

## Observing A Head of Study Program's Leadership Style at an Islamic-based University in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Various internal conflicts in education management generally occur due to poor leadership. Therefore, good leadership and governance are needed. This exploratory case study investigates the practices of ahead of the study program at an Islamic-based higher education institution in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Using the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM), a movement philosophy that aims to help solve personal problems in education, especially leadership, this study examines how this leader implements those principles as his typical leadership style. In this regard, competence, experience, and personal character must be considered in preparation for development. These four aspects can affect performance and leadership roles in leadership, organizational, and public roles. The data of this study were collected from the observation conducted in an Islamic-based higher institution in South Sulawesi. Meanwhile, to analyze the data, a thematic analysis method was used. The study's findings are divided into four main categories: characteristics, operational leadership, organizational leadership, and public leadership. Implications and future recommendations are also provided.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of quality improvement due to leadership performance is currently growing in the world of education (Tanzeh et al., 2021). One of the reasons that cause this is the phenomenon of an increase in higher education graduates who are not absorbed in the workforce. Many graduates are not absorbed in the workforce due to several things, such as limited job opportunities and also the low quality of graduates (Sugianto & Yul, 2020). Many universities in Indonesia face various problems, including problems in efforts to build the quality of education. Developing the quality of education requires an effective organization (Narzulloevna et al., 2020). This condition is a challenge and a stimulus for higher education institutions to improve the educational process to improve graduates. As a reflection of an

intelligent nation, qualified scholars will be a force that can withstand various difficulties. More specifically, the person in charge of specific positions in higher institutions must possess good leadership to bring the institution's quality in general.

Higher education institutions have an essential role in producing qualified human resources. For this reason, one of the organs that can significantly contribute to producing quality resources is the study program as an academic implementing unit (Martono, 2013). As an operational unit needed in the implementation, one component with other components should work systematically. It should be understood that each work component is not partial but complementary to one another. Therefore, excellent and systematic management is needed (Manatos et al., 2017). Study programs with good quality management can be seen from several indicators and quality education services, and which is no less important is the quality of the managerial aspects. Utilizing strategies to achieve effective management, such as Total Quality Management (hereafter, TQM), needs to be considered.

Implementing TQM in managing study programs provides an alternative that can be guided and is believed to improve quality in terms of input, process, output, and results. This is in line with the view of Badruddin (2014), which states that quality education services can be successful if it is facilitated by the application of adequate quality management, in the sense that TQM must be carried out holistically starting from input, process, output, and results. Ten characteristics of TQM are considered important in improving the quality of education, namely focusing on consumers (internal & external), being developed on quality, using a scientific approach, having a long term, working together, improving quality gradually, conducting education and training, applying freedom controlled, have a unity of purpose, involve and empower employees (Saifulloh et al., 2012). This model has been implemented in diverse educational settings and has proven to help manage the organization better.

In a study program majoring in Sharia Banking, a head of the study program has been attempting to implement this model to manage his institutional unit. The information was obtained from a preliminary observation conducted in that department. He believes that the role of leadership in managing and regulating study programs will significantly determine the success of educational institutions. Therefore, the ability to lead in determining the policies to be achieved can significantly be a guide for lower structures. A management system that can manage performance indicators can display all organizational activities into a joint movement to achieve the organization's vision (Gunaratne & Du Plessis, 2007). This shows that the leadership program plays an essential role in realizing a quality educational institution. The head of the study program is responsible for planning quality improvement program policies. In general, some of the problems encountered in the management of study programs include how a leader determines performance in realizing the vision and mission of a study program that is integrated with the vision and mission of the institution, how the leader understands work procedures and coordinates with all institutions and units within an organization. Institutions, how is the ability to build networks that are symbiotic mutualism with other institutions or institutions outside universities. To answer these problems, leadership and management of study programs are needed.

If this is not a concern for the head of the study program, he may not be able to formulate a suitable strategy to improve the quality of the study program. If the quality system problem can be implemented effectively in the leadership of the study program, the results will be good (Yarmohammadian et al., 2011). The principle of Total Quality Management as the basis for quality standards is likely to be a necessary alternative to improve the expected results. Leadership has an influential position in the organization. Leaders who carry out their leadership effectively can move people towards the desired goals.

