



## Teacher Leadership Models in Developing Cognitive Ability in Early Children

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the teacher's leadership model in an effort to develop early childhood cognitive abilities in RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The technique of collecting data from the process of observation and interviews with the principal, Deputy Head of Curriculum, homeroom teacher for grades A and B. Data analysis techniques using the Miles and Huberman Interactive Model with data reduction activities, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity with source and technique triangulation process. The leadership model of the teachers at RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor refers to the participatory-democratic leadership model. This leadership model includes two main characteristics, namely the concept of aspirational management, and broad-minded personal. The teacher leadership model shown in this study describes a teacher figure who emphasizes communication, equalizes subordinates (students), synchronizes learning interests and goals in terms of personal interests and goals, and makes decisions systematically according to the opinions, complaints, and problems of subordinates (students). . So that in learning, these two characteristics become an effort to develop students' cognitive development collaboratively without any pressure.

**Keywords :** *Teacher leadership model, cognitive abilities, early childhood*

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### Introduction

Early childhood is in a phase of growth and development both physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. At this time optimal stimulation is needed so that the potential possessed by children can develop and grow optimally (Haenilah et al., 2021). Early childhood education (PAUD) or pre-school education is a coaching program conducted for children aged 0 to 6 years to have readiness for further education. The statement emphasized that the role of the environment around children needs to stimulate all kinds of behavior and experiences that direct them to get used to knowing new things. One of the focuses of PAUD development for early childhood is the cognitive aspect. According to Hefniy et al. (2022) the scope of cognitive development consists of learning and problem solving, logical thinking, and symbolic thinking.

Children's cognitive abilities depend on the systematics of education obtained. As the purpose of implementing education is basically to educate the nation's life which must be realized through a learning system (Maunah, 2020). In the learning system in schools there is a process of interaction between the principal, teachers, employees, supervisors, school committees and students. All interaction processes take place, because they are influenced by the function of organizing, division of tasks, communication, motivation, authority and example. While the learning system in the classroom is directed so that two-way interactions can occur, namely the interaction between teachers and students and student-student interaction. From the two interactions, it is very clear the learning patterns and tasks of each (Umiarso et al., 2022). From the two interactions, it is very clear the pattern of learning and the respective assignments that occur in the classroom. Learning that involves more communication between components will tend to generate high learning motivation. Communication that is built must also be based on the duties and roles of each. The teacher as a facilitator cannot freeze the student's role during learning, while a student who incidentally is a collaborator also cannot be authoritarian in the actions and decisions of other people. So, the communication and interaction in question is to prioritize aspects of joint cognitive development and emotional stabilization during learning.

Teachers who have a central role in the successful implementation of learning, must have a leadership spirit. Teachers are also required to be competent because the teacher's involvement in learning has a major influence on the process and learning achievement of students (Umasugi, 2020). Teachers must be a good role model for students, especially pre-school students (TK/RA). A teacher must be able to manage the resources owned by the school and class effectively in order to ensure the fulfillment of learning objectives (Nuraida, 2019). According to Zahra et al. (2022), teacher leadership in the learning process is very important to apply in the classroom because it can significantly improve learning conditions and student achievement. Apart from that, it can also build a citizen learning community and even be able to make a learning class.

It is unfortunate to see the facts of education at this time, showing the role of the teacher to feel more of himself as the center of all information, not as a facilitator for students. So that the teacher's teaching style still conveys material conventionally, authoritarily, and tends to be the only leader in the class (Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2019). This is because the interaction is still one-way, namely the teacher and students alone which makes teachers reluctant to give opportunities to young students to express their opinions. Meanwhile, in the current curriculum, a student is required to be more active and creative during the learning process in class.

Other facts in the learning process, there are still many teacher behaviors that deviate from the norms and rules that apply. For example, the teacher's habit of only giving assignments without any guidance and direct learning to students. In fact, students with an age range of 4-7 years still lack knowledge, experience, and creativity. It's no doubt that sometimes PAUD students feel they can copy the work of their friends so they can quickly complete their assignments and ignore the potential for cognitive development. So it is very unfortunate if the teacher only leads the students in terms of delivering material for hours on end. This will make students less sympathetic, lazy, weak in thinking and do not find new things from their cognitive abilities in class.

