

## The Legacy of a School: Developing Better Schools Based on Mutual Cooperation

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### Abstract

This research aimed to analyze (1) how hard legacy was used to develop a school—namely MIN (Madasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri) Tegalsari, Wlingi sub-district, Blitar Regency—and (2) how soft legacy was applied at the same school. The research took a qualitative approach with a case study design. It was conducted at a madrasa, namely MIN Tegalsari in Blitar Regency, between January and June in 2020. The research was concerned with school programs and activities and the impressions of the school's stakeholders about them. In-depth interviews, observations, and documentation were used for data collection. What is more, the data's validity was checked for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The data were then integratively analyzed through data presentation, data reduction, and the drawing of tentative conclusions. The results revealed firstly that the school's legacy has resulted from a transformation from a school that was not well-regarded by the community into an excellent school. The dramatic improvement in this school was marked by changes in its culture in terms of transparent and accountable school management, environment-based and enjoyable learning, and increased support and participation from various school stakeholders. In addition, the school also has a soft legacy that manifested in three aspects, namely a collaborative leadership structure, transformational leadership, and effective communication.

**Keywords:** *management, accountability, legacy, stakeholder.*

### Introduction

During the 1960s, an argument that emerged from Coleman's (1968) research was that a school's approach cannot be grafted onto another school, so it is impossible for a school to imitate to another school that it considers to be better. Others, meanwhile, have assumed that the success of a school may be emulated (i.e., grafted) in other schools. As a result, comparative studies have been recommended to learn the best practices of certain schools, and even now, comparative studies from elementary to tertiary levels have been undertaken (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). However, such activities cannot automatically translate the best practices of one school to other schools. Indeed, many factors contribute to why a school may be more effective and efficient than others. The quality of a school, among other things, is determined by its culture. The stronger this is the better, so a superior academic culture in a school contributes to how effective the school will be

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(Hargreaves, 1995). The academic culture of a school is defined by the extent to which all members of the school community develop competitive attitudes, spirits, and behaviors (Adebayo, 2013). Good schools always develop a good culture, both internally and externally. Previous studies conducted by Purkey & Smith (1983) and Murphy (1983) found that leadership plays a key role in developing the school culture. Indeed, a clear and measurable vision is needed for a principal to lead all a school's stakeholders in delivering the shared goal of academic excellence. Thus, a clear vision, a detailed mission plan, comprehensive aims, and thorough programs can enhance work spirit (Solikhah & Budiharso, 2020).

There are many determinants of a good school culture, including, among other things, the various physical inputs (e.g., the characters of students and teachers, library and classroom facilities, etc.), the socioeconomic composition of teachers and students, the morals among school community members, teachers' aspirations for their students, and students' interest in learning (Coleman, 1975). What is more, it is also important to communicate the school's programs and activities to concerned external parties. In this era of technology, there are many ways (e.g., social media) to promote a school's programs and activities. The principal who participated in this research made use of social media and social networking to improve the participation of relevant school stakeholders. School-based social media is therefore a matter of urgency for school management to develop a good school culture (Mutongoza, et.al., 2021).

Each school principal leaves a legacy that is inherited by his or her successor, and this may be used to assist in managing the school. The achievements of a principal's ideas and programs may be referred to as political legacy, which can be defined as impacts of leadership that continue to be felt by subsequent school principals. Such political legacy usually manifests when a principal retires or moves to another school. In such cases, the principal's achievements in both academic and non-academic aspects continue to be felt, to some extent, even after he or she leaves the school. In political sciences, a principal's legacy may be distinguished into two forms, namely *hard legacy* and *soft legacy* (Fong, et. al., 2017).

Fong, et. al., (2017) adopted this theory in their political study aimed at portraying the leadership of the President of the United States. Their research theoretically divided political legacy into two types, which we used to analyze leadership at school. Hard legacy is a leader's concrete work. For a governing official, hard legacy is policy achievement, such as a measurable public policy. Soft legacy, meanwhile, reflects the wider public memory of a leading figure. Soft legacy is inevitably

influenced by hard legacy, however, because a leader will rarely be remembered well by the public if he or she never made any concrete achievements. In contrast, a leader will be remembered and regarded well by the public if he or she did some good work that improved people's quality of life or an institution's quality.