On the other hand, leaders whose existence is only as figures have no influence and leadership abilities can result in weak organizational performance because they work based on internal circles that never consider challenges and can ultimately lead to entropy (Natalia, 2010). The study program, an operational organ in an educational institution, must be able to prove its quality to increase public trust, which has implications for the interest of prospective students who will choose the study program. In addition, there is also a demand for accreditation from the National Accreditation Board (BAN-PT) as a form of recognition of the quality management of the quality of study programs nationally. For this

reason, researchers still consider that further information is needed regarding a study program leadership model to improve quality to realize the study program's vision and mission and the institution's vision and mission.

The study that concerns analyzing the leadership pattern and style of the heads of study programs have been conducted by some researchers previously (Rahayu et al., 2021; Rohiyatun & Aryani, 2020). Their studies only focused on the head of study program's competence and skills that can support the successful learning objectives. However, few studies considered a particular model to implement in educational institutions. Therefore, this current study differs from the old ones. TQM was employed as an analysis framework to scrutinize the following research question, "What is the modification model of TQM implemented ahead of the study program in an Islamic-based higher institution in Indonesia." By doing this study, the researchers hope that readers can gain benefits from the findings, especially those who work in higher institutions; they can try to apply the model.

## 2. METHODS

Since there was no detailed and sufficient preliminary research on this topic, the current study uses an exploratory case study as the research design (Sugiyono, 2011). The data source of this study was the head of the Sharia Banking department of an Islamic-based university in South Sulawesi. He declared his willingness to participate in this research by filling out the statement of readiness to be a participant. The researchers observed the participant's daily activities to collect the data. Besides, the researchers are also part of the department to see his activities. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data gathered, identifying the most common patterns in participants' acts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are six phases in thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), namely: a) Familiarizing with the data, the researcher created the data interpretation from the field notes. The researchers then read the data until they are acquainted with it so that the researcher can obtain an understanding of the data and begin selecting the correct code for each data set, b) Generating initial codes; after becoming acquainted with the data, the researcher began categorizing it into several codes and then organizing all of the codes and relevant data extracts, c) Searching for themes; the researchers were zeroed in on the more extensive degree of topics and includes arranging the various codes into expected subjects, d) reviewing themes; the proponents analyzed regardless of whether the topics recount to a persuading and convincing tale about the information, and started to characterize the intricacy of each topic just as the connection between the subjects, e) Defining and naming themes; the researcher began by writing down the topics to be examined next and analyzing the data contained within them, and f) Producing the Report; the researcher provides a compelling story that is coherent, logical, and valid about the database on the analysis.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The leadership model in this study is based on the study and analysis of the leading implementation performed by the head of the study program in the field of research so far. The model presented refers to the principles of TQM. Educational leadership in TQM must at least reflect: (1) focus on customers, (2) focus on problem prevention, (3) investment in human resources, (4) have a quality strategy, (5) define quality in administrative areas, (6) have policies and quality plans, (7) continuous quality improvement process, (8) creativity, (9) have clear rules and responsibilities, (10) make partners as customers (11) have clear evaluation strategies, (12) treat colleagues as a customer. The following is a map of one of the study program leadership models with Total Quality Management (TQM) principles. To summarize this modification model of TQM, the following table illustrates.

