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Leadership Roles of Muhammadiyah Branch Chairman in Participatory Decision-Making at an Islamic Primary School

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Leadership, Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch, Decision-Making.

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the role of the Chair of the Muhammadiyah Branch in leadership and decision-making processes at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong, as well as identifying the challenges faced in its implementation. The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The participants in the study consisted of the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch as the main informant, the head teacher, and the branch committee members as supporting informants. Data were collected through observation over one week and in-depth interviews over three days. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Association has a role as a mentor, guide, facilitator and liaison between the Muhammadiyah Association and the school. Decision-making processes were carried out through consultations involving the head teacher, teachers, and the branch committee. The obstacles encountered included differences in opinion, limited time for coordination, and suboptimal communication. The participatory leadership model implemented helped to create good cooperation and support the successful management of the educational institution.

Kata Kunci:
Kepemimpinan, Ketua Ranting Muhammadiyah, Pengambilan Keputusan.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Ketua Ranting Muhammadiyah dalam kepemimpinan dan proses pengambilan keputusan di MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong serta mengidentifikasi tantangan yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaannya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Partisipan penelitian terdiri atas Ketua Ranting Muhammadiyah sebagai informan utama, kepala sekolah, serta pengurus ranting sebagai informan pendukung. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi selama satu minggu dan wawancara mendalam selama tiga hari. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis tematik melalui tahap reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ketua Ranting Muhammadiyah memiliki peran sebagai pembina, pengarah, fasilitator, dan penghubung antara organisasi Muhammadiyah dengan pihak sekolah. Proses pengambilan keputusan dilakukan melalui musyawarah yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, dan pengurus ranting. Hambatan yang ditemukan meliputi perbedaan pandangan, keterbatasan waktu koordinasi, dan komunikasi yang belum optimal. Kepemimpinan partisipatif yang diterapkan membantu

menciptakan kerja sama yang baik serta mendukung keberhasilan pengelolaan lembaga pendidikan.

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1. Introduction

Education is one of the most important aspects of human life because it plays a role in shaping character and the quality of human resources. In Indonesia, schools serve not only as places of learning but also as venues for fostering religious and moral values (Hidayah & Kosasih, 2025; Isnaini, 2026; Jakandar et al., 2025). The development of education in the modern era faces various challenges related to the quality of leadership in educational institutions. Leadership is a key factor in determining the success of educational organizations in achieving learning objectives, building school culture, and improving the quality of human resources. The dynamics of social change, technological advancements, and increasing public demands for quality education necessitate that educational institutions have effective and adaptive leadership systems to respond to emerging challenges.

One of the things that makes daily life easier is the organizational environment. A person who exercises leadership within a group where interactions occur between superiors and subordinates is called a leader. The success or failure of an organization or group is greatly influenced by how leadership interactions take place within it. In general, leaders are responsible for the success or failure of task completion within a group; in fact, leaders play a key role in determining whether a task will be successfully completed or not (Jannah et al., 2024; Siddiquei et al., 2022). One organization that has a significant influence in the field of education is Muhammadiyah. This organization operates many schools spread across various regions, including at the branch level.

The existence of Muhammadiyah educational institutions demonstrates a tangible contribution to the nation's intellectual development; therefore, sound educational management, particularly in the areas of leadership and decision-making, is of the utmost importance. Educational institutions often face various leadership issues, ranging from ineffective leadership to flawed decision-making. Weak leadership can lower the quality of education and lead to suboptimal institutional governance, while poor decisions can hinder the institution's development (Afifa, 2026; Dewi & Abidin, 2023; Rusiana & Muhayat, 2026). This aligns with Article 3, paragraphs (4) and (5) of the Muhammadiyah Articles of Association, which affirm that one of Muhammadiyah's objectives is to improve the quality of human resources and to advance and modernize education as part of its charitable endeavors (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2019). To achieve these objectives, the Muhammadiyah Bylaws also specifically outline the requirements for leadership members, including competencies and the ability to perform duties, as well as adherence to organizational policy guidelines, demonstrating that leadership quality is indeed a primary concern in the management of both the organization and the educational institutions under its umbrella. Thus, leadership is the primary factor that determines the direction and success of educational institutions, as has been consistently emphasized both in

academic studies and within the organizational framework of Muhammadiyah through its Articles of Association and Bylaws.