Each principal should perform duties with awareness of the current conditions while aiming to realize measurable changes in future. This awareness is created by reflecting on the problems encountered (internally and externally), the school's academic culture, and the expectations of school stakeholders that have yet to be realized. With such an awareness, principals can create a vision that will be realized within the period of their leadership. For a leader, this vision is not merely a piece of paper pinned to the board but rather an inherent drive that stimulates leadership and progress in the form of programs and concrete activities. These are then promoted to develop relationships with stakeholders, so they will help realize the vision.

Previous studies of school legacy have been mainly conducted in the field of education politics, such as segregation schools (Bell, 1977; Horsford, 2010; Lemon, et. al., 2009; Reece & O'Connell, 2016; Saporito & Oni, 2006). Other researchers, meanwhile, have focused on school legacy for improving learning quality and cooperation among all school stakeholders (e.g., Cummins, 2015; Orr & Goodman, 2010; Raudenbush, 2009). A school's effectiveness is determined by two main factors, namely learning quality and the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in developing the school to reach its quality goals. This topic was explored by Cheng (1994) to find the best model for creating a superior school. This present study, meanwhile, intended to explore leadership effectiveness for realizing a superior school culture.

More specifically, this research focused on two matters: (1) How is hard legacy used to develop MIN (*madrassa Ibtidaiyah Negeri*) Tegalsari, Wlingi sub-district, Blitar regency? And (2), how is soft legacy applied to develop this school? Knowledge about a school's hard legacy could potentially assist practitioners and academics in formulating specifications for superior schools and models to realize them. A detailed explanation of the various superiority specifications will help other principals to replicate successes and develop schools in line with the desires of the school's stakeholders. Knowledge about a school's soft legacy, meanwhile, may be used as a reference for identifying other determinants of a superior school. Indeed, these two aspects of a school's legacy may ultimately be used to develop a theory for achieving a superior school culture.

The results of this research are expected to lead to a description for how a school's legacy can be effective in achieving improvements. Moreover, this could lead to a detailed map for cooperation-based school development. Indeed, the community's involvement in developing a school depends upon the principal's leadership characteristics, because an ambitious, driven principal will encourage the local community to become actively involved in the process of improvement (Mutongoza, et. al., 2021). What is more, a culture of mutual cooperation that is passed from one generation to the next may be useful in developing a school. As a result, the principal should know and understand the values, norms, and socio-religious culture of the local community. When a school is transparently managed and includes the community based on its cultural values and beliefs, it will help the principal to engage the community in actively developing a good school (Yamauchi & Purcell, 2009).

## **Methods**

### **Research Type and Approach**

A qualitative approach was chosen for this research (Creswell, 2018; Miles & Huerman, 1994) based on the following reasons: (1) the setting was natural, 2) the examined case occurred some years ago, namely during Saiful's tenure as principal from 2000 to 2010, and 3) MIN Tegalsari developed well in this period in terms of the number of students, community participation, and changes in the school culture. Other considerations to choose the qualitative was based on : 1) the data to be gathered dealt with knowledge, points of view, awareness, and subjective interpretations of the social dynamics of the internal-external school environment; 2) the subjective interpretations of the principal's most impressive achievements in developing a good school culture; and 3) the subject's experience of dealing with the phenomena of developing a school, both the negative and positive aspects (Husserl, 2001).

This research was conducted at MIN Tegalsari, Wlingi sub-district, Blitar Regency, Indonesia and ran from January to June in 2020. MIN Tegalsari was previously a madrasa (Islamic school) that had been independently established by Islamic figures in the village. It originally did not have any school buildings, with the students studying in three homes of local residents. All the residents in Tegalsari—both Muslims and non-Muslims, such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians—worked together to establish the madrasa. At the beginning, seven students were non-Muslims. Solidarity,

harmony, and a culture of mutual cooperation in social activities were therefore well maintained in the community despite people following different religions.