**Table 1. The Modification of the TQM Model**

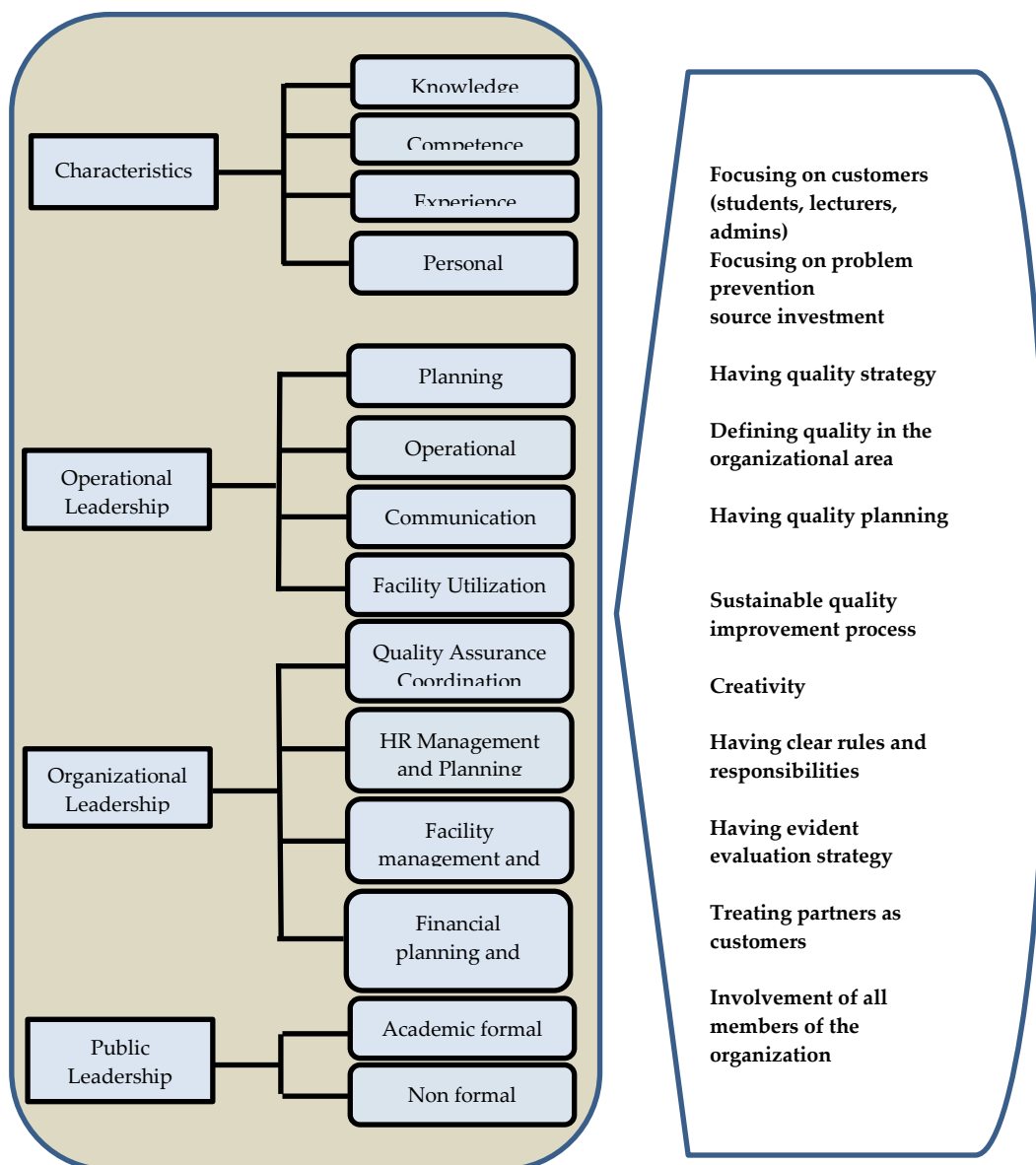


Table 1 provides information about how the participant's leadership style was presented through his acts in his daily activities. From the field notes in the observations, the researchers conclude the model into four main categories: operational leadership, organizational leadership, and public leadership. Leaders have a significant role and function in growing and developing an organization or educational institution (Pizzo et al., 2017). The ability of a leader who exceeds other members is the central aspect that must be possessed, such as the ability to predict the proper steps toward the realization of the organization's vision and mission. The leadership model needed to bring the institution to a better level is values-based leadership. The essence of this leadership is the creation of values that are converted into institutional culture related to the perceived value that involves the emotional impression of everyone, be it the academic community, customers, stakeholders, and users of education.

### ***Performed Characteristics by the Head of the Study Program***

Leadership, as intended, is reflected in the concept of TQM, so in this study, the authors try to describe the leadership model of the participant based on the modified concept of TQM. Based on the leadership model in Table 1, it can be seen that there are 4 (four) characteristics that the participant displays to represent his excellent leadership, namely knowledge, competence, experience, and personal character.

#### ***Knowledge***

Knowledge is one factor that is quite important to implement the three operational, organizational and public leadership well. The leader must possess in-depth knowledge of the business model and framework of organizational processes, financial maps, and resources in competition (Levin & Schrum, 2016). It also requires a deep understanding of the service process to focus on customers and academic procedures in the overall study program. This knowledge is not enough, but a leader must also know about making plans, such as quality planning in study programs, understanding the needs of customers and users, and the competition that occurs in building a solid organization (Nelson et al., 2014). In addition, they must also be able to understand well the management functions such as compensation, training, performance, and performance evaluation.