The same condition is seen in the learning system at RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor. Teachers tend to implement learning activities without identifying the needs, preferences, and desires of students in the learning process. So that it can be illustrated from the current reality that is often found that children's creativity has unknowingly been stuck in the midst of busy parents. Many parents or teachers are still not aware of and appreciate the importance of children's needs and creativity. Parents and teachers are less able to understand the meaning of creativity (aptitude and non-aptitude) and how to develop it in children in an educational environment at home and school. Furthermore, education in schools is more oriented towards

the development of intelligence (intelligence) than the development of creativity, while both are equally important for achieving success in cognitive learning abilities.

The teacher's leadership model is indeed one of the important factors that determines the success of the organization (school environment). The leadership model means the attitude and approach of the leader in giving directions, implementing plans and strategies and motivating followers. Different situations require different leadership models so that with these conditions it is hoped that teacher leadership can shape the process of developing the desired students' cognitive abilities. Andarwulan et al. (2019) explained in his research that good teacher leadership is manifested in the form of integrating task orientation with human relations orientation so as to change student behavior into intellectual figures.

The teacher's leadership role in the classroom as a figure that is needed in making policies and decisions so that various problems can be overcome even in the most complicated circumstances (Nengsih et al., 2020). Things that must be considered regarding the component of teacher leadership in the classroom are (1) the process of a series of teacher actions in the learning system in the classroom; (2) influence and set an example; (3) giving orders in a persuasive and humane way but still upholding discipline in the applicable rules; (4) students comply with orders in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities; (5) use authority and power within the justified limits; and (6) mobilizing or directing all students to complete assignments so as to achieve the goal of increasing cooperative relations between one student and another; (7) fostering and mobilizing existing resources in schools and classes; (8) and provide motivation to groups and individuals in the implementation of learning so that it can run as desired (Suyanto, 2017).

Research from Zahra et al. (2022) explains that in the process of structuring, teachers certainly apply an appropriate leadership model. There are several models that can be applied by teachers in managing the course of the educational process, such as; charismatic, paternalistic, autocratic, laissez faire and democratic. The important point is that whatever model is used by the teacher, the teacher must be a leader who is able to convince and involve all elements involved in the educational process, such as convincing parents to care more about the behavior of their children. While Muhammad (2017) in his research stated that the teacher's leadership style in the classroom must pay attention to the model. Because each model or type of teacher leadership in the classroom has different characteristics. Depending on how the nature of the teacher in question. In addition, a teacher must also be able to sort out several aspects of leadership that support the learning process. Because the teacher's leadership in the classroom is affiliated with the expected learning objectives.

According to the previous findings above, it shows that the study of teacher leadership styles and models is important and interesting to do in order to voice the relevance of a teacher in educational goals. However, some of the studies above show a different side to this research. This study describes the concept of an adaptive, collaborative, responsive, and productive teacher leadership model. This research can also be a reference for PAUD teachers in making decisions to properly channel their competence as class leaders. So that the real appearance of this study suggests actual innovation from the figure of a teacher who places students as active subjects in the learning process.

According to the description of the phenomenon above, states the current conditions that require the teacher's role in leading the movement of student education. Of course, the main goal of the teacher is to develop cognitive abilities to be able to receive and think critically about the new information obtained. So, the urgency of this research aims to find out how the teacher's leadership model develops the cognitive abilities of students in RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor.

## Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. This research is limited to efforts to reveal a problem and facts of the situation so that it is only a disclosure

of facts by analyzing data in the form of written or oral words from people from the observed behavior. RA Hidmatul Hikam is located on Besuk District, Probolinggo Regency. The data collection technique for this study used 2 instruments, namely observation guidelines and interview guidelines. The informants of this study included school principals, Deputy Head of Curriculum, classroom teachers for class A and B of RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor. The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman Interactive Model with data reduction, display (data presentation), and conclusion drawing/verification (conclusion drawing) activities. Data validity with source triangulation process.

## Results and Discussion

In a class, learning activities can be said to be successful or fail largely determined by the teacher as the leader in the class. The leadership model is more synonymous with a person's leadership style or type in leading (Hamid et al., 2021). The key to a successful leadership model in the classroom is that the teacher can understand the specific needs and desires of each student in the given situation. These needs and desires are to fulfill the goals and targets in the implementation of learning, not to meet the teacher's own personal needs and desires. Because these needs and desires are for good in achieving the expected learning objectives, leaders must be able to fulfill them (Purwanto et al., 2020). The teacher, in this case the leader in the class, must always try to increase his knowledge and learn about changes and developments in the situation in the learning process, so that the teacher can adjust student policies to the actual needs and circumstances (Aminuddin, 2017).