Mutual cooperation and assistance among the people of different religions has continued for a long time. While the research was being conducted, the researchers observed non-Muslims giving snacks to the workers building a mosque in the madrasa. This cooperative culture among the community is important social capital for the process of building the cooperation needed to develop a superior school, because such cooperation does not only reflect among the citizens but also between these citizens and their social institutions. For instance, a culture of cooperation in the community can be transferred to building and operating schools, mosques, churches, temples, and other public facilities. For the people of Tegalsari, their attitudes have passed through the religious space, but the common good in the wider social space supersedes the narrow religious one.

### Participants

Participants of this study were 12 persons, 7 male and 5 female. The participants were composed of principal 1, deputy principals 3, parents of the students 3, school teacher 3, and school communities 2. See table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*Study Participants*

No	Participants	Male		Female		Total
		F	%	F	%	
1	Principal	1	8.3	-	-	1
2	Deputy principal	2	16.6	1	8.3	3
3	School teacher	1	8.3	2	16.6	3
4	Student parents	1	8.3	2	16.6	3
5	School community	2	16.6	-	-	2
		7	58.5	5	41.5	12

The 12 participants have their own role and function. The principal performed to grow, develop and mobilize for changes to occur according to the school's vision and mission. The vice principal for curriculum and teaching has the function of compiling lesson schedules, coordinating curriculum implementation, and supervising teacher teaching (internal); vice principal in the field of administration and finance has the function of planning the budget, coordinating and supervising the use of the budget; vice principal for student affairs and cooperation has the function of growing and developing students' talents and interests and developing school internal-external cooperation.

Three selected guardians provide information about the dynamics of school development, both aspects of soft legacy and shard legacy. In addition, three selected teachers function as policy implementers and the development of quality teaching programs while providing information about the community.

### **Data-Collection Techniques**

The data were collected using three techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation (Creswell, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The in-depth interviews were the main tool for data collection. If concepts arose in the in-depth interviews that could not be fully understood, observations were made and/or documentation—such as in the form of pictures, photos, and videos—was examined. In-depth interviews started with the key informant, namely the principal, and this gave a general picture of the dynamics of developing the school from its previous state. Observations and documentation techniques were also adopted to completely and concretely understand any concepts that could not be grasped orally. Indeed, it is necessary to gain a detailed, deep comprehension, especially for unique concepts, hence why the observations and documentation were needed.

The data were collected through various stages: First, an exploration was made. The second stage then went into more depth, before the third stage identified patterns. The exploration stage involved the principal and the vice principal for the curriculum and learning affairs. Following this exploration, in-depth interviews were conducted to learn about the technical aspects of implementing the programs and activities, and these interviews involved the teachers, members of the school committee and the class association, and representatives of the local community. During the interviews, the researchers did not bring any interview materials because they had memorized in detail the objects and indicators they wished to investigate. The researchers were therefore more free to act naturally during interviews. The final stage was to identify patterns through the process of data collection, selection, and reduction.

### **Trustworthiness of Data**

The collected data in this study needed to fulfill four criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. First, credibility requires that all research participants fully know the entire situation. Consequently, the researchers engaged with the participants for a