Previous studies on leadership within the Muhammadiyah education system have emphasized the importance of progressive Islamic values and professionalism in its management. Research indicates that Muhammadiyah's educational management integrates Islamic values with modern principles in governing educational institutions. Furthermore, effective leaders can create a supportive educational environment that enhances the quality of education (Suyatno et al., 2023). In the context of Muhammadiyah, leaders are also expected to serve as role models and embody Islamic character in carrying out their duties. This indicates that leadership is not only related to administrative matters but also to moral and spiritual aspects.

A number of studies indicate that leaders in Muhammadiyah schools can improve the quality of education through appropriate methods. Transformational leadership, for example, can bring about positive change in schools and enhance public trust (Berkovich & Hassan, 2025; Caharian & Cabanlit, 2024; Kareem et al., 2023). In addition, clear leadership strategies can improve academic quality and create a better learning environment (Hallinger et al., 2025). This demonstrates that good leadership has a significant impact on the success of educational institutions. Thus, the role of leaders is vital in determining the success of an institution.

However, previous studies on Muhammadiyah educational leadership have consistently focused on the level of school principals and institutional management, rather than on the organizational structure of the association at the branch level. Novezar & Ridho (2024) for example, examined the transformational leadership competencies of Muhammadiyah junior high school principals in Wonosobo Regency and found that such leadership practices fell into the moderate category, with the analysis focusing entirely on the principal as the decision-making unit. Integrated the principles of a learning organization into Muhammadiyah education at the elementary and secondary school levels in Palembang; however, this study also stopped at the school management level and did not address the organizational leadership structure above it (Kareem et al., 2025; Welsh et al., 2021). These three studies reveal a common pattern: the unit of analysis for Muhammadiyah educational leadership is consistently at the level of the school principal or institutional management, whereas the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership, which structurally oversees and serves as a decision-making partner for educational institutions in its region, has not yet been the subject of a separate study. It is important to bridge this gap, because strategic decisions regarding the establishment, oversight, and policy direction of schools at the local level often do not stop at the principal's desk but involve branch leaders as representatives of the parent organization.

This study offers a novel perspective compared to previous research, as earlier studies have primarily focused on school principal leadership, transformational leadership, and Muhammadiyah educational management in general, as outlined above. This study specifically highlights the role of the Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership at the grassroots level of the organization in the leadership and decision-making processes within educational institutions. The research focus examines not only leadership roles but also decision-making processes, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed to resolve various issues within educational organizations. This focus offers a new perspective on the

involvement of Muhammadiyah's organizational structure at the branch level in the management of educational institutions.

The concept of education from the Muhammadiyah perspective has characteristics that differ from the general concept of educational leadership. Muhammadiyah education emphasizes a holistic approach, grounded in the idea that a person's character is shaped by the development of their reason and intellect (Hamami & Zalik Nuryana, 2022). Thus, education is directed toward shaping individuals who are in harmony with their natural disposition. Through the implementation of holistic education integrated with various components and environments, it is hoped that a harmonious social life will be created and a civilized society will be built.

Nevertheless, there are still a number of issues in the management of education at the Muhammadiyah branch level, particularly regarding decision-making. As indicated in the discussion above, most studies focus only on school principals or higher levels of management, while the role of branch leaders is rarely examined in depth. In fact, branch chairs play a crucial role in managing and developing educational institutions within their local communities. The lack of research at this level has led to a limited understanding of how leadership at the branch level functions in practice. Furthermore, there is no clear explanation of how the decision-making process takes place at that level. This gap represents an important area for further research and analysis.

The differences between this study and previous research can be identified across three interconnected dimensions. First, in terms of the unit of analysis, previous studies have predominantly examined leadership within the internal structure of individual schools, particularly through the roles of principals and school management teams. For example, studies of leadership in Muhammadiyah schools have examined principals as the primary actors responsible for formulating school programs, managing teachers, addressing institutional challenges, and improving school quality. Ramadhani & Anwar (2026), for instance, examined transformational leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah Semin and focused on the principal's efforts to improve school quality, address internal and external challenges, and develop strategies within the school management structure. In contrast, the present study places the Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2019) as the primary unit of analysis. This position is located outside the internal managerial structure of an individual school but has an organizational relationship with educational institutions within the branch's jurisdiction. Consequently, the study shifts the analytical focus from leadership within the school to leadership exercised through the organizational structure surrounding the school.

