

The Influence of School-Based Management (MBS) and Transformational Leadership Through Digital Transformation in Improving The Quality of Education at Islamic Boarding School Cirebon SMP

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: School-Based Management, Transformational Leadership, Digital Transformation, Education Quality, SEM .	Quality education is a key factor in enhancing a nation's competitiveness in the era of globalization. Along with the development of time, digitalization in education has become an urgent necessity to improve the effectiveness of learning and school management. School-Based Management (SBM) and transformational leadership are two main factors in improving education quality; however, their effectiveness in addressing the challenges of the digital era remains a subject of debate. This study aims to analyze the influence of School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership through Digital Transformation on Education Quality at SMP IBS Cirebon. The research method used is quantitative with a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach to examine the relationships between variables. The results of the study indicate that SBM and transformational leadership (p-value = 0.016) significantly affect education quality (p-value = 0.019). However, both SBM (p-value = 0.000) and transformational leadership (p-value = 0.002) were found to have a significant impact on digital transformation. Furthermore, digital transformation significantly influences education quality (p-value = 0.000) and also acts as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between SBM and transformational leadership with education quality. The findings of this study confirm that digital transformation plays a crucial role in enhancing education quality in the modern era. Therefore, schools need to optimize digitalization in management and learning to achieve better education quality.
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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the development of high-quality and competitive human resources. As a key factor in a nation's progress, education must continuously improve in terms of

quality, accessibility, and effectiveness in achieving learning objectives. In this era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, education systems are required to adapt to the changing times, particularly in facing the rapid challenges of digitalization. Along with technological advancements, new approaches in education management need to be implemented to ensure that every educational institution functions optimally in producing competent, innovative, and globally competitive graduates.

One of the key approaches in education management is School-Based Management (SBM). SBM is a strategy that grants greater autonomy to schools in managing resources, including finances, human resources, and academic policies. By applying the principle of decentralization, SBM allows schools to be more flexible in making decisions that align with the needs and characteristics of their students. Effective SBM implementation can enhance school operational efficiency, strengthen community participation in education, and create a learning environment that is more responsive to scientific and technological developments.

In addition to SBM, leadership also plays a crucial role in determining the quality of education. Transformational leadership is one leadership style that is believed to have a significant impact on school management. Transformational leadership encourages school leaders, such as principals and educational staff, to become visionary change agents who inspire and motivate all school elements to achieve higher educational goals. Transformational leaders do not only focus on academic achievement but also on character development, creativity, and adaptation to technology.

In recent years, digital transformation has become a major factor in the reform of global education systems. Digital technology provides opportunities for educational institutions to enhance the quality of learning, improve administrative efficiency, and expand access to education for all groups. At the school level, digital transformation can take various forms, such as the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), digitalization of administrative systems, utilization of online learning platforms, and the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology in teaching processes. With digital transformation, schools can create a more flexible, collaborative, and student-centered learning ecosystem.

However, in Indonesia, the implementation of digital transformation in the education system still faces various challenges. Limited technological infrastructure, low digital literacy among educators, and resistance to change are some of the main obstacles to digital transformation in schools. These challenges are even more evident in Islamic Boarding Schools (IBS), which have unique characteristics in their management and curriculum systems. IBS, or modern pesantren, is an educational model that integrates the national curriculum with Islamic religious education. As Islamic-based educational institutions, IBS face unique challenges in adopting technology while maintaining the Islamic values that are central to their education system.

In Cirebon, the development of IBS has grown significantly, with the emergence of various schools offering modern and high-quality Islamic-based education. However, there is variation in the quality of education across different IBS institutions, influenced by several factors, including the effectiveness of SBM implementation, the leadership style of school principals, and the readiness of schools in embracing digital transformation. Some IBS schools have adopted digital technology in learning and school management, while others struggle with infrastructure and human resource limitations. This has created disparities in education quality, which may affect students' learning outcomes and the competitiveness of IBS graduates in Cirebon.

Given these phenomena, this study aims to analyze the influence of School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership through Digital Transformation on the Quality of Education in Islamic Boarding Schools at the Junior High School Level (SMP) in Cirebon. This research will examine how SBM implementation can enhance education quality, how transformational leadership contributes to educational innovation, and how digital transformation serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between SBM and education quality.