relatively long time and tried to confirm the data and the results of the analysis with other participants (i.e., peer checking). Second, to ensure transferability, the researchers tried to present data and analyses in a way that enabled the readers, participants, and other parties to gain knowledge through clear descriptions of the context and the research results. Third, for dependability, the consistency of the findings and data analyses is key if it is to be studied by other parties. Other researchers should be able to obtain the same data and analysis results if they were to examine the same object using the same methods used in this present research. As such, the researchers performed a structured data analysis and interpreted the research results well, so that other researchers would be able to yield the same or similar research findings and conclusions. As a result, the researchers tested the obtained data using stability, consistency, and equivalence standards. Finally, for confirmability, the researchers attempted to reveal and analyze the data transparently, so that other parties (e.g., researchers, participants) could agree with all the research results.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis went through a continuous process from data presentation to data reduction before drawing tentative conclusions. The analysis process in this study adopted theory of Miles & Huberman (1994) that is interactive analysis. Miles & Huberman (1994) outline four steps; data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification and conclusion drawing. The data was presented based on the categories of the research focus, and this was followed with tabulation to facilitate the data categorization. The results of the data presentation were then standardized in line with objective conditions in the field. If any data seemed inappropriate to our needs, they were moved into backup files. The next step was to draw tentative conclusions. The researchers then discussed the results with peers and some informants. If the data were still considered to be incomplete, the researchers collected additional data according to the need, such as by deepening and exploring further. The three steps of the data analysis were repeated until it was deemed valid according to the validity criteria given in the sub-section above. Some firm conclusions were then drawn.

## Results

### Theme 1: Principal Leadership

The first area concerned the concrete achievements of the principal's leadership (i.e., the hard legacy) in the 2000–2010 period. This involved transforming a marginal school that was not well-regarded by the parents and guardians of prospective students into one that drew the interest of many people, even from beyond the village. The principal therefore succeeded in developing it into a superior school. Prior to this, the community referred to the school building as “a goat pen,” since it was unmaintained, dirty, smelly, and certainly not pleasant. This was described by the principal:

- (1) *In the past, when I first entered this school, the condition was unpleasant. The building was unmaintained, dirty, and smelly. Especially in the rainy season, there was mud, and the traces of children's playing could be seen on the walls of classrooms. The classrooms were never locked, so sometimes goats entered them at night. In the morning, no one cleaned them, and all the teachers came late, and it was even the principal who should clean them. Most teachers also worked in other places or had jobs besides being teachers, so they came late, and after teaching, they went directly home.*

Indeed, according to the principal's reflection, the school's condition was really bad. The principal, together with the vice principal for the curriculum and teaching affairs, had discussions and found solutions for developing attitudes and habits of mutual cooperation at school. The aim of this program was to involve all the school's stakeholders, both internal and external, as stated by the vice principal:

- (2) *The keyword we agreed upon is mutual cooperation. All internal and external school stakeholders were involved in each school program and activity. Through this mutual cooperation, we could make changes in all school aspects. Through this mutual cooperation, we were able to hold workshops, meetings, and visitations with all members of the class association. Because of this mutual cooperation, all programs and activities that had been considered impossible became easy.*

### Theme 2: School Change

This fundamental change had been brought about by the principal. He presented his ambitious ideas to all the school's stakeholders in a workshop forum about school cultural changes. According to the principal, there were three targets for change agreed through this process of mutual cooperation, namely budget transparency, contextual learning, and synergy between the



school and the community. These three targets became the trigger for community involvement with the school for developing a superior school. On the basis of the relevant document, the researchers studied the motto of the principal, namely “Mutual cooperation changes everything.” The principal conveyed his vision and programs to anyone, anytime with the expectation that they would want to become involved in them and cooperate in developing a school that the community could be proud of.

The principal always communicated programs and activities in formal forums at school and non-formal ones in the community. A prominent figure, who also served as the head of the school committee, also helped promote the school’s programs and activities. This person stated that he thought that the principal and the head of the school committee should possess the same vision and awareness when a school is developed through mutual cooperation, so everything will be developed in the same way. The involvement of all people from various socioeconomic backgrounds is also vital, so everyone will understand the changes to be carried out. They should also all know about the school’s mission, programs, and activities.

