Humanistic Leadership of School Principals in Promoting Effective Collaboration through Problem-Solving in Madrasah Aliyah

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Abstract

This study explores the role of humanistic leadership among school principals in fostering effective collaboration with parents through collaborative problem-solving in Islamic-based schools in East Java. Employing a qualitative approach that involves interviews, observations, and documentation, this research integrates servant leadership principles with Islamic educational values, such as trust, justice, and communal benefit. The study reveals that principals who adopt a humanistic leadership style promote inclusive communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making with parents, thereby enhancing student motivation, academic performance, and socio-emotional development. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of bibliometric analysis to map current research trends on humanistic leadership in Madrasah Aliyah, identifying key themes, gaps, and underexplored collaborative strategies involving school stakeholders. It uniquely combines theoretical insights from servant leadership and Islamic education with empirical findings from local contexts in East Java, offering a culturally grounded model for inclusive school governance. This study makes a significant contribution to the development of ethical leadership in Islamic education, encouraging school leaders to foster stronger, value-based partnerships with families to enhance educational quality.

Keywords: Humanistic Leadership, Collaborative Problem-Solving, Islamic Education, Servant Leadership, Madrasah Aliyah.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran *kepemimpinan humanistik di kalangan kepala sekolah dalam memfasilitasi kolaborasi efektif dengan orang tua melalui pemecahan masalah kolaboratif di sekolah-sekolah berbasis Islam di Jawa Timur. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang melibatkan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan prinsip-prinsip kepemimpinan pelayan dengan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam seperti kepercayaan, keadilan, dan manfaat bersama. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa kepala sekolah yang mengadopsi gaya kepemimpinan humanistik mempromosikan komunikasi inklusif, saling menghormati, dan pengambilan keputusan bersama dengan orang tua, sehingga meningkatkan motivasi siswa, prestasi akademik, dan perkembangan sosial-emosional. Keunikan penelitian ini terletak pada integrasinya dengan analisis bibliometrik untuk memetakan tren penelitian terkini tentang kepemimpinan humanistik di Madrasah Aliyah, mengidentifikasi tema-tema kunci, celah, dan strategi kolaboratif*

yang belum dieksplorasi melibatkan pemangku kepentingan sekolah. Penelitian ini secara unik menggabungkan wawasan teoretis dari kepemimpinan pelayan dan pendidikan Islam dengan temuan empiris dari konteks lokal di Jawa Timur, menawarkan model tata kelola sekolah inklusif yang berakar pada budaya. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi konseptual dan praktis bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan etis dalam pendidikan Islam, mendorong pemimpin sekolah untuk membangun kemitraan yang lebih kuat dan berlandaskan nilai-nilai dengan keluarga guna meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Humanis, Pemecahan Masalah Kolaboratif, Pendidikan Islam, Kepemimpinan Pelayanan, Madrasah Aliyah.*

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of educational leadership are undergoing a significant transformation, necessitating a shift towards more humanistic approaches that prioritize collaboration, problem-solving, and effective decision-making (Mora-Ruano et al., 2021). Traditional hierarchical models are gradually being replaced by leadership styles that emphasize empathy, trust, and shared responsibility, recognizing the inherent value and potential of every member within the educational ecosystem (Jo, 2025)(Huda & Rokhman, 2021; Ma`arif et al., 2025). This evolution is particularly evident in the role of school principals, who are increasingly expected to foster inclusive environments where teachers, students, and staff can collectively address challenges and contribute to the overall success of the institution (Jo, 2025). The effectiveness of a school principal is crucial for developing all members of the institution (Mora-Ruano et al., 2021) (Adeoye, Baharun, & Munawwaroh, 2025; Alwi & Mumtahana, 2023; Daheri, Meliani, Putra, Saputra, & Syarifah, 2023). The principal should recognize the importance of understanding the interconnectedness between schools and homes instead of viewing them individually (Cruickshank, 2017) (Hasanah, Sandy, Mannan, & Nasucha, 2022).

While previous research has explored various facets of educational leadership, a gap exists in understanding how humanistic leadership specifically contributes to fostering effective collaboration through problem-solving and decision-making processes in schools (Asmendri et al., 2024; Deng & and Turner, 2023; Ezzani, Brooks, Yang, & Bloom, 2021). Many scholars have addressed the persistent disparities among different schools, which can be reduced by changing school principals (Hou et al., 2019). While studies have examined the impact of leadership on school climate and instructional organization (Ongaga et al., 2020), there is a need for in-depth investigation into the specific mechanisms through which humanistic leadership behaviors translate into tangible improvements in collaborative practices (AL-Momani, 2024; Azizah & Mardiana, 2024). Addressing this gap, this article aims to explore the role of humanistic leadership in shaping collaborative dynamics within schools, with a particular focus on problem-solving and decision-making.