This study is expected to provide deeper insights into the interrelationship between SBM, transformational leadership, and digital transformation in the context of Islamic Boarding Schools. Additionally, the findings of this research may offer recommendations to school administrators, educators, and policymakers in designing more effective strategies to improve education quality, particularly in Islamic-based schools. Therefore, it is hoped that IBS institutions in Cirebon will be better prepared to face the challenges of the digital era and be able to produce graduates who are not only academically excellent but also equipped with 21st-century skills relevant to the demands of the workforce and global society.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using the ex post facto and survey research methods to analyze the influence of School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership on Education Quality through Digital Transformation in Islamic Boarding Schools (IBS) at the Junior High School (SMP) level in Cirebon. A quantitative approach is chosen as this research focuses on testing the relationships between variables using statistical analysis techniques. The ex post facto method is applied because this study examines phenomena that have already occurred without manipulating the independent variables, while the survey research method is implemented by collecting data from respondents using a structured questionnaire.

The population of this study consists of teachers and educational staff at SMP Islamic Boarding Schools in Cirebon. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants based on

specific criteria, such as teachers with a minimum of two years of teaching experience and school principals actively involved in school policy-making. The sample size is determined using Slovin's formula to ensure a representative number of respondents.

The research instrument consists of a closed-ended questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of SBM, Transformational Leadership, Digital Transformation, and Education Quality. The validity and reliability of the instrument are tested through construct validity tests and reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring that only valid and reliable instruments are used for data collection.

The collected data is analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. SEM-PLS is chosen as it allows for analyzing direct and indirect relationships between variables while also testing the mediating effect of Digital Transformation on the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership with Education Quality. The analysis follows several steps, including the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test validity and reliability, and the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to assess relationships between variables and test research hypotheses.

Additionally, classical assumption tests, such as normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test, are conducted to ensure that the regression model meets the necessary statistical assumptions. Hypothesis testing is carried out using the bootstrapping method, where the t-statistic and p-value serve as the basis for determining the acceptance or rejection of research hypotheses.

With a systematic research design and appropriate analytical methods, this study aims to provide valid and reliable findings in understanding how SBM and Transformational Leadership contribute to improving Education Quality through Digital Transformation in SMP Islamic Boarding Schools in Cirebon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to analyze the influence of School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership on Education Quality, with Digital Transformation as a mediating variable in Islamic Boarding Schools (IBS) at the junior high school (SMP) level in Cirebon. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to examine the relationships between variables.

Based on the validity and reliability tests, all indicators in this study showed outer loading values above 0.70, indicating that these indicators are valid in measuring their respective constructs. The reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability also produced values above 0.70, confirming that all variables in this study meet the criteria for good reliability.

The structural model (inner model) analysis results indicate that SBM has a positive and significant influence on Education Quality, with a p-value = 0.019 and t-statistic = 2.34, meaning that better SBM implementation leads to improved education quality. Additionally, Transformational Leadership also has a positive and significant impact on Education Quality, with a p-value = 0.016 and t-statistic = 2.45, suggesting that the more effective transformational leadership is, the higher the education quality in the school.

The findings also reveal that both SBM and Transformational Leadership significantly influence Digital Transformation. The influence of SBM on Digital Transformation is shown by a p-value = 0.000 and t-statistic = 4.21, while the effect of Transformational Leadership on Digital Transformation has a p-value = 0.002 and t-statistic = 3.17. These results suggest that improved SBM implementation and stronger transformational leadership contribute to a higher level of digital transformation in schools.

Furthermore, the study confirms that Digital Transformation has a positive and significant impact on Education Quality, with a p-value = 0.000 and t-statistic = 5.12. This finding highlights that the implementation of digital technology in learning systems and school management enhances overall education quality. Additionally, mediation analysis results indicate that Digital Transformation serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between SBM and Education Quality (p-value = 0.001, t-statistic = 3.89) and between Transformational Leadership and Education Quality (p-value = 0.003, t-statistic = 3.44). Thus, Digital Transformation strengthens the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership in improving education quality in Islamic Boarding Schools in Cirebon.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the implementation of School-Based Management and Transformational Leadership has both direct and indirect effects on improving Education Quality through Digital Transformation. Therefore, Islamic Boarding Schools in Cirebon are encouraged to further optimize SBM practices, strengthen transformational leadership approaches, and accelerate digital transformation in their education systems to enhance learning quality and school management more effectively.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership have a significant influence on Education Quality, both directly and through Digital Transformation as a mediating variable. These results reinforce the theory that schools granted autonomy in managing resources and decision-making through SBM tend to have more effective systems for improving education quality (Suryadi, 2020). School autonomy allows principals and educators to tailor policies to students' specific needs, creating a more adaptive and innovative learning environment.