Making big changes also needs a big budget, however, and this was a reason for many teachers to be pessimistic. According to the vice principal for administrative and financial affairs, to realize the dream at that time, a workshop involving all teachers, the school committee, and representatives of the students’ guardians was held. The principal acted as the facilitator in the workshop, with the agenda being to equate perceptions of the programs, match the budget with the programs, and plan for where the money would come from. The workshop made an important decision in terms of agreeing with changes in the school’s programs and culture and supporting the necessary budget independently. The vice principal for the administrative and financial affairs described this in detail:

- (3) *After the workshop forum agreed the programs and activities for school cultural changes, the budget support was decided. For each program and each activity, a matrix was constructed to establish the budget support in terms of money, staff, goods, services, and the budget sources. The budget sources were various: the school, the local community, and/or third parties. The task of the school leader and the committee was to look for financial support from third parties. The forms of support from these third parties were various, such as, among others, money, services, goods, and professional staff. Meanwhile, the financial support from the school came from two sources, namely a grant from the government (the Ministry of Religion) and the student tuition fees.*

**Theme 3: Transformation and Cultural Change**

All the school's stakeholders accepted that the school's operation needed money. Some funding came from grants and tuition fees, but the school also planned to cooperate with a third party to establish a business, which would make use of the land next to the school, near the road, and be professionally managed. The school's openness to outside parties gave an opportunity to secure the resources needed to support the school's operational costs.

Planning, implementing, and reporting the school's operational budget were all done under the principle of transparency. Planning was undertaken based on the work meeting held at the beginning of the fiscal year, which all internal–external school stakeholders could attend. The budget was adjusted to accommodate the school's programs and activities, including a determination of the source and form of funding for each activity. According to the vice principal for administrative and financial affairs, before the operational costs were definitive, the detail would be sent to all school stakeholders. In addition, it was displayed on the school board, so it could be view by anyone. At the end of the year, how the budget was used was reported to all concerned parties, such as to the Ministry of Religion, the teacher council, the school committee, and the class association.

The workshop on cultural change also mandated the principal and teacher council to plan and implement contextual learning, where learning activities adopt a student-centered learning approach. Teachers played roles as the planners, implementers, and facilitators to ensure that learning was still relevant to the curriculum and the dynamics of society. In a scientific sense, the school environment and the community were together used as the learning medium. This learning model enabled all teachers, students, parents, and class association members to become involved in supporting and facilitating the learning process. They were very enthusiastic and synergized in working together, so the learning process could be conducted effectively and efficiently. The vice principal for the curriculum and instruction affairs discussed this in detail:

- (4) *The principle used for developing the teaching capacity at school was based on asah (caring for), asih (loving), and asuh (nurturing) each other. Each month, a meeting was held to share knowledge and teaching experiences. The learning process was conducted by making use of the school facilities and environment, the community environment, and learning media. Each day before entering the classroom, the students did morning prayer and dhuha prayer in the school yard as their “morning tasks.” At the end of the semester, each group put together an environment-based learning portfolio. At the end of the year, a learning bazaar was held, where each class could exhibit their learning*

*products to the community at a bazaar in the school yard. This bazaar was organized with cooperation between the students and the class associations, and it showed their best works.*

According to the head of the school committee, the school was developed by following the ancestral value of mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation was common in building houses, mosques, schools, bridges, and roads for the village. This was what had been practiced by the village's people in the past. Indeed, they could only survive and develop by cooperating with one another. As a result, this value could be adopted at school for aspects of financing, learning, and physical development. According to the principal, "We always synergized hopes, desires, programs, and activities with the potency possessed by the village's society."

The second area, soft legacy, relates to what people remember. The basic change was transforming a school that was dismissed by local people into one with a good record of achievement, not just locally but also nationally, within two school leadership periods. This was indeed an extraordinary achievement. The principal even mentioned that an institution from the US once made a comparative study of MIN Tegalasri, with the intention of directly learning about the growth process, the school's development, and management in this school. At the time, MIN Tegalasri was one of the practical examples put forward by the Ministry of Religion for succeeding in achieving a cultural change.

A representative of the class association said that the principal always had new and interesting stories to tell. Most of the students' parents or guardians who picked up their children rarely left the school before listening to the principal's newest story. As a result, the principal often spent time to engage with parents and guardians who were waiting for their children in the schoolyard. Taking shelter under the trees, the principal often conveyed information about the school's programs and activities. Such opportunities were always leverage by the principal to share ideas about development and tell stories about the success of the school. Thanks to such informal engagement, the parents and guardians were willing to support the ideas that would be implemented by the school.