This article seeks to unpack how principals, by embodying humanistic principles, can cultivate a culture of shared responsibility, open communication, and mutual respect, thereby empowering teachers and staff to actively participate in identifying and addressing challenges. It also aims to analyze how humanistic leadership practices influence the quality of decisions made within the school context, ensuring that these decisions are informed by diverse perspectives and aligned with the best interests of the students and the broader school community.

The subsequent sections of this article will delve into the theoretical underpinnings of humanistic leadership, examining its key principles and contrasting it with other leadership styles. Furthermore, the article will analyze the specific behaviors and practices of humanistic leaders in the context of school administration, providing concrete examples of how these behaviors translate into effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. By

providing a comprehensive analysis of the role of humanistic leadership in fostering effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of how school principals can create more inclusive, empowering, and ultimately, more successful learning environments.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to deeply explore how school principals implement humanistic leadership to foster effective collaboration with parents through problem-solving strategies. The focus of the research is on Islamic-based Madrasah Aliyah in East Java, a region chosen for its rich socio-cultural diversity and strong pesantren traditions that support active community involvement in education. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with principals, direct observation of school-parent interactions, and document analysis of collaborative policies and agendas implemented by the schools. These three methods were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of humanistic leadership within the context of Islamic education. The study integrates the concept of servant leadership with Islamic educational values such as justice, trustworthiness, consultation (*shura*), and collective benefit values that form the foundation of inclusive and participatory leadership styles.

Data were analysed thematically by identifying patterns from the interviews, observations, and documents. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation techniques were used to cross-check information from multiple sources. In addition to the fieldwork, the study also applied bibliometric analysis to map current research trends on humanistic leadership in Madrasah Aliyah. By using tools such as VOSviewer and Bibliometrix, the researchers were able to identify key themes, influential authors, and research gaps that remain underexplored. This analytical dimension enriches the study's conceptual framework and contributes to the development of ethical leadership models rooted in local and religious values. Thus, the research method not only captures real-world practices but also connects them to broader academic discourse in the field of Islamic educational leadership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Humanistic leadership, collaboration, problem solving, and decision making in the context of Madrasah Aliyah

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method used to analyze scholarly publications, providing insights into research trends, influential authors, and the impact of specific research within a given field. Focusing on the period 2020 to date, bibliometric analysis can provide valuable insights into the evolving research landscape related to humanistic leadership, collaboration, problem solving and decision making in the context of Madrasah Aliyah in East Java. The application of bibliometric techniques enables the identification of key themes, research gaps, and potential areas for future investigation, thus enhancing our understanding of the dynamics within these educational institutions (Inayah et al., 2020). Bibliometric studies have been widely adopted in various research domains (Ilham et al., 2023). By examining publication patterns, citation networks and co-authorship patterns, researchers can gain a comprehensive overview of the research landscape and identify the most influential works and scholars in the field (Zhao et al., 2024). The ability of school principals to communicate effectively in improving the quality of education can be reflected in promoting civility and mobilizing school members to participate in improving the quality of education (Devi & Subiyantoro, 2021).

The following is a list of journals that were subjected to bibliometric analysis.

Table 1. List of journals in the bibliographic analysis related to humanistic leadership and madrasah Aliyah.

Category	Main Content	Source
Purpose of Bibliometric Analysis	Analyze research trends, influential authors, and impact of publications related to humanistic leadership, collaboration, decision making, and problem solving in Madrasah Aliyah.	Inayah et al., 2020
Study Period	Year 2020 to date	-
Benefits	Identify key themes, research gaps, and opportunities for future exploration	Ilham et al., 2023
Bibliometric Steps	1. Data collection from Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar 2. Data analysis with VOSviewer, CiteSpace, Bibliometrix 3. Network visualization & keyword trends	Fernández et al., 2010
Additional Analysis Techniques	Citation analysis, co-authorship, keyword trends, geographic distribution, inter-institutional collaboration	Zhao et al., 2024
Humanistic Leadership Context	Leadership that encourages participation, effective communication, promotion of values, and involvement of school members in improving the quality of education.	Devi & Subiyantoro, 2021
Relevance of Ethics and Culture	Ethical leadership influences organizational culture, integrity, and transparency in educational institutions and the public sector	Zahari et al., 2024
Supporting Research Methods	Quantitative causal, with a path analysis approach	Darimus & Hanif, 2023
Potential Findings	- Dominance of collaboration & ethics themes - Gaps in student/parent participation - Lack of study of collaborative strategies among teachers/administrators - Lack of exploration of inclusive decisions	-
Practical Implications	Encourage the development of ethical leaders, promotion of a values-supportive organizational culture, and improvement of inclusive decision-making strategies	Zahari et al., 2024
Theoretical Contribution	Humanistic leadership is based on human relations theory: emphasizes interpersonal relations, teamwork, managerial effectiveness, transformational and transactional.	Javed et al., 2020