#### ***Competence***

Another aspect that is no less important in carrying out operational, organizational, and public leadership is competence. In this case, competence is being able to build a mind that contains innovation, especially in introducing and managing change (Patterson & Krouse, 2015). Another competency that must be possessed is the ability to build communication, develop cooperation within the scope of the institution or cooperation between existing work units and workgroups, as well as build strategic relationships with partners or parties outside the institution to ensure that interested parties can fulfill their needs as expected (Kamales & Knorr, 2019). Study program leaders must also have the competence to inspire and lead change on a broader scale than their work unit, the patience to achieve results, and encourage high performance.

#### ***Experience***

One's experience has quite an influence on one's attitude in leading. Various types of research have proven this scientifically (Alius, 2019; Day et al., 2014; Fitriana & Cenni, 2021; Laptiev & Zakharov, 2021). In the leadership model created in this study, experience is included as one aspect that needs consideration. The experiences referred to include: experience working in cross-functional groups, experience in preparing a plan and managing an academically important function. In addition, at a strategic level, he has been involved in creating an organizational culture and has outsourced tasks in building cooperation. This is important because leaders must provide direction to build the culture in their environment.

#### ***Personal Character***

Personal character in leadership is needed in developing a unit or institution within the institution. A leader must have a responsibility, dare to take risks, have a strong desire to develop the institution or unit he leads sustainably, can be flexible and adaptive to change, and must also be able to receive feedback (Waldman & Siegel, 2008). Leaders must also have positive ambition, can imagine, innovate, and have an orientation to study harder.

### ***Operational Leadership as the First Principle***

Furthermore, the leadership model in Table 1 shows that operational leadership is divided into 4 parts, namely operational planning, implementation, communication and evaluation, and utilization of facilities. In the following, the four sections are described.

#### ***Operational planning***

The development of an annual program implementation plan in the study program at the beginning of each academic year must involve all members of the organization in the study program, such as students, lecturers, and staff, to obtain inputs or development ideas from members of the organization and also as a forum for internal customers in conveying their expectations in obtaining service. According to Nanang (2011), in TQM, the concept of customer quality is expanded. Quality no longer only means conformity to certain specifications, but the customers determine the quality, so the program planning must always involve the customers. The implementation plan of this program is then proposed to be ratified along with the ratification of the budget and expenditure plans. After the ratification, ideally, there is a regulation that controls the authority of the study program leader to have complete independence in managing resources to support the operation of the study program so that the planned strategy can go according to plan to achieve organizational goals. Internal coordination must also be carried out so that each unit in the work environment has a management contract that contains the objectives or performance indicators of the study program to be carried out according to the program planning that the study program has developed. Monitoring and evaluation (Monev) of the implementation of this program is carried out by the internal supervisory unit (SPI) to see budget absorption and program effectiveness in achieving quality targets. The leader can use the results of this Monev to make adjustments and improvements to program implementation to make it more effective.

#### ***Operational Implementation***

In the operational implementation of the study, program leaders spread the nature and role of leadership to staff and study program lecturers. The leadership style is participatory, as explained by Sutarto (2015). In the total quality management (TQM) setting, the most suitable leadership style is participatory in seeking input from staff who have been empowered first. Leaders do not try to concentrate leadership on themselves but will spread that led to other people, leaving only themselves that a leader must hold. Leadership is meant to make decisions and influence others. The decision on the policy of the Study Program remains in the hands of the Head of the Study Program, and others that are operational or technical are distributed to other people according to their position and duties. Thus, the organization's dependence on the leader will be minimal, but most people in the organization have high independence. In addition, all activities can be transparent, accountable, and traced when there is a discrepancy with the expected quality. The study program leader must refer to the standard operating procedure (SOP). All existing SOPs have controlled documents regulated in the quality document management system. At the study program level, quality controllers assist leaders in ensuring all academic business processes run according to SOPs. The suitability of the educational process with the SOP will be seen through an Internal Quality Audit (AMI) periodically each semester independently conducted by the Quality Assurance Institute. The AMI report must be submitted to the head of the study program as an AMI result document. Meanwhile, the findings obtained from AMI must be submitted to the highest leadership to be decided together with measurable corrective actions.