According to the head of the school committee, the principal could easily convince others. He added that it was the first time that a member of the school committee came from another village and area. At the time, the principal convinced two people to join the school committee, namely Mr. Sunu of Wlingi village, Wlingi sub-district and a businessman from Sidoarjo regency. These

two people, both from outside the village, made great contributions according to the school committee. For example, for each *Eid Adha*, they contributed cows and sheep for the *Qurban* at school. Thus, each year at *Eid Adha*, the school always held the routine activity of *Qurban* in the schoolyard with the assistance of the school committee and the class association.

According to the teachers, the principal was an effective leader in implementing programs and activities. All ideas, plans, and school activities were based on the results of work meetings held at the beginning of the year, so they could be fulfilled in the academic year. The principal's work effectiveness and leadership played an important role in transforming a substandard village school into one that was well-regarded at the national level. Every idea was communicated and carried out together with all the concerned parties, and almost all school programs and activities involved the community and other third parties, although the precise parties involved could differ between one program and another. The school culture became lively and dynamic, with all teachers and stakeholders competing to come up with original ideas for developing the school into an even better one.

The principal's effectiveness in transforming the school was also recognized by the local officers and the Ministry of Religion in Blitar Regency. The public information chief of the Ministry of Religion for Blitar Regency once said that the principal of MIN Tegalsari was the best asset possessed by the ministry in the regency. He could work in a disciplined manner and embrace and involve all people, and he also had the ability to convince others to support the school's programs and activities. His programs and activities also did not just depend on grants from the Ministry of Religion—he also looked for support from third parties. Besides being an effective communicator, he was also very efficient in making decisions and implementing them. His abilities allowed him to implement the school's programs and activities effectively and efficiently. The research results are presented in a simple way in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
*Findings of the Research Results*

Indicator	Sub-indicator
Hard legacy	Transforming into a superior school
Soft legacy	1. Collaboration/mutual cooperation
	2. Transformational leadership
	3. Effective communication

Source: Research of Kholis *et al.*, 2020

## **Discussion**

The school legacy that was much discussed in the 1990s in the US was related to instructional leadership. One study focused on the effect of leadership on the effectiveness of the learning process at school (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Indeed, learning is the main aspect to consider when developing a mediocre school into an excellent one. Any principal should therefore focus his or her attention on effective learning policies to realize learning goals that accord with the competencies expected by the school and its stakeholders. For example, MIN Tegalsari, Blitar Regency developed an Adiwiyata green school, which won the national championship. Based on previous research results, this achievement can be said to have been influenced by effective instructional leadership (Munardji, et. al., 2020). Indeed, the principal was the major factor in determining the direction of learning policy in accordance with his leadership vision.

A principal with a strong vision, effective communication skills, and organizational competence will often be able to realize rapid changes (Hörnqvist & Leffler, 2014). Indeed, the above three factors enable a principal to achieve his school's goals, so he or she may be accurately called an effective principal. Effective principals can make changes and transform their schools into better ones, both in terms of learning and school culture. However, this progress is also influenced by internal and external factors, and a school principal needs to show leadership to overcome these barriers (Hallinger, 2003). Some previous studies have found that a principal is the dominant factor in making changes and coordinating all school stakeholders (Kholis, et. al., 2014). As a result, in order for a principal to leave a memorable legacy that serves as good practice for subsequent generations, he or she needs to have a vision and the ability to communicate it to all school stakeholders.

The main hard legacy at MIN Tegalsari is how the principal could transform a school that was disregarded by local people into a high-quality one. This change occurred through a systematic and measurable process starting with the school's internal culture and a participatory culture that encouraged school stakeholders in the local village. The changes were not realized instantly, of course, because they had to go through a process of establishing a core team for implementing changes and communicating the efforts to all stakeholders in the surrounding community, including the parents and guardians of students and other school stakeholders. Thus, the school's management changed entirely, the school culture was modified dramatically, and a culture of

community participation was established at the stages of planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating the school's programs and activities.