Second, in terms of the scope of inquiry, previous studies have largely concentrated on leadership styles, leadership practices, and their effects on school quality, teacher performance, school climate, or institutional development. For example, research on transformational leadership at Muhammadiyah schools has emphasized how principals formulate visions, motivate teachers, address institutional challenges, and implement strategies for improving educational quality. Similarly, the study by Jemain et al. (2025) examined the integration of learning organization principles in Muhammadiyah elementary and middle schools in Palembang. However, its analytical focus remained at the level of school management. The present study extends this scope by examining not only how leadership is exercised, but also how organizational decisions are formulated and

implemented at the branch level, including the problems encountered in decision-making, the considerations underlying particular decisions, the actors involved, and the strategies used to resolve organizational challenges. Thus, decision-making is treated not merely as an outcome of leadership but as an organizational process that connects Muhammadiyah branch leadership with the management of educational institutions.

Third, in terms of the organizational level, previous research on Muhammadiyah educational leadership has generally concentrated on individual schools, school principals, or educational management within particular institutions. Even research addressing learning organization practices in Muhammadiyah education has primarily investigated how organizational learning principles are implemented within schools. The present study, however, specifically examines the branch level of Muhammadiyah as an organizational layer between the broader Muhammadiyah organizational structure and individual educational institutions. This level is important because branch leadership may function as a mechanism through which organizational values, policies, guidance, supervision, and strategic decisions are translated into local educational practice. Accordingly, the study does not treat the branch leadership merely as an external actor. However, it investigates its organizational position and its interaction with schools in shaping educational leadership and decision-making.

Taken together, these three distinctions establish the specific contribution of the present study. Rather than repeating existing research on principal leadership or school-level management, this study examines leadership and decision-making at the Muhammadiyah branch level, with particular attention to the role of the Branch Chairperson in guiding, coordinating, and responding to issues concerning educational institutions under its organizational authority. The study therefore seeks to illuminate an organizational dimension that has received comparatively limited attention in existing research: how leadership beyond the school boundary influences the direction, decision-making, and development of Muhammadiyah educational institutions at the local level.

Based on these issues, this study aims to examine the role of the Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership in the leadership and decision-making processes at educational institutions. This study will examine how branch chairpersons carry out their leadership duties and how decisions are made in the management of educational institutions. In addition, this study will also identify various factors that influence leadership success at the branch level. Thus, this study is expected to provide a better understanding of the role of the branch chairperson. The results of this study can also serve as a reference for leadership development in Muhammadiyah educational institutions.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of leadership science in the field of education, particularly within the Muhammadiyah context. Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as an evaluation tool for educational institution administrators to improve the quality of leadership and decision-making. With a clearer understanding of the role of the branch chairperson, it is hoped that Muhammadiyah educational institutions can develop more effectively. This study also offers a novel perspective because it focuses on leadership at the branch level, a topic that has not been extensively researched. Therefore, this study is of great importance.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch

in leadership and decision-making in educational institutions. The research was carried out at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong in 2026. The research activity lasted for one week: observations were carried out for seven days to examine the leadership process, the implementation of school programs, and the interaction between the branch management and the school, while in-depth interviews were conducted over three days, scheduled according to the availability of the informants.

This study involved a total of three informants, who were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in leadership and decision-making processes at the school: one primary informant (the Muhammadiyah Branch Chair) and two supporting informants (the school principal and an administrator). The informants' codes, roles, and interview details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Code	Position	Interview Duration	Interview Method
NF-1	Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch	60 minutes	Face-to-face In depth
NF-2	Principal, MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong	45 minutes	
NF-3	Branch Administrator (Education Division)	40 minutes	

The research instruments consisted of interview guidelines and observation sheets. The interview guidelines were used to obtain information on leadership patterns, decision-making mechanisms, obstacles encountered, and problem-solving strategies. The observation sheets were used to record leadership activities occurring during the study, including interactions between the branch management and school staff during routine and non-routine activities. To ensure the credibility of the data, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by cross-checking information obtained from the Chairman of the Branch against that obtained from the principal and branch administrators, so that a single account was not taken at face value. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing data from interviews with data from direct observation. In addition, member checking was conducted by returning interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations to the main informant to confirm the accuracy of the data before it was used in the analysis.

