

POLICIES IMPLEMENTATION BY *PESANTREN* EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN MORALITY AND GENERAL SCIENCES: A CASE FROM INDONESIA

By

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Abstract

Pesantren plays an essential role in meeting Indonesia's national education goals. Pesantren-based school is developed to achieve excellence to improve the quality of education. This study aims to analyze the policies implemented by two pesantren schools in Jombang, Indonesia, to gain one of the schools' goals: creating students with good academic abilities and religion-based morality. This research applies qualitative methods with a case study approach, and the data collection process uses interviews and observation. The analysis is based on Lezotte's seven correlates of effective schools. The results show that the policies' implementation integrated religion, science, and technology in the learning process. In other words, the two schools well implemented the seven correlates which resulted in the achievement of the school's goal. The students in the two pesantren schools possessed high academic ability and good Islamic morality.

Keywords: Pesantren effective school; effective schools; religion; education

Introduction

Everyone agrees that schools should teach students how to read, write, count, and get jobs, but what about teaching students how to be good people or moral people? The question of whether education should provide rigorous intellectual content or whether it should include morality is a classic debate among educators and in the broader society. In the history of education in the Western world, moral and intellectual education is considered to go hand in hand. Similar beliefs are held in the East and many cultures worldwide. According to Cheng, Wang, and Wang (2021), most schools and home-schooling include morality as an element of learning. In many western teachings, morality-focused education often relies on social class and student roles; in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, western education allowed the poor to read the Bible as a literacy movement.

Pesantren schools are educational institutions in Indonesia with unique characteristics (Suhardi, 2012). *Pesantren* school system refers to the practice of Islamic values that prioritizes the development of spiritual intelligence integrated with general knowledge (Malik, 2005; Suhardi, 2012). *Pesantren*-based schools in Indonesia show significant growth, where they originally had a traditional concept that was slowly moving towards a modern orientation. There were two kinds of *pesantren*-based schools, namely *Salafi* (traditional) and *Khalafi* (modern) (Kusnadi, Sobur, and Aziz, 2017).

Pesantren schools combine two social systems, *pesantren* and school institutions, to create faithful and pious human resources according to social and societal norms (Suhardi, 2012) and facilitate education for minority students (Curto and Fryer, 2014). Several research also found out that parents chose *pesantren* schools for their children to increase their religious values (Sharp and Hirshberg, 2005; Smith, 2009) and develop leadership, knowledge, and skills (Martin et al., 2016).

However, the emphasis on religious sciences makes *pesantren* appear to lag behind public schools. According to Madjid, as cited by Yasmadi (2005), this condition is more due to the vision and objectives of the *pesantren* to create individuals who are pious in religious knowledge and have noble character. As a result, the learning process that occurs in *pesantren* schools has some problems with curriculum, learning methods, facilities and infrastructure, and administration. The problem with the curriculum that occurs in *pesantren* schools is the lack of effectiveness of teaching general subjects because it emphasizes more on providing religious ones. Therefore, it results in students with minimal abilities and a lack of recognition by society, especially regarding their knowledge in the general sciences.

It is a common problem faced by Islamic boarding schools and a challenge for policymakers in the *pesantren* school environment. They must be able to balance the learning of religious sciences with the general sciences. But, of course, this becomes another obstacle for policy stakeholders in *pesantren*. According to Habibi, Mukminin, Yaqin, Parhanuddin, Razak, Nazry, Taridi, Karomi, and Fathurrijal (2021), the educational barriers that must be overcome in everyday situations include technological, financial, and pedagogical readiness, which are key factors for teachers and policymakers in *pesantren*.

Along with the problems, *pesantren* effective schools are expected to have a higher value than ordinary *pesantren* schools. Anjani, Nursalam, and Risfaisal (2018) showed that the requirements of effective schools that must be fulfilled include school discipline, student achievement, and the value of daily life in the surrounding environment. Abdi and Ananiah (2017) even concluded that effective schools have better quality than ordinary schools, so it is expected that the government pays more attention to the existence of effective schools.