The principal leadership legacy at MIN Tegalsari, Blitar, Indonesia can be grouped into two aspects, namely positive and negative legacies. A positive school legacy can usually serve as a learning model that can be continuously developed by the school from one generation to the next. This way, a school with a positive legacy can continue developing itself and its culture in ever better ways. Moreover, a leader who is successful in developing a good institutional culture often has a strong character (Levy, 2020). Synergistic efforts are therefore needed to strengthen the characters of school leaders, and this is an urgent matter for principals. For example, the government could cooperate with educational consulting agencies or other institutions to implement programs for strengthening the leadership characteristics of principals.

A principal with a strong character is willing to delegate authority to the vice principals and teachers in line with the needs of the school's programs. This is something that contributed to the significant transformation of MIN Tegalsari into a superior school, because distributing the authority for implementing school programs can diminish the loss that is experienced when a principal leaves and is replaced (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Getting a school used to the habit of collective leadership will be beneficial in the process of regeneration, assure the permanence of the school's legacy, and generate productive social capital. The three benefits of collective leadership contribute to ultimately improving a school's effectiveness in terms of school management, learning, and the relationship with the surrounding community. A study conducted by Nappi (2014) found that distributed school leadership authority can improve the social capital and effectiveness of a school.

The attainment of a policy, program, or leadership activity will always be remembered by people as either a good or bad legacy. Good leadership achievements will mean a principal is remembered as an effective leader who contributed to the institution. Indeed, the principal at MIN Tegalsari, Blitar Regency is remembered well by community members, the parents and guardians of students, and other school stakeholders as a leader who effectively improved the school dramatically.

Based on the research results, the school stakeholders recalled three main things about the principal, namely that he was a collaborative leader, an effective leader, and an excellent communicator. These three characteristics are what made him special as a leader. He succeeded in leveraging all the school's assets to attain his goal of developing a superior school.

Effective leadership contributes to school superiority directly and indirectly through the quality and success of learning at school (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Indeed, learning quality can be improved if the following conditions are met: i) the academic atmosphere develops well; ii) the facilities and infrastructure are adequate; and iii) and there is participation from all school stakeholders (Hipp, 1996). This is supported by the research findings of Li et al. (2016). A school's physical and social environments can also be leveraged in the learning process, such as through laboratory sessions or learning media. Such learning adopts a contextual learning model where students get direct experiences in addition to theoretical knowledge. It is also suggested that good learning combines various activities that enable interactions between students and teachers, independent activities, and interactions among students.

Effective principal leadership manifests in a principal with a vision for managing a school and improving learning effectiveness and efficiency (Tarim, 2015). Teachers are the implementers of a principal's learning policies, however, so teachers' involvement in developing these policies is essential. A principal therefore needs to develop a framework of collaborative leadership with his vice principals and teachers. Moreover, the teachers are the leaders in their classrooms, so they should be given the discretion to pursue their own innovations in dynamic and diverse class situations. A similar principle applies to the vice principals. They should be given opportunities to plan and implement their own responsibilities. According to one study, collaborative leadership can improve the efficiency of a school's programs (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). A good school atmosphere can also encourage the participation of all school stakeholders (Bandur, 2012). In turn, the participation of vice principals, teachers, students and their parents or guardians, the school committee, and the local community acts as a keystone in the transformation process.

A transformational leader acts as a role model, a source of inspiration, an effective manager, a strong motivator, and a solver of all the problems that an institution encounter (Bandur, 2012). He or she demonstrates creativity and innovation to achieve success for the institution's programs and activities. Moreover, a transformational leader inspires every individual in an organization to work more effectively and efficiently (Hurduzeu, 2015). In addition, achieving institutional goals also means improving the welfare of every individual. Programs and activities that are developed and expected to be successful should be coordinated among all stakeholders and follow a schedule that has been determined through cooperation. Moreover, it is important for a leader to delegate broad authority in accordance with the work scope of each element in the institution.