The teaching model for each teacher at RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor is different. However, the principal of the Al-Farida Semampir Kraksaan Kindergarten (Ms Hasnawati) emphasized to all class teachers to be able to make the teacher's position not be seen as someone in power in the class, but to be a colleague and a collaborative figure in the implementation of learning. He mentioned that there are at least 4 principles that are upheld by teachers, namely increasing the productivity of learning in the classroom, increasing trust and respect between teachers and students and students and students, encouraging teachers and students to collaborate in solving creative and innovative problems, and upholding equality in communicate and interact.

Based on the statement of the principal of the RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor and the observations of the researchers, it is concluded that the leadership model of the teachers of the RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor includes 2 characteristics, namely the concept of aspiration management (aspiration management concept), and broad-minded.



**Figure 1. Characteristics of the Teacher Leadership Model**

### *Aspiration Management Concept*

Aspiration is a desire that exists within a person that triggers the emergence of directed behavior and efforts to achieve the expected goals and desires. While aspiration management is planning or organizing a proposal and desire to achieve what is expected (Aminuddin, 2017). This aspiration management concept listens to students' ideas, opinions, and complaints so

as to establish easier communication, foster students' trust in teachers, and awaken the courage to speak in students. This activity includes two-way interactions that require students to be active in speaking, dare to express opinions, and learning will take place more actively and effectively (Munir & Ma'sum, 2022).

Deputy Head of Curriculum (Ms. Nur Awaliyah) explained that the activity of listening to and addressing student aspirations was carried out with the teacher going around among the students asking about the condition of the students' hearts, minds, and needs before, during, and after learning. Each class at RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor has a class teacher or homeroom teacher and an assistant teacher. So, in the aspiration management process, the two teachers can exchange ideas about the condition of each student. Students usually submit ideas when completing assignments, submit opinions when they find perceived mistakes, ask questions when they have difficulty doing assignments, and submit complaints if they feel uncomfortable in students. Students may go against direction, guidance, and trust in the teacher if students' ideas and opinions are rejected without consideration, complaints and questions are prohibited without reason, accused of being subversive and disturbing the safety and comfort of other students. This is evident characteristically, that early childhood students (AUD) tend to be more egocentric, careless, and relatively spontaneous. So should, the concept of managing student aspirations in the learning process will facilitate interaction between teachers and students.

After listening to students' aspirations, the next process is that the teacher looks for problems that make students anxious and uncomfortable with the learning situation. The concept that was tried to be applied in this activity was chatting with these students. This chatting activity will provoke students' confidence to come out within themselves compared to formal languages such as counselors. Then the teacher examines the problem with critical and conscious reasoning, so students can get feedback or solutions to their aspirations. The solutions offered must be able to contain the principles of fairness, trust, and convenience for students. So that for the next learning process, students do not feel doubt in their steps. In principle, the learning space is opened as wide as possible for students to express opinions, complaints, suggestions, and constructive criticism about any problems related to the learning process in general and the teaching materials provided. especially the teacher.

Offering this concept, Mrs. Karmila Dewi as the homeroom teacher for class A said that one of the advantages of "chatting together" which is non-protocol in nature (nonsense) will be more effective because it is conveyed in an open way and without tendencies. The teacher hopes that there will be various answers, whether in the form of policies or unwritten agreements whose goal is for better and more effective learning continuity. Apart from "chatting together" with students, as stated above, another breakthrough that teachers can take advantage of is opening cross-message services through the WhatsApp application among parents. Usually, there are students who are still embarrassed if their ideas, opinions, and complaints are known by other students. The goal is almost the same as getting closer and communicating the various problems that exist in the classroom and at school. Whether it's personal problems, class atmosphere, study consultations, to other similar complexities that students feel.

The concept of aspiration management also upholds the aspect of courage to argue, which means a situation that requires a strong student will to achieve the desired goals. In achieving these goals, there is a demand for the maturity of thinking processes logically, creatively, and critically based on students' understanding and experience. To achieve the courage to express opinions, the teacher creates a pleasant and relaxed classroom atmosphere. Fun means that the class atmosphere is filled with democratic nuances (freedom in expressing opinions), freedom in asking, answering, and conveying ideas in opinion.