There are many definitions of an effective school, one of which is proposed by Lezotte (1991). He published *Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation*, which described the "Seven Correlates of Effective Schools":

1. **Instructional leadership.** In effective schools, principals and teachers have the role of instructional leaders who effectively and continuously communicate the school's mission to staff, parents, and students. Principals and teachers understand and apply the characteristics of learning effectiveness in managing learning programs. There are several characteristics and components of learning leadership described by several

researchers. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) concept of instructional leadership is the most widely used. Instructional leadership is most often associated with principals who manage curriculum, budgeting, and scheduling and are responsible for the success of every student in their school. Effective school teachers are empowered to become leaders themselves, distribute school responsibilities more equitably and provide a model of teamwork for students to emulate. Effective teaching and instructional leadership skills significantly influence student success. An instructional leader advocates for effective teaching by providing clarity and support to teachers and the necessary resources to maximize teaching effectiveness.

2. A clear and focused mission. In an effective school, the school's mission is clearly stated so that all components share an understanding of and commitment to instructional objectives, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability. The mission is not only a description of the organization but also the leader's expression, desire, and intentions for the organization. The purpose of a mission statement is to communicate the purpose and direction of the organization to employees, customers, vendors, and other stakeholders. The mission statement also creates a sense of identity for its employees. Organizations do not usually change their mission statements from time to time, as they define the organization's ongoing goals and focus.
3. Safe and orderly environment. In an effective school, the school becomes a place where students feel safe and help each other. School climate depends on the quality and character of school life. It has been described as "the heart and soul of the school ... the essence of the school that leads students, teachers, and administrators to love school." A positive school climate helps students feel safe socially, emotionally, and physically at school. It includes norms, beliefs, relationships, teaching and learning practices of students, parents, and school personnel, as well as organizational and structural features of the school.

Many factors can affect the quality and character of school life. Unfortunately, there is no consensus on the definition or dimensions of school climate. However, the factors that shape school climate are often grouped into four main dimensions. These dimensions are security, learning, teaching (academic climate), relations (community climate), and the environment.

A positive school climate is associated with positive student outcomes. For example, a positive school climate is associated with higher academic achievement, better mental health, and less bullying. In addition, improving the school climate can be a preventive approach to reduce disruptive behavior and increase student and parental attendance, achievement, and satisfaction in schools. Therefore, many assessment tools and interventions have been developed to assist schools in climate improvement.

4. A climate of high expectations for success. When teachers have high expectations for their students and provide interesting assignments, the students build self-esteem, increase self-confidence and improve academic performance (Brophy, 2010). The term "high expectations" is synonymous with Carol Dweck's work on the Growth Mindset. Students will perform (or not perform) according to our expectations. Therefore, what teachers expect of students greatly influences student achievement, and many educational researchers have proved this.

Dweck (2012) tells the story of a researcher named Falko Rheinberg, who studies how students' academic achievement and progress are influenced by the teacher's mindset about intellectual abilities. He found that when teachers believe that ability is fixed, students end the

year at the same rate as when they started the year, i.e., if students are in the lower group at the beginning of the year, then they are in the lower group at the end of the year. On the other hand, when teachers teach with a growth mindset, it doesn't matter where the students start; all students progress to much higher levels.

5. Frequent monitoring of student progress. Effective schools measure students' academic progress through various assessment procedures. Lezotte (1991) mentions that schools need to monitor student progress frequently and use the results as the basis for improving students' performance and learning programs. The use of technology will allow teachers to do a better job of tracking their students' progress. In addition, the same technology will enable students to monitor their own learning and, if necessary, adjust their own behavior.

Using computerized practice tests, getting immediate results, and seeing the correct solution on a screen are good ways to ensure student learning (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte (1991) says that "in the area of assessment, the emphasis will continue to shift away from norm-referenced paper-pencil tests and towards curricular-based and criteria-referenced student mastery measures. The use of digital tests means that there will be less emphasis on paper pencils and multiple-choice tests and more on grading student work products, including performances and portfolios (Lezotte, 1991).