The process of becoming a superior school will be more quickly felt by school stakeholders when it is completed within a certain leadership period. A previous study found that a school led by a professional principal could change dramatically, and this principal would be remembered as leaving a spectacular and long-lasting legacy (Botha, 2004). Such principals generally possess good personal capacity, a sense of trust, and values. What is more, a school is developed with a focus on improving the professional capacity of teachers (Wang, et. al., 2016). Hence, efforts to improve the capacity of a school's principal, the establishment of a collaborative leadership model, and the securing of support from all school stakeholders can contribute to improving the quality of a school.

Support from internal and external school stakeholders will increase when they know, understand, and respond favorably to a school's programs and activities (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), which requires a principal with effective communication skills. This present study found that the principal was an effective communicator, such that the teachers, guardians and parents of students, class associations, and the school committee were willing to support the school's programs. They were even willing to listen to the principal's stories every day when they collected their children. The emotional closeness between the principal and the students' parents and guardians enhanced their trust in the school's programs and activities, which in turn helped him to secure support for further programs and activities.

Effective communication from a principal correlates with creating a good school climate and achieving learning goals (Halawah, 2005). Indeed, at each stage of developing the dynamics of programs and activities, effective communication is needed, as well as the ability to recognize the characteristics of the school stakeholders and what may trigger them into becoming involved voluntarily (Husain, 2013). Each stakeholder in an organization will have his or her own expectations, goals, motivations, and characters, and being sensitive to this variety allows a principal to accommodate them in a way that will achieve the school's objectives. It is therefore important to involve all stakeholders in school processes, so effective communication is a must-have skill for every principal.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, MIN Tegalasri has transformed into a superior school, and this has been marked by changes in the school culture in terms of more transparent and accountable school management, environment-based and enjoyable learning, and better support and participation from school



stakeholders. The school's soft legacy manifests in terms of collaborative leadership, transformative leadership, and effective communication. This leadership model is the main thing that is remembered by stakeholders, because it played an important role in the school's transformation from a mediocre school into a superior one. The principal is considered to have been an effective leader in elevating the school's status by demonstrating his own qualities. Hence, the abovementioned three factors of leadership could be regarded as a basis for improving a school's quality.

The school stakeholders and local community were viewed from religious, cultural, and economic aspects. Taking account of community concerns and seeking mutual cooperation help the principal to develop a better school, and this is a good example of best practice for educational practitioners and scholars. In theory, religious and social values can act as the basis for developing a spirit of mutual cooperation in the community, and this can be leveraged to improve a school. Indeed, stakeholders may contribute their ideas, time, energy, and funding. However, this present study has not fully established whether a community's diversity is really a determinant for the development of a culture of mutual cooperation or vice versa. Moreover, this research has also not determined whether the values of each religion act as a catalyst for mutual cooperation among fellow human beings. The success enjoyed by a principal in securing support from school stakeholders is also not simple to determine conceptually, because community involvement may be influenced by factors like attitudes, behaviors, and descriptive norms.

This research has been very much dominated by the roles of active school stakeholders, meaning that the collected data gives a limited picture of the full diversity of the school's users. Opinions from less active parents/guardians and community members should also be solicited and considered. It would therefore be appropriate for future research to widen the variety of research subjects. There are also other suggestions for further research: First, a study could examine the motivations of the community in mutually cooperating to improve a public institution. Second, a study could investigate how religious values and beliefs underlie cultures of mutual cooperation. Third, future researchers could investigate religious and cultural doctrines where a community lives harmoniously in diversity, so that such practices may be adopted in other communities. Fourth, a study could examine whether the qualities of an effective principal are innate or the result of education and training. A quantitative approach should also be considered to complement the shortage of existing data, so that a theory of cultural development for excellent schools in various

settings can be built. Moreover, a mixed-methods research approach may provide more comprehensive data.

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