#### ***Operational communication and evaluation***

Communication in the study program environment can be done in various modes. In addition to coordination meetings, communication channels can also be made through the study program web, individual emails and official office emails, and lecturer portals which can be in office notes, decrees, circulars, and announcements. The leadership can also hold special meetings to anticipate problems correctly for crucial and sudden matters. The leadership must carry out the performance evaluation on

an ongoing basis to make continuous improvements. As Badruddin (2014) explained, one of the principles of TQM in improving the quality of an organization is to make continuous improvements. Evaluation is done by looking at the lecturer performance index (IKD). This IKD includes the success of lecturers in managing to learn, carrying out research and community service activities, and Islamic morality. The evaluation results can be used to determine corrective action for the individual concerned.

### ***Operational Facility Utilization***

The management of short-term facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and other learning infrastructure must be carried out by the head of the study program. This is done so that the study program can easily control directly and ensure the feasibility of the facility in providing services. As explained by Goetsch and Davis in Sutarto (2015), the application of TQM in an educational institution takes at least 10 actualizations of TQM teachings or principles, one of which is a focus on customer service. In addition, a clear division of authority in the management and utilization of facilities is carried out so that the distribution of workloads becomes more transparent and more measurable.

### ***Organizational Leadership as the Second Principle***

The second leadership principle is organizational leadership, where this leadership is related to understanding work procedures between units in higher education organizations. Similar to operational leadership, in the model performed by the participant in Table 1, organizational leadership is also divided into 4 (four) parts, namely coordination of quality assurance, coordination of HR management and planning, coordination of facility management and planning, and coordination of financial management and planning.

### ***Quality Assurance Coordination***

The implementation of quality assurance in study programs must be supported by a study program quality group that organizationally has a line of coordination with a quality assurance institution (LPM) and has a line of control under the faculty leadership. Budianto (2011) states that leadership in TQM must be able to plan and have a quality strategy, and of course, in planning the quality of study programs, it must be in tune with the institution's goals. In organizational leadership, the study program leader must be involved in at least three activities related to quality assurance, namely coordination in quality planning, coordination in quality implementation, and quality auditing. To develop various procedures and work instructions within the study program environment, the leadership must carry out jointly with the faculty leadership and other study programs under the same faculty or other units' auspices, depending on the type of document to be carried out. The involvement of the study program leaders and the leaders of other work units incorporate the most effective continuous improvement ideas for the progress of the work units they lead, especially when determining quality policies and targets. Quality policies and quality objectives at the Institutional level must be understood and used as the basis by the study program leaders in making quality plans at the study program level. The primary purpose of the involvement of the study program leaders in quality planning at the institutional level is to understand the institution's goals better and immediately formulate a quality plan at the study program level.

### ***Coordination of HR management and planning***

Another policy determination carried out through coordination between units is determining the procurement of human resources. Observations on trends that have been carried out by institutions in human resource management and planning are a reference in the process of hiring and firing staff. In this regard, Sulisworo (2012) argues that the leadership of the study program must be involved in determining the qualifications and number of staff needs that meet the needs of strategy

implementation. The need for human resources for this study program is communicated with the faculty and will then be forwarded to the institutional level to carry out the recruitment process according to the current period. In this case, the head of the study program has the authority to determine whether the staff to be recruited is by the qualifications or not, even though deciding it is the authority of the Higher Education Leader.

#### ***Facility Management and Planning Coordination***

In organizational leadership, coordination in facility management and planning is also essential. Therefore, the study program leader must have precise data regarding the need for facilities that will be used for the implementation of the learning process, such as the need for lecture rooms, laboratories, and others, and this is done through coordination with the faculty leadership and the equipment bureau (Alsayyari et al. 2019). Data regarding facilities in the form of time series can be used as a form of consideration in planning student recruitment programs in the next few years, taking other factors into account. The forecasting carried out is then used to assist the institution in achieving and planning according to the existing master plan.