Prior to data collection, all informants were informed about the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of their participation, and informed consent was obtained from each informant before the interview began. Informants were also informed of their right to decline to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. To protect informant confidentiality, all names have been replaced with codes (as shown in Table 1) in both the field notes and the reporting of findings, and any information that could reveal an informant's identity has been omitted or generalized in the write-up.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles et al. (2015) which consists of three interrelated stages carried out concurrently with data collection: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The reduction stage involved selecting, simplifying, and

focusing the raw field data on information relevant to the research questions. The data display stage presented the reduced data in the form of a descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of patterns in leadership and decision-making at the branch level. The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, was carried out iteratively by identifying recurring patterns and meanings in the data and cross-checking them against the triangulated sources described above, until stable and well-supported conclusions were reached.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. The Role of the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch in Leadership

Leadership is a person's ability to direct, guide, and influence others to achieve common goals and ideals (Grogan, 2024). In the Muhammadiyah educational environment, the branch chairman has an important position as a coach who helps the school run according to the vision and mission of the organization. The head of the branch not only functions in administrative activities, but also provides direction for education policies. The presence of the branch chairman is part of the support system that helps the school run the program more specifically according to the vision and mission of the organization. Leadership at the branch level is also a form of organizational responsibility for the sustainability of education. Through the directions given, schools can more easily maintain the quality of learning and religious activities. The role shows that leadership is not only carried out by the principal, but also supported by the organizational structure above it (Alecida et al., 2025).

The Chairman of the Muhammadiyah branch has the responsibility to provide input to the school so that it continues to run according to Islamic values and the educational goals of Muhammadiyah. Based on the results of the interviews, the branch chairman is often involved in school activities such as meetings, program evaluations, and student character development. This involvement shows that the branch chairman is not only present at formal activities, but also assists in the educational process. The presence of the branch chairman helps create a stronger relationship between the organization and the school (Mukhtar et al., 2025). The moral support provided can foster the enthusiasm of teachers and school principals in carrying out their duties. In addition, the coaching carried out also helps maintain a religious school culture. Thus, the leadership of the branch chairman has an influence on the educational environment as a whole (Haryaka et al., 2026).

In addition to serving as a coach, the branch chairman also acts as a liaison between schools, communities, and Muhammadiyah organizations. The relationship is important because schools need help from various parties so that teaching and learning activities can run smoothly. The head of the branch helps strengthen good communication between the school and the surrounding community. With good communication, the school's various needs can be easier to understand, and solutions can be found together (Bush, 2024). This role also helps to strengthen public trust in Muhammadiyah educational institutions. Support from the community can be in the form of participating in school activities or helping to improve and develop teaching and learning programs. This shows that leadership not only pays attention to things within the school, but also strengthens the relationship with the environment around the school (Early, 2024).

In carrying out leadership duties, the branch chairman also assists the school in dealing with various problems that arise. These challenges can be in the form of communication difficulties, lack of manpower or equipment, and differences of views among administrators. The head of the branch is in charge of providing solutions by discussing and working together. By communicating well with each other, problems can be solved together without causing constant debate. Such an approach helps maintain a good relationship between the school and the organization. In addition, the branch chairman can also encourage so that the school remains focused on achieving educational goals. Open leadership is an important factor in creating a comfortable school atmosphere (Akhmad, 2025).

Overall, the leadership of the Muhammadiyah branch chairman plays an important role in ensuring that educational institutions run smoothly. The role carried out not only involves supervision, but also provides guidance and support to the school's programs. The chairman of the branch participates in maintaining the values of Muhammadiyah in various educational activities. The research approach is also applied in the teaching and learning process to improve the quality and sustainability of education. Its presence also acts as a bridge that strengthens cooperation between schools, organizations, and the community. This support helps schools in carrying out teaching and learning activities in a more targeted manner. Leadership that involves the participation of all parties helps create a good and collaborative working atmosphere in the school environment. Therefore, the head of the branch has an important role in helping the development of Muhammadiyah educational institutions (Fadhli et al., 2025).

