolah*) and the School Work Plan (RKS - *Rencana Kerja Sekolah*) at the beginning of the academic year. Moreover, the principal requires teachers to complete their teaching apparatus, including the Learning Objective Flow (ATP - *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*), Teaching Modules, and others. The principal also ensures that classroom administration order and other administrative tasks are executed properly. In carrying out their duties as an administrator, the principal does not work alone but empowers existing resources by establishing several vice principals, managing areas ranging from curriculum, administration, student affairs, and facilities and infrastructure, to public relations.

Fifth, the Role as a Supervisor. The principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek seeks to develop an effective school culture through several actions. One of them is conducting routine supervision to evaluate the teachers' teaching process using monitoring supervision techniques. The objective of this activity is to foster teachers to become more professional. Furthermore, the principal frequently invites expert supervisors with specialized skills, such as Al-Qur'an teacher supervision conducted by an expert in the field. This aligns with the view of Mulyasa (2013), who states that supervision can be conducted by the principal as a supervisor; however, in a modern educational system, special independent supervisors are required to increase objectivity in fostering and executing duties.

Sixth, the Role as a Motivator. As a motivator, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek plays an essential role in shaping an effective school culture. One of the methods used is continuously providing motivation to the staff to increase responsibility in their duties. As stated by Emron (2023), the principal as a motivator must have an effective strategy to encourage educational staff in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. This motivation can be enhanced through the arrangement of a supportive physical environment, the creation of a conducive work atmosphere, the consistent application of discipline, the provision of appropriate encouragement, suitable rewards, and the provision of various learning resources through the development of a Learning Resource Center. The principal acts as an inspirer and motivator for teachers, students, and employees, inviting them to collaboratively create a positive madrasah culture. One strategy used is creating a culture of healthy competition throughout the school community. For the teachers, the principal holds a selection for favorite and exemplary teachers, accompanied by the presentation of awards. As for the students, the principal establishes a superior class (*kelas unggulan*) at each grade level as a competitive arena for students. Overall, the motivation provided by the principal can take the form of words of encouragement, moral support, enthusiastic cheers, and awards.

Seventh, the Role as an Innovator. The principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek creates new innovations in developing the madrasah culture; one of them is the moral mentoring program to cultivate a culture of honesty. In this program, students are encouraged to speak honestly about their actions, whether they involve infractions or good deeds. Additionally, there are several other programs initiated by the principal as part of the reform efforts within the madrasah. This is in line with Mulyasa's (2013)

perspective that the principal as an innovator must be active in seeking, discovering, and implementing various changes in the school.

Important Factors in Building Madrasah Culture

Based on the research findings, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek implements various efforts to build a positive school culture. The following elucidates the important factors considered and applied by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek in building an effective madrasah culture:

a. Harmonious Relationships with the Entire School Community

One of the steps taken by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek to create an effective madrasah culture is establishing good relationships with the entire madrasah community. This effort aligns with the views of Vern Jones and Louise Jones, as cited in Sumarto (2020), who state that indicators of a positive madrasah culture include harmonious interpersonal communication, a sense of kinship, mutual trust among teachers, a comfortable atmosphere, teachers' enthusiasm in carrying out their duties, high teacher loyalty to the school, and teachers' pride in their institution.

To create harmonious relationships, the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek utilizes several methods, one of which is increasing the frequency of communication. This communication is conducted through various approaches, encompassing both formal and informal activities. Examples of formal approaches include weekly or monthly routine meetings with teachers, meetings with parents, and bimonthly meetings with the school committee. Informal approaches include activities such as mass prayers (*istighosah*), Quranic recitation completion (*khataman al-Qur'an*), WhatsApp groups, informal gatherings such as barbecues, and seven-minute sermons (*kultum*). The principal communicates not only with the teachers but also with all madrasah elements, including the committee, parents, and the wider community. This intensity of communication helps create good relationships within the madrasah environment, enabling madrasah development to run effectively. This resonates with the view of Kurnia et al. (2020) that good collaboration will create a comfortable and peaceful environment felt by the entire school community. Positive social interactions and relationships are evident in communication styles, personalities, attitudes of sympathy and empathy, as well as various actions that build harmonious relationships.

The principal's efforts have successfully enhanced the harmony of relationships among the school community. This harmony contributes to the creation of a positive work climate, thereby forming a conducive and productive madrasah culture. The principal consistently encourages participation and collaboration with the entire madrasah community.

b. School Security and Safety

Another step considered and implemented by the principal in creating a good madrasah culture is enhancing madrasah security across various aspects, including psychological, physical, social, and cultural dimensions. This effort aims to ensure the safety of the entire school community, thereby creating a comfortable and pleasant environment for everyone attending MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek.

The principal has implemented various initiatives to improve school security. These steps include the application of written regulations, the signing of integrity pacts by teachers, the use of Student Control Cards (KKS - *Kartu Kendali Siswa*), the provision of additional facilities, the optimization of security personnel, the establishment of a suggestion service, and the installation of motivational pamphlets or slogans on banners and billboards. Furthermore, the principal promotes the 5S culture Smile, Greet, Salute, Polite, Courteous (*Senyum, Sapa, Salam, Sopan, Santun*) to create a safe and friendly environment.