The finding that Transformational Leadership significantly influences Education Quality aligns with previous research, which suggests that leaders with a clear vision, the ability to motivate teachers, and a drive for innovation in learning will enhance overall school effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1994). A school principal with a transformational leadership style is not only an administrator but also a change agent who inspires educators to adopt more innovative and up-to-date teaching methods. The study results show that school leaders who foster a collaborative and visionary work culture tend to create a higher-quality educational environment.

Additionally, this study confirms that Digital Transformation significantly influences Education Quality and serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership with Education Quality. This underscores that the integration of technology in education is not merely a supplementary tool but an essential part of a school's strategy to enhance quality (Redecker & Punie, 2017). The use of technology in school management and learning facilitates more efficient administration, broader access to learning resources, and more interactive teaching methods. Consequently, schools that effectively adopt digitalization tend to exhibit higher efficiency and effectiveness compared to those still relying on conventional methods.

However, despite the study's findings emphasizing the crucial role of digital transformation in improving education quality, challenges in its implementation cannot be overlooked. Some schools, particularly in areas with limited technological infrastructure, still struggle to fully integrate digital-based learning systems. Issues such as unstable internet access, inadequate technological equipment, and low digital literacy among teachers and students remain significant barriers. Therefore, support

from the government, educational foundations, and the community is essential to ensure that digital transformation can be implemented equitably across all schools.

The implications of this study highlight that the implementation of SBM and Transformational Leadership must be balanced with technological readiness in the digital transformation process. Schools aiming to improve education quality should not only focus on management policies and leadership but also invest in digital infrastructure, provide training for educators on technology usage, and develop curricula that integrate digital tools into the learning process. With this holistic approach, schools can be better prepared to address educational challenges in the digital era and enhance their graduates' competitiveness at both national and global levels.

This study also contributes theoretically by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of digital transformation in the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership with Education Quality, a topic that has not been extensively explored in previous research. Therefore, these findings can serve as a foundation for future research to further investigate how digitalization can be optimized to improve education quality, particularly in Islamic-based schools such as Islamic Boarding Schools.

Overall, this study reinforces that improving education quality does not solely depend on school management and leadership but also on the school's readiness to adopt digital transformation. Thus, school administrators, policymakers, and educators must collaborate in developing comprehensive strategies to ensure that technology is optimally utilized to support a more innovative, efficient, and high-quality education system.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that School-Based Management (SBM) and Transformational Leadership have a significant influence on Education Quality, both directly and through Digital Transformation as a mediating variable. The analysis results indicate that the better the implementation of SBM, the higher the education quality in schools. This is due to greater autonomy in school management, enabling more effective decision-making tailored to students' needs and the school environment. Additionally, Transformational Leadership also plays a crucial role in improving education quality, where school principals with a clear vision, the ability to inspire educators, and the capacity to foster innovation in learning contribute to a more dynamic and high-quality school environment.

The findings also demonstrate that Digital Transformation has a significant impact on Education Quality and acts as a mediating factor that strengthens the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership in enhancing education quality. With the digitalization of school management and learning processes, administrative efficiency increases, access to learning resources expands, and teaching methods become more interactive. However, the implementation of digital transformation still faces challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure, teacher readiness, and policy support from relevant stakeholders.

The implications of this study highlight that efforts to improve education quality cannot be conducted in isolation but must be integrated by optimizing SBM implementation, strengthening transformational leadership, and accelerating the adoption of digital technology in schools. Therefore, schools, especially Islamic Boarding Schools, should focus on these three key aspects in their development strategies to address the challenges of education in the digital era.

This study contributes theoretically by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of digital transformation in the relationship between SBM and Transformational Leadership with Education Quality, which has not been widely explored in previous research. Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for school administrators, policymakers, and educators in designing more effective and technology-driven educational policies and strategies.

As a recommendation, schools should enhance teachers' capacity to utilize technology, develop more comprehensive digitalization policies, and ensure that digital transformation is implemented inclusively to maximize its impact on all students. Future research can explore additional variables, such as organizational culture and parental involvement, to provide a broader understanding of the factors influencing education quality in the digital era.

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