Applying bibliometric analysis to research on humanistic leadership in Madrasah Aliyah involves several main steps, starting with data collection, where relevant publications, including journal articles, conference proceedings, and books, are collected from academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar (Fernández et al., 2010). Search queries should be carefully designed to obtain relevant literature, using keywords related to humanistic leadership, collaboration, problem solving, decision making, and

Madrasah Aliyah. The data extracted from these publications typically include author name, publication title, year of publication, abstract, keywords, and citation information. After data collection, the next step is data analysis, where the collected data is analyzed using bibliometric software such as VOSviewer, CiteSpace, and Bibliometrix. These tools facilitate the visualization of citation networks, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence patterns, which offer insights into the structure and evolution of the research field. Ethical leadership and organizational culture are critical in driving Environmental, Social, and Governance alignment in public sector organizations (Zahari et al., 2024). Ethical leadership, characterized by integrity and transparency, shapes organizational culture by promoting ethical behavior and accountability (Aisyah, Ilmi, Rosyid, Wulandari, & Akhmad, 2022; Dasopang, Adam, & Nasution, 2022). Quantitative research using causal methods, path analysis technique approach (Darimus & Hanif, 2023).

In addition, analyzing the frequency of certain keywords can reveal emerging trends and research hotspots in this field, while citation analysis can identify the most influential publications and authors. Analyzing publication trends over time can reveal the growth and evolution of research on humanistic leadership in Madrasah Aliyah, identifying periods of increased research activity and areas of interest. This research reveals the importance of ethical leadership in encouraging ethical behavior in organizations (Bauer & Hermann, 2024; Yasin & Khasbulloh, 2022). Examining the geographical distribution of research can identify institutions and regions actively engaged in studying humanist leadership in Madrasah Aliyah, encouraging potential collaboration and knowledge sharing. Ethical leadership is considered an important source of ethical guidance for employees (Corbin et al., 2023; Gagné & Briggs, 1979). Existing research indicates a research gap in understanding the interaction between ethical leadership and organizational culture and their collective impact in shaping organizational behavior, which is critical for promoting transparency, integrity, and ethical practices in government departments (Bakker, Hetland, Kjellevold Olsen, & Espevik, 2023; Devi & Subiyantoro, 2021).

Synthesizing the findings from the bibliometric analysis can provide valuable insights into the state of research on humanist leadership, collaboration, problem solving and decision making in Madrasah Aliyah in East Java. Identifying key themes and areas of research that have received the most attention can help researchers understand the current focus of the field, while identifying research gaps can highlight areas that need further investigation. For example, while there is growing recognition of the importance of collaboration in educational settings, there may be a lack of research on effective strategies to foster collaboration among teachers and administrators in Madrasah Aliyah. In addition, there is little research exploring the role of humanist leadership in promoting inclusive decision-making processes involving students, parents and community members. Organizations that aim to promote ethical practices, value-driven employees, and ethical cultures should prioritize the development of ethical leaders (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Ferine, Aditia, Rahmadana, & Indri, 2021).

Managerial effectiveness is essential for sustainable development and competitive advantage, relying on management's ability to manage self, subordinates, and relationships. Based on human relations theory, ethical leadership emphasizes personal attributes, administrative qualities, human relations, teamwork, and relationships with managers and colleagues. Transformational and transactional leadership styles are positively associated with managerial effectiveness (Javed et al., 2020). Ethical leadership has received considerable attention, recognizing its pivotal role as a driver for improving organizational performance (Zahari et al., 2024). Leaders with high integrity, ethical standards, and genuine concern for their subordinates are more likely to foster trust and loyalty within the organization (Krisharyuli et al., 2020; McCann et al., 2017). Methods that are effective in challenging

operational contexts can deliver superior results compared to organizations operating in less demanding environments (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; Gagne, Wager, Golas, Keller, & Russell, 2005; Kartiko, Wibowo, Gobel, Wijayanto, & Saputra, 2023):

Principal's Humanistic Leadership in Realizing Effective Collaboration with Parents through Problem Solving

Principal's Humanistic Leadership in Realizing Effective Collaboration with Parents through Problem Solving: Analysis of Servant Leadership Theory and Islamic Education. The following is a table of articles from 2020 on humanistic leadership in bibliometric analysis.