3.2. Decision-Making Process at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong

Making decisions is part of our daily lives, both individually and in groups, especially in an organization. Decision-making is an important part of educational leadership because it determines the effectiveness of policies and the success of institutions in achieving educational goals (Lestari, 2024). Proper decision-making will result in change in the organization for the better and improve quality, but on the other hand, wrong decision-making will have a bad impact on the wheels of the organization and its administration. Decision-making is an important step in solving problems that apply in various fields, involving functions and processes to choose between alternatives. It covers a wide range of models and approaches to improving the quality and effectiveness of decisions in personal and organizational contexts (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2024).

According to Lestari (2024), the decision-making process usually goes through three main stages that are interrelated. The first stage is the investigation stage, which is the initial process carried out to understand the situation or environmental conditions that require a decision. At this stage, all data obtained from the field is collected, then analyzed and checked in order to provide a clear explanation of the problems being faced. The second stage is called the planning stage. In this process, the person or party responsible for making the decision begins to gather various options of action that can be taken. Each alternative is then developed and analyzed in depth to see the opportunities, risks, and possible outcomes that can be achieved from each of them.

Furthermore, the third stage is the selection stage. At this stage, the final decision-making is carried out by choosing the action that is considered most appropriate and most suitable to achieve the desired goal. Thus, the three stages

show that the decision-making process does not occur suddenly, but is carried out with regular steps, starting from recognizing problems, thinking about various options, to deciding on the best choice. The three stages of decision-making offered by Lestari (2024) above can be illustrated as shown in the following figure:



Figure 1. Decision-Making Stage

Figure 1 above illustrates a three-stage decision-making process based on (Lestari, 2024). The investigation stage is presented as the starting point of the process, that is, when field data and conditions are collected and analyzed to understand the problems at hand; this stage then proceeds to the planning stage, where various alternative courses of action are formulated and evaluated in terms of their opportunities and risks; and concludes with the selection stage, which involves determining the final decision deemed most appropriate for the objectives to be achieved. This framework is consistent with field findings, as the decision-making process at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong, as explained by the Muhammadiyah branch chairperson in an interview, also follows a similar pattern: it begins with the presentation and discussion of the problem, followed by deliberations to identify alternative solutions, and ultimately culminates in a consensus decision.

In Islamic educational institutions, organizational culture not only comes from the concept of modern management, but is also based on Islamic values such as honesty, justice, good manners, deliberation, brotherhood, and orientation to the common good. A good organizational culture can create a harmonious work environment, increase a sense of responsibility, and strengthen the morale of all members of the institution (Paredes-Saavedra et al., 2024). In addition, decision-making is an important part of the management of educational institutions because it is directly related to the policies to be implemented.

Islamic educational institutions have a close relationship with the culture of the organization because they are both built on certain values. The management of Islamic educational institutions has an important role in instilling good culture and habits in the institution. A strong organizational culture can help create a more purposeful work atmosphere and support the development of educational institutions. The decision-making process not only chooses the best option, but must also pay attention to the principles of deliberation, fairness, and openness. Right decisions can help the institution achieve its goals effectively, while inappropriate decisions can cause problems and hinder the development of the institution. Therefore, organizational culture and decision-making have a close relationship within Islamic educational institutions because they support each other to achieve common goals (Hestiana & Labaso, 2024).

The decision-making process at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong usually begins by conveying problems that occur in the school environment. Based on the results of the interview, the chairman of the Muhammadiyah branch explained that every problem that arises is first discussed together before determining how to

overcome it. The problems discussed can be related to the teaching and learning process, student discipline, or the implementation of school programs. The chairman of the branch argued that a good decision should be based on the real situation that occurred on the ground. Therefore, school principals and teachers play an important role in conveying information about school needs. Discussions are carried out so that the decisions taken are not only temporary, but also have a long-lasting impact. This approach helps to produce policies that are more suited to the conditions of educational institutions. Based on the results of the interview, NFC-1 stated:

> "*Usually we listen first to the problems conveyed by the school. The principal explained the conditions that occurred, then we discussed finding the best possible solution. So the decision was not made immediately, but considered from various sides first.*"

The statement shows that decision-making is carried out slowly and pays attention to information from parties directly involved in the school. The branch chairman is not only in charge of making decisions, but also a listener who understands the needs of the institution. So, an issue needs to be discussed before a decision is made in order to consider the decision to be made. This helps to make more realistic decisions and in accordance with the situation that the school is facing.