6. Positive home-school relationships. In effective schools, parents understand and support the school's primary mission and have an essential role in helping it achieve its mission. Many teachers believe that parents if they truly value education, know how to get their children to behave the way the school wants them to. However, it is now clear to teachers and parents that the issue of parental involvement is not that simple. Parents are often as confused as teachers are about the best way to inspire students to learn what the school teaches. The best hope for dealing with problems effectively—and not with each other—is to build enough trust and enough communication to realize that both teachers and parents have the same goal—an effective school and home for all students! It is imperative to have regular communication with the family throughout the school year. As society has changed and families have become more diverse, one method of communication will not work for all. Teachers should consider a variety of ways to get input from parents.
7. Learning opportunities and time for students to do assignments. In effective schools, teachers allocate a large amount of class time to teaching essential skills. For a high percentage of this time, students are involved in whole class, or extensive group learning activities planned and directed by the teacher. One of the characteristics of most effective schools is their willingness to state that some things are more important than others; they are willing to abandon some of the less critical content to have enough time dedicated to the most valued areas.

Balancing religious/moral learning and general sciences is not only a matter of balancing the number of religious/moral subjects and general sciences but also how to organize school management that supports the achievement of a conducive learning climate. This study reveals how *pesantren* schools apply the concept of effective school to balance religious/morality learning and general sciences, which aims to produce graduates who are competent in science and have good morals. This study takes two *pesantren* schools that have

applied the concept of an effective school. The two schools are SMA X and SMA Y, both of which are schools located in the middle of a *pesantren* in Jombang, Indonesia.

Research Methods

This current study used a qualitative approach to understand an event, situation, group, or social interaction involvement (Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 2007). The research design used a case study that focused on specific events individually, in groups, and portraits of life. The primary goal of this research is to find out how the *pesantren* schools being studied apply the concept of effective school to balance religion-based morality learning and general sciences. The findings would be beneficial for all policy stakeholders to face the education challenges of *pesantren* effective schools in the future.

This current research was conducted at two *pesantren* effective schools (SMA X and SMA Y) in Jombang, Indonesia. Both schools were chosen because they had the characteristics of both *pesantren* schools and effective schools. The two schools were located in the middle of the *pesantren* community, where the students (called “*santri*”) had to stay in the *Pondok* (dormitory) to study religious sciences. Both schools applied the concept of effective schools, as indicated by interviews with principals and some teachers in the two schools.

Data collection techniques in this study include 1) interviewing the principals and teachers of the schools to collect more specific data about the policies implementation of *pesantren* effective schools, and 2) observing the events that occurred at SMA X and SMA Y to collect the data of policies implementation of *pesantren* effective schools.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1984). The analysis results focused on revealing how the two schools applied the seven correlates of effective schools, more specifically, how these schools balance religion-based moral learning with general sciences in relation to their identity as effective schools.

This research has received a research ethics certificate issued by the Research Ethics Commission of Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum No: 232-KEPK/2021, signed by Dr. Achmad Fanani. It is also confirmed that informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in this research.

Findings

The principals of SMA X and SMA Y, in their position as instructional leaders, prepared several things. First, the principals ensure that there must be a balance between moral/religious contents and general science contents. At SMA X, the curriculum content is balanced between religion-based morality and general sciences. Meanwhile, SMA Y provides more extracurricular activities to develop students' morality. Second, the principal prepares adequate facilities and infrastructure for religious/moral learning and general sciences. In SMA X and SMA Y, the facilities provided for learning both religious and general subjects are adequate. The specific learning facilities for spiritual learning are Islamic centers, mosques, and libraries with adequate Islamic references, both digital and non-digital references. Meanwhile, both schools provide very supportive facilities such as laboratories and libraries for learning general sciences.