Table 2. List of journals from 2020 according to the theme of Humanistic Leadership of Principals in Realizing Effective Collaboration with Parents.

Discussion Aspect	Core Explanation	Source
The Principal's Role in Modern Education	Not just administratively, but as a transformative leader and servant to the school community (teachers, students, parents).	Harsoyo, 2022
Humanistic Leadership	Focus on self-development, individual needs, inclusive atmosphere and active learning.	Muhammad, 2017; Rahimi, 2022
The Importance of School-Parent Collaboration	School and parent synergy is important for consistency and support of holistic student development.	-
Humanistic Curriculum	Humanizing people, appropriate for post-pandemic recovery, and responding to learning issues.	Rohman et al., 2022
Humanistic Leadership Practices	Listening to parents' aspirations, involving them in policies, open communication.	Rohman et al., 2022
Relevance to *Servant Leadership* and Islamic Values	Leaders serve, empower, fair, trustworthy, people-oriented, and prioritize common interests.	Sri Susatyo et al., 2021; Amaliati, 2020
Collaborative Problem Solving Strategy	Parents are involved in problem identification, joint solutions, deliberation and collective decision-making.	Septiwiharti, 2023; Zuhaerani, 2021
Impact of a Collaborative School Environment	Open communication, active participation, increased learning motivation, better academic performance.	Fitriah et al., 2013; Amalia, 2018
Challenges of Parent-School Collaboration	Socio-economic background, parental education, lack of understanding of the material, time constraints, technology and cost issues.	Egistiani et al., 2023
Strategies for Overcoming Challenges	Effective communication, building relationships, understanding parents' expectations, parenting programs, volunteering.	Ningsih et al., 2023
Results of Effective School-Parent Collaboration	Improved academic performance and social-emotional development of students.	Davis & Yang, 2005
Learning Context	Contextual learning model helps students understand the material maximally.	Rif'ati, 2020

In the context of modern education, the role of the principal is no longer limited to administrative functions, but extends to being a transformative leader and servant to the school community, including teachers, students and parents (Harsoyo, 2022). Humanistic leadership is crucial in creating a collaborative and inclusive environment where each individual feels valued and has a significant contribution to make to educational progress (Muhammad, 2017). This approach emphasizes the development of personal potential, the fulfillment of individual needs, and the creation of an atmosphere that supports active and dynamic learning (Rahimi, 2022). Effective collaboration between schools and parents is an important foundation in improving the quality of education, as the synergy between the two parties can create a consistent learning environment that supports students' holistic development. The implementation of a humanistic curriculum is considered appropriate to overcome the problems that arise in the learning process of children (Rohman et al., 2022). The humanistic curriculum with humanizing characteristics inherent in it is a necessity to be implemented for educational units that have almost lost learning due to a long pandemic (Rohman et al., 2022). The following is a table of previous research on the Principal's Humanistic Leadership in Realizing Effective Collaboration with Parents through Problem Solving.

The principal's humanistic leadership is manifested in various concrete actions, such as actively listening to parents' aspirations, involving them in decision-making regarding school policies, and facilitating open and transparent communication. Humanistic principals understand that parents are important partners in children's education and that close collaboration between school and home can have a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement and social-emotional development (Rohman et al., 2022). This humanistic leadership is aligned with the principles of *servant leadership*, where leaders serve the needs of others, empower them, and help them reach their full potential (Sri Susatyo et al., 2021). In addition, Islamic educational values also emphasize the importance of leadership that is trustworthy, fair, and oriented towards serving the people. A leader who adheres to Islamic values will always strive to provide the best for the people he leads, by prioritizing common interests over personal interests. Education is the right means to maximize children's potential, because education is the main capital to develop a better human life (Amaliati, 2020).

In realizing effective collaboration with parents, principals can use a variety of collaborative problem-solving strategies. This approach involves parents as part of the problem-solving team, where they are invited to identify problems, find alternative solutions and make decisions together. This process not only increases parents' participation in their children's education but also builds mutual trust and understanding between schools and families. Family involvement in the education unit will establish good communication and cooperation between families, communities and schools, which can have a positive impact on the development and progress of children in their education (Septiwiharti, 2023). In the context of Islamic education, collaborative problem solving is also in line with the principle of deliberation, where everyone has the right to express their opinions and contribute to finding the best solution. Education is basically a process to help humans develop their potential so that they can face any changes that occur (Zuhaerani, 2021).