These actions reflect the principal's responsibility, as outlined by Torrance (2022), which emphasizes that the principal is responsible for maintaining the safety of all individuals within the madrasah environment, including staff and visitors. Preventing undesirable events is the responsibility of the madrasah leader, both legally and ethically. Maintaining a safe school environment free from disruptions is crucial for creating a positive school climate. The principal must be proactive in addressing and overseeing security issues in accordance with applicable regulations.

c. A Conducive Madrasah Environment

Based on field data derived from the research, the principal also applies various other initiatives to create a good madrasah culture, namely by establishing a conducive madrasah atmosphere. Several steps taken by the principal to achieve this goal include: *(1) Creating a religious school environment/religious culture:* At MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek, the development of a religious environment and culture is carried out by systematically applying behaviors and manners in their respective religious practices. The objective is to shape good personalities and attitudes (noble character/ *Akhlaqul Karimah*). This effort is implemented through rules, motivational writings, and habituation. Example activities include reciting the Quran for one hour every morning, praying together before and after lessons, performing congregational *Dzuhur* and *Ashar* prayers, encouraging modest dress, and implementing a memorization program for short Quranic *surahs*. *(2) Creating a beautiful, comfortable, and clean school environment:* Another effort made by the principal is building a clean, comfortable, and beautiful madrasah environment. To achieve this, the principal implements several policies, such as scheduling classroom cleaning duties (*piket kelas*) and empowering two janitors responsible for maintaining cleanliness in the madrasah environment. Moreover, the principal organizes a moral mentoring program and routinely provides motivation on various occasions, whether in meetings, *kultum*, or via WhatsApp media. To foster awareness of the importance of cleanliness, the principal installs slogans, pamphlets, and banners calling for cleanliness in the school environment. *(3) Creating a conducive academic*

environment: To create a conducive learning environment, the principal takes several steps, although current efforts are still limited to providing classroom rules and motivation to the teachers. These steps are taken to ensure that the learning environment becomes comfortable for the students.

However, viewed from an ideal perspective, MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek still faces challenges. The principal notes that the school has not reached the ideal standard due to an imbalance between the student population and the available learning spaces. According to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (*Permendikbud*) No. 23 of (2013), the number of students in one class should not exceed 32. This imbalance somewhat affects the conducive learning environment, especially due to the annual increase in student enrollment. This increase in students is disproportionate to the existing facilities and infrastructure, as the development of infrastructure can be considered slow. Therefore, to overcome this issue, the principal takes preventive measures by limiting the student quota to match the madrasah's available facilities and infrastructure.

d. Improving Student Discipline

Student discipline has become one of the main focuses of the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek in creating a conducive school environment. Various steps taken include routine monitoring, providing examples of good behavior, using fingerprint scanners for teacher and student attendance, implementing a reward and punishment system, and putting up posters containing disciplinary messages. This effort has led to a significant improvement in madrasah discipline, although more intensive action is still required from the principal, particularly in enforcing discipline among educators.

The steps taken by the principal align with Imron's perspective in Anggraini et al. (2019), stating that by applying clear rules and regulations, providing rewards for students who follow the rules, and imposing punishments on those who violate them, the situation will impact student discipline. In this regard, the school must have written rules that serve as the foundation for discipline.

e. Building a Culture of Competition

The principal has taken another step in creating a conducive environment by building a culture of competition in the madrasah. This aims to foster high motivation and enthusiasm for learning, as well as better academic achievement. A culture of competition among students has been formed, particularly through the recognition of superior classes (*kelas unggulan*) at each grade level. Furthermore, a special tutoring program for Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MIPA) subjects from the third to the sixth grade has also been introduced by the principal. This program not only provides academic guidance but also creates opportunities for students to participate in various competitions, such as the National Science Olympiad (OSN) and the like. This is done to enhance the school's image and provide a positive impact on the learning environment.

The principal's efforts in building this culture of competition have positively impacted academic achievement. According to Mulyasa's (2013) view, a culture of competition among students is considered successful when they demonstrate consistent improvement in achievement over time. This method is capable of awakening the students' enthusiasm for learning, thereby eliciting curiosity, aspirations, and a strong sense of ambition within them.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the leadership role of the madrasah principal is crucial in creating and building an effective madrasah culture. A strong and positive madrasah culture not only improves educational quality but also supports student development and motivates both staff and teachers. The principal's adaptive and situational leadership style is the key to building this effective culture, as evidenced by the positive impacts resulting from the approach implemented by the principal of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek. Strategies such as developing harmonious relationships among all madrasah members, improving the security and comfort of the learning environment, and creating a conducive academic atmosphere are integral parts of the principal's efforts to achieve this goal. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of the principal's leadership in building a culture that supports effective learning, which has direct implications for the enhancement of educational quality within the institution.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express the deepest gratitude to the principal, educators, educational staff, and students of MI Nurul Huda Rancaekek for their openness, cooperation, and participation during the data collection process. Furthermore, the author extends sincere appreciation to STAI Al-Falah Cicalengka for funding and supporting this research activity.

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