Table 1: The implementation of seven correlates by two schools

Seven Correlates of Effective Schools	SMA X	SMA Y
Instructional leadership	<p>The principal ensures a balanced curriculum between religious/moral and general learning</p> <p>The school principal prepares adequate facilities and infrastructure for religious/moral and general learning</p> <p>Principals design periodic training for teachers on religious/morality and general sciences</p> <p>The teacher designs learning by always incorporating elements of religion/morality in learning</p> <p>The teacher always motivates students to well behave and develop their intellectual abilities</p>	<p>The principal stipulates several religious-based morality activities/lessons in extra-curricular activities</p> <p>The principal prepares adequate facilities and infrastructure for religious and general learning</p> <p>Principals encourage teachers to develop themselves by attending related seminars or trainings.</p> <p>The teacher designs learning by always incorporating elements of religion/morality in learning</p> <p>The teacher always motivates students to practice their religion in daily life and develop their intellectual abilities</p>
Clear and focused mission	<p>The school's missions reflect a balance between religious/morality learning and general knowledge learning</p>	<p>The school's missions reflect a balance between religious/morality learning and general knowledge learning</p>
Safe and orderly environment	<p>Schools make rules about what can and cannot be done in the school environment.</p> <p>Installing CCTV in the school area</p> <p>Giving sanctions to violators of regulations</p>	<p>Schools make rules about what can and cannot be done in the school environment.</p> <p>Installing CCTV in the school area</p> <p>Giving sanctions to violators of regulations</p>
Climate of high expectations for Success	<p>Teachers strongly believe that the students will possess good character after graduating</p> <p>The teachers strongly believe that the students can succeed in learning general sciences</p>	<p>Teachers strongly believe that the students will possess good character after graduating</p> <p>The teacher strongly believe the students can succeed in learning general sciences</p>
Frequent monitoring of student progress	<p>The school utilizes various types of written tests to monitor student progress, both for religious/moral learning and general learning.</p> <p>The school utilizes various types of oral tests to monitor student progress, especially in formative tests.</p>	<p>The school utilizes various types of written tests to monitor student progress, both for religious/moral learning and general learning.</p> <p>The school utilizes various types of oral tests to monitor student progress, especially in formative tests.</p>
Positive home-school relations	<p>Creating WhatsApp groups for parents</p> <p>Zoom meetings</p> <p>Gathering for parents</p>	<p>Creating WhatsApp groups for parents</p> <p>Zoom meetings</p> <p>Annual gathering for parents</p>
Opportunity to learn and student time on task	<p>The school/teachers allocate more time to certain topics in each lesson both for religious subjects and general subjects.</p>	<p>The school/teachers allocate more time to certain topics in each lesson both for religious subjects and general subjects.</p>

These facilities and infrastructure are supported by the existence of excellent teachers in both schools. The principal ensures that teachers must have good competence to teach students well. The school principal encourages them to attend seminars and trainings that are appropriate to their fields. Besides, the principal always ensures that the element of morality/religion must be integrated into the learning of general sciences. Only those who have

potential competence in reading the *kitab*s (religious books) were assigned as teachers, so that the schools' targets and objectives can be achieved maximally. In both schools, teachers as instructional leaders motivate students to constantly learn and practice religious/morality teachings in everyday life.

As *pesantren* effective schools, both schools have a clear mission of balancing religious/morality and general science learning. In SMA X, the school's mission related to developing religion-based character is (1) creating students who can distinguish between good and evil, understanding the contents of the Koran; (2) carrying out congregational prayers, *istighosah*, *tahlil*, ESQ, celebration of Islamic holidays and others; and (3) organizing integrated education between schools, Islamic boarding schools, and the Cambridge Assessment International Examination (CIE). The mission indicates that the school emphasizes increasing students' competence in general sciences and religious/morality sciences. SMA Y's mission also shows the same thing: cultivating an appreciation of moral teachings.

The safe and orderly environment is reflected in schools' regulations that regulate the behavior of students and school staff. These regulations contain what should not be done in the school environment and provide sanctions for those who violate them. In addition, the school has also installed CCTV in the school area. With this policy, the school hopes students get a guaranteed safe learning environment and study peacefully.

The climate of high expectations for success in both schools is indicated by the teachers' high expectations for the success of their students in learning. The teachers strongly believe that their students will be successful in learning, no matter whether the students have sufficient learning capital or not at the beginning of entry. They always have the belief that students can achieve the minimum mastery score set for both religious lessons and general sciences because they have good learning methods.