All students are the central determinant of the success of educational goals so that in practice, teachers place themselves and their abilities equally. Each student is given freedom of expression, interaction, and opinion in an active-productive manner according to the learning objectives. Homeroom teacher for class B (Mrs. Khoirun Nisa) explained that teachers who

make students equal can be seen from being fair, not discriminating between students and always treating each student to feel that they are worthy and accepted in the learning setting.

Usually, to do this, the teacher gives students the opportunity to display their works and results that day on clips that are displayed on the classroom walls, and the next day they save their works and results in individual folders. Another example, such as student seats that are formed in heterogeneous groups both in terms of gender, and cognitive level. This effort is carried out by changing seats/groups at each turn of the semester. This is done so that students do not feel that they can only be friends with one or two friends, but more than that. The teacher also emphasizes students to get used to speaking polite words to anyone, including their friends. Usually, students are directed to say "ask for help" when they ask for help, say "sorry" when they make mistakes whether intentional or not, and "thank you" when they get good treatment and when their wishes come true. From these three examples of teacher efforts, it shows that a leader must be able to equalize the position of his subordinates in a fair and safe manner without any disputes.

### ***Broad-Minded Person***

Teachers are also called educators and instructors. But it is known that not all educators are teachers. Because the teacher is a professional position which essentially requires certain technical skill requirements and personality attitudes. All of this can be obtained through a teaching and learning process and practice (Mansyur, 2021) . In welcoming the era of globalization, teachers are expected not only to teach, but must prepare themselves to improve their abilities to become professional and have *broad-minded insights* (Sari, 2020). Teachers are required to have broad insights in order to provide a positive & memorable learning experience for the development of students ' cognitive abilities (Ilyas, 2022) .

As stated by the principal of RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor, teachers must have extensive knowledge of the *subject matter* (field of study) to be taught, mastery of methodology with knowledge of theoretical concepts, appropriate reduction of learning methods, and be able to use them in the teaching and learning process. Simply put, a teacher must position himself as a professional figure who must be productive in the world of education. Therefore, professional competence means the teacher's ability to master the subject matter and the teacher's ability to manage the learning process. This learning management is often referred to as the teacher's leadership style in managing the class. The most important management of teacher learning is understanding the characteristics of children, managing learning so that students can understand the material, planning the implementation of learning, mastering learning methods and media and evaluating learning outcomes.

The circle of teacher learning management processes will reflect the leadership style of a teacher. Judging from the conditions in RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor, each teacher tries to carry out learning by exploring learning conditions according to the needs of the child. The innovation presented by the teacher is solely the result of his insight and form of professionalism. Teachers understand the educational basis for learning purposes, such as applying learning and learning theory, understanding the educational basis, determining learning strategies based on student characteristics, teaching materials, competencies to be achieved, and developing innovative learning designs.

More specifically, the position of the teacher at RA Hidmatul Hikam is as a facilitator and active demonstrator in every learning meeting. For early childhood, the figure of the teacher is the second parent in school who has the right to be a role model, director, leader and mentor in learning. So to achieve learning success, students serve as learning subjects and co-workers. The role of the teacher describes and organizes teaching materials in a systematic (patterned) manner, relevant to objectives, in line with the demands of scientific and technological developments (up-to-date), and taking into account the conditions and facilities in schools. So that students' critical reasoning abilities can continue to develop with a real and directed understanding of the material.

In accordance with the description of the teacher leadership model with the three characteristics above, it seems to refer to the participatory-democratic leadership model. Where a leader emphasizes communication, equates subordinates, synchronizes organizational interests and goals in personal interests and goals, and makes decisions systematically according to the opinions, complaints, and problems of subordinates. These three things form the foundation of RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor teachers as a leader in managing the class. So, its relevance to the teacher's position, the characteristics of this teacher's leadership model can develop students' cognitive abilities well.

## Conclusion

The leadership model of the teachers at RA Hidmatul Hikam, Alassumur Lor refers to the participatory-democratic leadership model. This leadership model includes two main characteristics, namely the concept of aspirational management, and broad-minded personal. The teacher leadership model shown in this study describes a teacher figure who emphasizes communication, equalizes subordinates (students), synchronizes learning interests and goals in terms of personal interests and goals, and makes decisions systematically according to the opinions, complaints, and problems of subordinates (students). So that in learning, these two characteristics become an effort to develop students' cognitive development collaboratively without any pressure.

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