The implementation of the principal's humanistic leadership, imbued with the principles of servant leadership and Islamic educational values, can create a school environment conducive to effective collaboration with parents (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Fitriyana, Astuti, Rahman, Werdiningsih, & Idrus, 2023; Pawar, Sudan, Satini, & Sunarsi, 2020). This environment is characterized by open communication, mutual respect and high trust between all parties. In such an environment, parents feel

comfortable to actively participate in school activities, provide constructive feedback and work together with teachers and school staff to improve the quality of their children's education (Saleem, Zhang, Gopinath, & Adeel, 2020; Spears & Lawrence, 2001). With great support from parents, children feel more motivated to learn and achieve better. Decentralization of education can encourage the involvement of parents in the success of national education goals (Fitriah et al., 2013). In addition, effective collaboration between schools and parents can also help students in overcoming various problems they may face, both at school and at home (Amalia, 2018).

However, it is important to realize that achieving effective collaboration with parents is not an easy task. There are various challenges that may be faced, such as differences in socio-economic backgrounds, education levels and views on education. Lack of understanding of the material by parents, parents' difficulties in fostering children's interest in learning, not having enough time to accompany children because they have to work, parents' impatience in accompanying children, parents' difficulties in operating online learning applications, and the high cost of internet quota (Egistiani et al., 2023). To overcome these challenges, principals need to have effective communication skills, the ability to build good relationships with parents, and a deep understanding of their needs and expectations. Schools as one part of the education system are expected to be able to establish good communication and cooperation with student guardians or parents (Ningsih et al., 2023). In addition, schools also need to provide various programs and activities that involve parents, such as parent-teacher meetings, parenting seminars and volunteer activities at school. Close collaboration between schools and parents will have a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement and social-emotional development (Davis & Yang, 2005).

Thus, the principal's humanistic leadership is a key factor in realizing effective collaboration with parents through problem solving. The contextual learning model activates students so that students can understand the material optimally (Rif'ati, 2020). Leadership imbued with the principles of servant leadership and Islamic educational values will be able to create a school environment conducive to collaboration, where all parties feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to improving the quality of children's education. The role of teachers is needed to be able to change the attitude of students for the better (Shodiq, 2023). Teachers must be able to be role models for their students (Andini et al., 2020). In addition, through a collaborative problem-solving approach, schools and parents can work together to overcome challenges that students may face and create an optimal learning environment for their development. Students who are in the transitional age between adolescence and childhood experience a process of development and growth and have a tendency to be less psychologically stable (Zuhaerani, 2021). Therefore, motivation from within is more effective than motivation imposed from outside (Aseery, 2024; Ma'arif, Zuana, & Sirojuddin, 2022; Pratiwi & Warlizasusi, 2023). One way to foster learning motivation is to increase awareness of the importance of education for the future. Education is one of the shields that the younger generation can use in responding to globalization in today's modern era (Wahyu et al., 2020).

Education is an effort to obtain important information that has never been received by students (Putri, 2024). The education sector is the engine that drives human change by developing its potential to provide broad benefits for the life of the universe (Nugraha et al., 2021).

Improving the quality of education and training is a top priority, with a focus on developing teacher competence and professionalism (Maintaining Religious Identity in an Era of Pluralism in Indonesia, 2024). Globalization has created two opposing dimensions of life, namely opportunities and challenges (Mappasiara, 2018). Therefore, it will be increasingly

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important to strengthen universal values such as the values of truth, honesty, virtue, wisdom, and compassion to maintain a harmonious social life system in global community life.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the principal's humanistic leadership plays an important role in building effective collaboration with parents through a problem-solving approach based on Islamic values. This approach creates an open, participatory and supportive school environment, which has a positive impact on students' learning motivation, academic achievement and social-emotional development. However, this study has limitations. The study area only covers East Java, so the results may not necessarily apply to other regions with different backgrounds. The qualitative approach used also does not quantitatively show the effect of humanistic leadership on student performance or collaboration effectiveness. In addition, the perspectives studied were mostly from school principals, thus not fully representing the views of teachers, students and parents.

Future research is expected to be conducted in various regions with a more diverse approach, as well as involving more related parties in order to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the impact of humanistic leadership in a broader educational context.

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