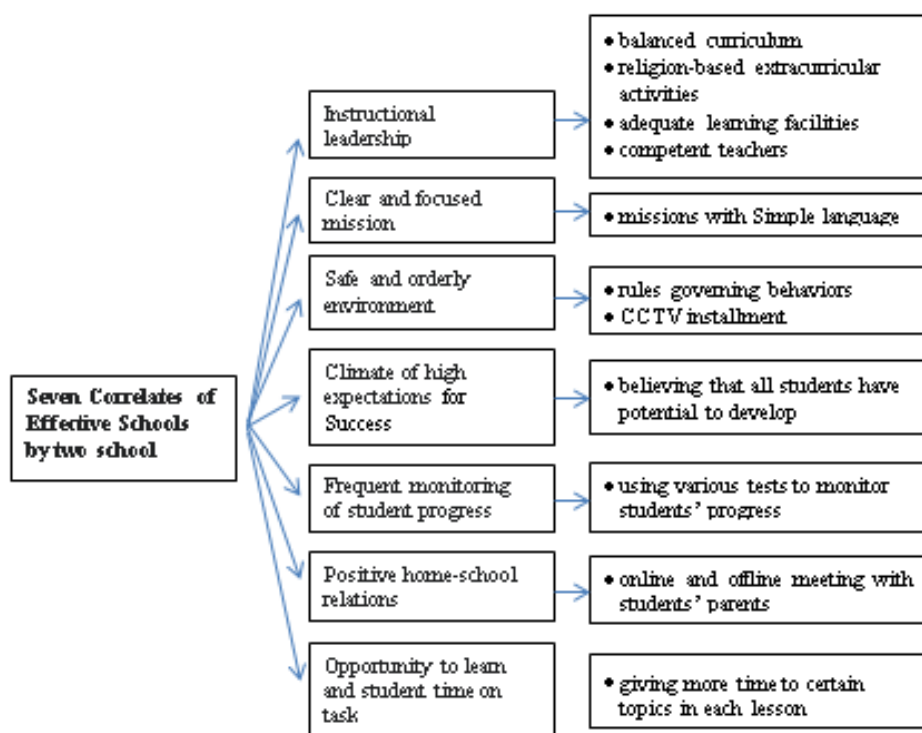


Figure 1: The implementation model of seven correlates by two schools

Student progress is monitored regularly using various forms of written and oral tests to measure student learning progress. They consider this monitoring important because through an evaluation of student learning progress, the teacher can determine the material for the next lesson, whether it needs repetition or continuing to the next material. Forms of formal tests usually carried out in the two schools are odd semester mid-term and final-term test, even semester mid-term and final-term tests.

The relationship between school and home is established in several ways. Both schools use social media a lot to build relationships with parents or guardians of students. Online social media such as WA or telegram are options to establish communication every day. Official meetings with parents are scheduled regularly per semester (6 months) to convey student progress and to get input from parents. In addition, applications such as Zoom or GMeet are also an option for face-to-face meetings between schools and parents online.

In both schools, the principals ask teachers to spend more time on more important subject topics that support the achievement of the school's mission, namely to produce students who have good intellectual abilities and also good religion-based morality. Teachers must therefore “have the courage” to cut down on the time allotted to “less important” topics that can therefore be “ignored,” as the implementation of the opportunity to learn and student time on task principle.

Discussion

From the results of the analysis, it was found several important things related to how schools manage the seven correlates that reflect effective schools in order to achieve the school's mission, namely to create students who are not only competent in general sciences but also religion-based morality studies.

In both schools, it can be seen that the principals, as instructional leaders, actually manages various resources in the school (HR, facilities and infrastructure, curriculum) to achieve the school's mission. The curriculum designed is balanced between religious lessons and general sciences at SMA X, the addition of morality-based extracurricular activities, the preparation of facilities that support morality and general learning, and the preparation of teacher competencies show the principal's seriousness in achieving the school's mission. This is in accordance with the results of research by Shava, Heystek, and Chasara (2021) which revealed that in Africa, school principals are a key component of successful teaching and long-term school improvement and are also responsible for academic development. The results of the analysis also show that the principal's active involvement in curriculum formulation can have a positive impact on increasing student competence as revealed by Robinson et al, (2008) that the more concentrated a principal's job is on teaching and learning processes, the more positive the impact on student learning results would be. Furthermore, Hoy (2012) explained that the principal has a duty to ensure that the school is a competitive learning environment and promote a culture of accomplishment for all learners by communicating and executing a common mission shared by all stakeholders.

In addition, teachers in both schools also act as instructional leaders by incorporating religious-based morality content in every subject taught, including general subjects. In addition, the teacher always motivates students to practice their religious teachings and develop their intellectual abilities. What these teachers do is a form of their high commitment in the

success of the school's mission. This is in line with a study by Cosenza (2015) which shows that teachers have a very crucial role in achieving the school's mission or goals.