#### ***Financial Planning and Management Coordination***

The study position of the leadership program in financial management and planning is an interaction in internal coordination with the leadership and work units within the faculty to formulate a program implementation budget plan. In the implementation of the approved program to carry out the planned strategy, it is regulated in the budget setting procedure. So that the results of program implementation can be transparent, accountable, and successful, each activity using the budget is equipped with a Term of Reference (TOR). This TOR also forms the basis for the internal supervisory unit (SPI) monitoring, evaluating, and auditing according to the current period. For changes in the budget caused by several things, such as changes in the strategic environment, changes in activities that require improvements or changes in activities, the head of the study program have the right to do so by taking into account the level of effectiveness and efficiency of resources so as not to reduce the performance achieved through coordination of the parties who have the authority.

#### ***Public Leadership as the Third Principle***

The third principle of leadership is public leadership, namely leadership related to the ability of study program leaders to collaborate and become a reference for the public, for example, through dissemination or providing examples and the influence of change on the community. To achieve this, it can be done through formal and non-formal channels.

#### ***Formal Path***

Study program leaders can carry out public leadership through formal channels through scientific activities such as seminars or workshops, discussion forums, focus group discussions, and others involving stakeholders. This activity can be used as a forum to establish cooperation with other parties in developing study programs. For example, in seminars or workshops, the leadership of the study program invites several parties, such as academic experts or practitioners of prospective graduate users, or other parties who can provide benefits for the development of the study program. For this reason, the study program must prepare a form of cooperation that can be offered and benefits both parties. It should be noted that according to Sallis (2012), in the principle of TQM, partners and potential partners must be treated as customers. Thus, the study program must be able to provide good service and prepare a form of cooperation that is beneficial to both parties.



### **Non-Formal Path**

One of the imperatives of studying program leaders in public leadership is to have a role in community organizations. The purpose of the involvement of study programs in community organizations, among others, is to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, to be able to influence change, and be an example to the community as a manifestation of the use of science for the wider community. In addition, the role of study program leaders in community organizations can increase trust and support from the community so that it becomes a reference for the public. By identifying the leadership model in Table 1, it can be said that the determination of leadership by considering knowledge, competence, experience, and personal character will influence operational, organizational, and public performance and leadership (Sulisworo, 2012).

The current high competition demands a university to seek and find the correct strategy formulation in order to be able to survive during highly competitive competition. Many concepts have been offered in managing higher education institutions, but what is currently being adopted by quality higher education institutions is the marketing concept that business people commonly use. Prihatini (2012) argues that the management of educational institutions should be managed like other industries. The core of the marketing concept is Customer Relationship Management. Barner (2001) reveals that Customer Relationship Management is a process of getting, retaining, and developing customers by providing satisfactory service to increase customer loyalty. In implementing this concept, a leadership model is needed both at the institutional and study program levels as an operational organ as well as the leadership capacity in carrying out the model in determining and implementing its products so that the expectations and demands of customers are achieved, and satisfied customers will have loyalty. The higher the level of loyalty from the customer, the higher the growth drive from the university. In this case, the study program as an operational organ in an institution has a significant role in bringing the university to grow and develop.

In conclusion, this paper reveals a leadership model based on the principles of total quality management TQM performed by the head of the study program in an Islamic-based higher education institution in South Sulawesi. These principles are one of the current favorite models widely used in industry and education to develop their institutions. One of the teachings of TQM is how to treat customers according to their expectations. In the TQM concept, Sutarto (2015) mentions that if it is likened to a vehicle, the expectations of the customer/client are the destination of the trip, which determines where the quality of the product/service is directed. This applies to both external and internal customers. External customers determine the quality of the expected product/service, while internal customers help determine the quality of personnel, processes, and the environment needed to produce the expected product/service.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The characteristics of education leadership are unique and broad. They are not only related to aspects of learning and personality formation but also touch the aspects of management so that it cannot be managed in general, but there is a unique touch that can unite the two aspects. TQM-based leadership in the principles of operational leadership, public leadership, and organizational leadership must become the primary plan that can be realized as soon as possible in order to improve academic services, create education, customer satisfaction optimally to build loyalty which will be the spirit of improving the quality of study programs. The contribution of TQM, which is very meaningful in a leadership world in education, is to make a significant contribution to continuous quality improvement that focuses on customer satisfaction in solving problems faced in the field. Future studies to develop another model of leadership in higher education institutions are suggested to conduct in order to provide another alternative for the reference leadership model.

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