The involvement of various parties is important in the decision-making process at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong. According to the results of the interview, the branch chairman said that decisions made together will be easier to accept and implement by all parties. Teachers, principals, and branch administrators were given the opportunity to express their respective opinions. That involvement is considered important because each party has different experiences and perspectives. Teachers understand the learning situation in the classroom, while the principal knows the need to manage the school. By involving all parties, the decision taken is not only based on one opinion. It also helps create a sense of shared responsibility in implementing the agreed decisions. Based on the interview results, NFC-2 stated

> "*If the decision is discussed together, usually the results are easier to implement. We also ask teachers and principals to express their opinions because they are the ones who know the conditions at school best. So everyone feels involved, not just accepting decisions from above.*"

The statement shows that the culture of deliberation is an important part of managing educational institutions. The head of the branch does not consider himself to be the most powerful person, but rather as the one who guides the discussion process. The role of teachers is one of the most important in making decisions because they are the ones who know the situation the most in school. Such an approach helps to strengthen cooperation between institutions and school researchers.

In conducting deliberations, differences of opinion often occur as part of the discussion process. Based on the results of the interview, the chairman of the Muhammadiyah branch said that differences of opinion are a common thing in an organization. Each party has different experiences and perspectives in dealing with a problem. However, these differences are not considered obstacles, but rather part of efforts to find the best solution. The chairman of the branch tries to create a

comfortable discussion atmosphere so that everyone feels confident to express their opinions. With good communication, differences can be turned into mutually agreed agreements. This helps maintain a good relationship between the administrators and the school. As stated by NFC-2:

> "*Sometimes there are different opinions during meetings. But that's normal, because everyone has a different point of view. The important thing is that everyone is willing to listen and find a middle way together.*"

The statement shows that the leadership of the branch chairman emphasizes an approach to dialogue and open communication. Mutual respect is an important factor so that differences of opinion do not develop into conflicts. Differences of opinion are common; therefore, we must respect the opinions of others and express our opinions well. In this way, the decision-making process continues to run in a conducive manner.

In general, the decision-making process at MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong shows a leadership style that involves participation. Based on the results of the interview, the branch chairman explained that a good decision is a decision that can be accepted by all parties and implemented together. Deliberation is an important step in maintaining a balance between the needs of the school and the organization's policies. The branch chairman acts as a facilitator who helps guide the course of the discussion to stay focused on the learning objectives. By being open to each other in communication, all parties feel that they have a role in making decisions. This method also helps to strengthen a sense of shared responsibility in achieving the success of the school program. Therefore, in making decisions in this educational institution, it is not only about prioritizing the results, but also about paying attention to the process of cooperation between all parties. Based on the interview results, NFC-3 stated

> "*In my opinion, a good decision is a decision that can be accepted together. If everyone is involved in the process, usually the implementation is also easier. So deliberation is important so that the decision does not burden one of the parties.*"

The statement shows that the culture of deliberation is the main basis in the decision-making process in schools. Leadership that involves many parties helps create a more open and harmonious work environment. Deliberation is fundamental during the decision-making process because of its efficiency and precision in decision-making. Thus, the decisions taken can support the sustainable development of educational institutions.

3.3. Challenges of Branch Leaders in Leadership at Islamic Primary School

In leading MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong, the branch chairman had to face various problems that arose within the organization and the school. Based on the results of the interviews, the most frequent obstacles that arise are related to communication between parties that do not always go well. The busy work of each manager often causes coordination to be disrupted, so the decision-making process takes longer. In addition, the difference in ways of thinking between the branch management and the school also causes its own challenges. The chairman of the branch said that each party has a different view because each has different responsibilities. This condition sometimes makes the team get involved in debates during meetings. However, these differences are considered part of organizational

dynamics that need to be managed properly. Based on the interview results, NFC-1 stated