In SMA X and SMA Y, the school's mission is formulated very clearly and is easily understood by both school staff and students. The ease and clarity of the school's mission helps the school achieve the goals set (Ouma & Mosoti, 2018). The school's mission clearly informs stakeholders of the strategies adopted and the measurable goals. This is in line with what is explained by Edwards (2014) that the mission of a company has three main functions, namely (1) explaining to stakeholders about the organization's goals, (2) informing about strategic development, and (3) informing the company's measurable goals and objectives. With a clear mission regarding the objectives of learning morality and general knowledge, school members are able to move in the same direction in order to achieve the school's mission. This is in line with what was conveyed by Roblek & Meško (2018) that policy and regulation positively moderate the relationship between mission and vision and organizational performance.

In both schools, safe and orderly environment is gained through setting the rules governing students' behavior. The rules are written in short and clear language that is easily understood by teachers, staff, and students. This is important because the rules, as well as the consequences of violations, that are written in clear and concise language make the parties concerned apply the rules with no hesitation so that discipline can be achieved quickly (A Union of Professionals. 2003).

The installation of CCTV in the school environment is also helpful to establish discipline and monitor students' behavior. With a monitoring camera, students will think twice about committing bad things at school. The benefits of using a monitoring camera in shaping the students' character are in line with research by Purwanto (2020) which found that CCTV has an important role in shaping the character of students. The installation of CCTV cameras helps create a safe environment because feeling safe while studying at school is also one of the factors that support student success at school (Voight, Austin, and Hanson, 2013). In addition, a safe environment also plays a role in student achievement and maintaining positive relationships between teachers and students (Cornell & Mayer, 2014; Kutsyuruba, Klingler, & Hussain, 2015).

The results of the analysis also indicate that in SMA X and SMA Y, teachers have high confidence that students will be able to achieve success in learning both religion-based morality lessons and general lessons. What the teachers did was right because having that kind of belief is one of the characteristics of an effective school. Beliefs like this are important to foster students' learning motivation (Alexander, Ryan, & Deci, 2000) because students feel that they are always appreciated for every development they achieve. Similarly, Lumsden (1999) states that teachers who have a high belief in the success of their students tend to be able to make students love learning. This high confidence indicates that teachers have the right methods to teach their students and feel supported by school policies.

Monitoring of student progress in both schools is carried out regularly. Management views that it is important to monitor student progress because through this method the teacher can find out how far the students have achieved the set learning goals (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; Mathew and Poehner, 2014; Magdalena, Fauzi, and Putri. 2020), providing feedback to students (Tosuncuoglu, 2018) and evaluate their performance in teaching (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005, pg. 18). The results of the evaluation can be used as a basis for adopting appropriate strategies for teaching students (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). Therefore, it is clear

that what teachers do by monitoring the progress of students both for religion-based morality learning and general lessons is a very good effort to achieve the achievement of learning goals, and ultimately the achievement of school goals.

The relationship between school and home is built in several ways both in SMA X and SMA Y. Apart from regular physical meetings; the two schools use social media to build relationships with parents or guardians of students. Social media such as WhatsApp and telegram are commonly used to establish communication with parents of students. In addition, applications such as Zoom or GMeet are also an option, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Well-maintained communication can have a positive impact on students, especially to develop student motivation, activity and achievement (The education hub, 2019).

The principals' policy that ask teachers to spend more time on more important subject is the hallmark of an effective school that supports the achievement of the schools' missions, namely to produce students who have good intellectual abilities as well as good religion-based morality. Both schools determine that there must be more time allotted for essential topics than the time allotted for other topics. The policy applies to all lessons, both religion-based morality lessons and general lessons. More time to learn about what students need gives better output than giving the same time to all topics (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). Sipes (2017) explains that students will understand better on essential topics if more time is given.

Conclusion

The policies in the two schools were carried out by synergizing the stakeholders and the academic community that involved school and *madrasahs* leaders, teachers, and students in learning religious subjects and general subjects to meet the school missions. The seven correlates were well applied and involved the use of technology. In short, in both schools the principals effectively act as instructional leaders, schools have clear and easy-to-understand missions, schools enforce school rules and install CCTV to control student behavior, teachers have confidence that all students have the potential to develop, teachers apply tests various online and offline activities to monitor student progress, schools hold regular meetings with parents both online and offline, and teachers are required to devote more time to more important topics. With this good application, the school's mission of trying to balance religion-based morality lessons and scientific subjects can be fulfilled.

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