> "*Sometimes the obstacle is not in the decision, but in how to equalize the time and thoughts of all parties. Some are busy with school activities, others have organizational responsibilities outside. So we have to find the right time so that the discussion can be done together.*"

The statement shows that coordination is a major challenge in leadership. The head of the branch is not only tasked with providing direction, but must also be able to unite various interests so that they continue to work toward one goal. Less than optimal communication can cause delays in the implementation of school programs. Therefore, the ability to manage relationships between members of an organization is an important part of leadership. The head of the branch needs to maintain communication so that the relationship between the school and the organization remains harmonious. With good coordination, obstacles that arise can be minimized. This shows that leadership is not only about decision-making, but also the ability to build cooperation.

In addition to communication problems, another obstacle that arises is the difference of opinion in determining school policies. Based on the results of the interview, the head of the branch explained that differences of views often occur when discussing programs related to school needs. Each party has its own considerations based on experience and field conditions. These differences sometimes cause the discussion process to be longer. However, the head of the branch views this condition as a natural thing in educational organizations. Differences of opinion can actually help produce more mature decisions if managed properly. Deliberation is the main way to find common ground between various views. Based on the interview results, NFC-3 stated

> "*If there is a difference of opinion, it is normal. Sometimes the principal has his own views; the management also has other considerations. But usually we look for a middle way so that the decision can still be accepted together.*"

3.4. Strategies in Leadership and Decision Making of Branch Leaders

3.4.1 Strengthen open communication between administrators and schools

Improving open communication between branch administrators and the school is an important way to carry out good leadership. Honest communication makes information clearer, reduces misunderstandings, and makes cooperation in running school programs faster. In the school world, good communication allows everyone to communicate what they think, the problems they face, and what they need directly. The branch chairman serves as the person who connects the organization with the school so that the relationship remains harmonious and peaceful. Communication that is carried out regularly can increase mutual trust between members of the organization. Thus, the cooperation carried out becomes more effective, and the goals of educational institutions can be achieved more easily.

Open communication is very important; this is supported by research that shows that the way schools communicate has a great influence on the success of a leader. Research shows that good communication helps in building cooperation, improving coordination, and strengthening relationships between members in educational organizations. In addition, open communication can

create a comfortable working atmosphere and support the formation of a healthy organizational culture. In educational institutions, communication is not only used to provide information, but also to foster professional working relationships. A leader who can communicate well will find it easier to manage an organization. Therefore, communicating openly is an important way to support good leadership (Rahmatia et al., 2023).

3.4.2 Familiarize deliberation in every decision-making

Deliberation is an important way to lead, as it helps to make decisions that are fairer and can be agreed upon by all parties. In the school environment, deliberation provides an opportunity for administrators, principals, and teachers to express their opinions before a decision is made. The habit of talking together can reduce misunderstandings and make people feel more responsible for the outcome of the decisions made (Ambuehl et al., 2022). The chairman of the branch is in charge of ensuring that meetings take place regularly and remain focused on the goals of the institution. With deliberation, decisions are not made by just one person, but are based on the considerations of all parties involved. This helps create a more democratic and open working atmosphere.

3.4.3 Conduct periodic program evaluations

Regular program evaluation is needed so that we can find out the extent to which school activities are running well or what obstacles arise during their implementation. By conducting an evaluation, the branch chairperson and the school can find out whether the program that has been carried out is in accordance with the goals that have been determined. Evaluation is also useful to find out the existing weaknesses so that improvements can be made in future activities. In education management, evaluation is essential to ensure that the quality of the program remains good and continues to grow. By conducting regular evaluations, each party can find out the results of the work that has been done. This step helps to make school management more targeted and more effective (Shiddiq et al., 2024).

3.4.4 Fostering mutual trust and organizational cooperation

Mutual trust is the main basis for creating good and healthy organizational cooperation. In an educational institution, good communication between branch heads, principals, and teachers can help carry out better cooperation and support the implementation of programs more effectively. Trust makes both parties feel valued and more comfortable expressing their opinions. In addition, good cooperation can help reduce conflict and increase effectiveness in conducting research and cooperation. The head of the branch is in charge of helping to create a good atmosphere and supporting the relationship between the members of the organization to be more positive. Mutual trust helps to increase the effectiveness of cooperation and supports the creation of a conducive organizational environment (Bush, 2024).

3.4.5 Improve coordination through regular meetings

Regular meetings are a good way to strengthen cooperation between administrators and schools. By meeting regularly, each party can provide up-to-date information about the program being run, the problems faced, and the

plan for future activities. Good coordination helps speed up problem resolution and reduce misunderstandings. The branch chairperson can use the meeting as a way to explain the duties and responsibilities of each member clearly. Regular meetings also play a role in maintaining active and harmonious working relationships through strengthening organizational coordination (Mukhtar et al., 2025).

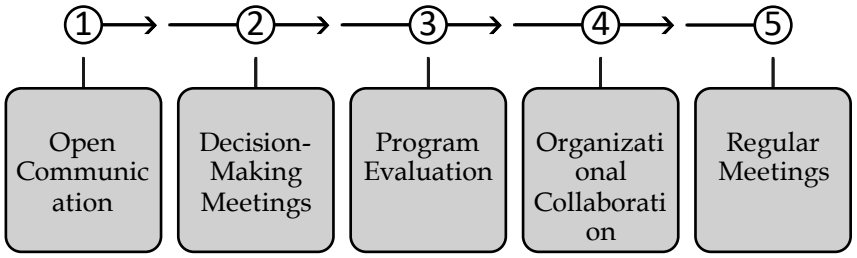


Figure 2. Leadership and decision-making strategies

Figure 2 above illustrates the five leadership and decision-making strategies implemented by the Muhammadiyah branch chairperson in developing MI Muhammadiyah 10 Yanggong, namely: strengthening open communication, fostering a culture of deliberation, conducting periodic program evaluations, building mutual trust, and improving coordination through regular meetings. These five strategies were not formulated purely on a theoretical basis but were derived directly from interviews and field observations, during which the branch chair emphasized the importance of listening to the school's concerns before making decisions, involving teachers and the principal in every consultation, and maintaining harmonious relationships through ongoing meetings and communication with school officials. Thus, this diagram is a synthesis of the field findings described earlier and demonstrates that these five strategies are interrelated and work together to support effective leadership and the sustainability of educational management at the branch level.

These three stages of decision-making serve as the common thread that ties everything together. The chairman's function as coach, guide, and liaison is what first brings problems from the school into view. However, it is also at this early, investigative point that communication gaps and clashing schedules do the most damage, since a problem that is poorly conveyed or delayed in reaching the table cannot yet be discussed at all; strengthening open communication and holding regular meetings work precisely at this point, keeping the channel between school and organization open enough for problems to surface promptly. Once a problem has surfaced, planning takes over. Here the chairman's facilitative style becomes concrete as the habit *of musyawarah*, the same forum in which the differences of opinion noted as a barrier are aired and gradually narrowed down, with periodic program evaluation supplying the evidence that keeps this weighing of alternatives grounded in what is actually happening at school rather than in assumption. The process only reaches a workable outcome, however, once mutual trust and organizational cooperation carry the discussion into the selection stage, because a decision arrived at through deliberation still has to be accepted and carried out jointly. It is trust between administrators, principals, and teachers that keeps disagreement from hardening into refusal once a choice has been made.

Read this way, the five strategies are less a list of good habits than a set of responses positioned exactly where the decision-making cycle tends to break down, and it is this fit between role, process, obstacle, and strategy that constitutes the real leadership pattern uncovered at the branch level.

4. Conclusion

The Chair of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership serves as a mentor, guide, facilitator, and liaison between the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership and the school. In decision-making, he employs a participatory leadership style through deliberations involving the school principal, teachers, and branch officials. Decisions made collectively are considered easier for all parties to accept and implement, and they foster an open and harmonious work environment. Nevertheless, the implementation of this leadership style faces several challenges, including differences of opinion among parties arising from varying responsibilities, limited time for coordination due to the busy schedules of individual committee members, and communication that has not yet been optimized, thereby prolonging the decision-making process. These differences are viewed as part of the organizational dynamics that can be managed through deliberation and effective communication. Thus, the participatory leadership model implemented has proven to foster good cooperation and support the successful management of the educational institution, thereby serving as a model for leadership development in other Muhammadiyah educational institutions.

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