

Principal Management in Improving the Quality of Education in Madrasahs

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the management of madrasah principals in improving the quality of education at MTs T Darul Huda Medan Marelan. The main focus of this research is to find out how the planning, implementation, organization, and supervision carried out by the madrasah principal in improving the quality of education. The method used in this research is qualitative with a case study approach, with data collection techniques through interviews with principals and teachers. The results showed that the management applied by the madrasah principal plays a role in improving the quality of education, through steps that include careful planning, effective organization of resources, and strict supervision of the implementation of educational activities. The principal also provides the motivation and guidance needed to support teachers' professionalism in carrying out their duties.

Keywords: *Management; Madrasah Principal; Education Quality*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji manajemen kepala madrasah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di MTs T Darul Huda Medan Marelan. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana perencanaan, pelaksanaan, pengorganisasian, dan pengawasan yang dilakukan oleh kepala madrasah dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara kepada kepala sekolah dan para guru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen yang diterapkan oleh kepala madrasah berperan dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan, melalui langkah-langkah yang mencakup perencanaan yang matang, pengorganisasian sumber daya yang efektif, serta pengawasan yang ketat terhadap pelaksanaan kegiatan pendidikan. Kepala madrasah juga memberikan motivasi dan bimbingan yang diperlukan untuk mendukung profesionalitas guru dalam menjalankan tugasnya.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen; Kepala Madrasah; Mutu Pendidikan*

Introduction

The principal has a central role in determining the direction, policy, and success of an educational institution, including in the madrasah environment. The leadership of the principal is not only administrative, but also includes managerial, academic supervision, and strategic decision-making in order to improve the quality of education. Madrasah as an Islamic educational institution faces a double challenge: maintaining Islamic values while meeting national education quality standards. Therefore, the ability of madrasah heads to carry out managerial functions greatly determines the success of learning and human resource development in the madrasah environment (Martani, 2023).

Effective education management requires school principals to be able to manage various components of education such as curriculum, educators, infrastructure, and relationships with the community. In the context of madrasahs, school principals must be able to bridge the administrative demands of the government and the cultural and religious needs of students. The management carried out is not rigid, but adaptive to internal and external dynamics that affect the educational process. Madrasah heads are required to have vision, integrity, and transformational leadership skills in order to be able to encourage sustainable positive change (Zaini et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of principal management in improving the quality of education. Mulyasa's research (2017) shows that the success of school principals is highly dependent on their ability to manage human resources and motivate teachers. Meanwhile, a study by Muhaimin (2019) emphasizes the importance of the visionary leadership of madrasah heads in integrating Islamic values in school management. Another study by Wahyuddin (2020) examines the principal's strategy in academic supervision as a tool to improve teacher professionalism. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Nurhayati (2021) focuses on the influence of the leadership style of madrasah heads on work culture and teacher ethos.

This research is different because it not only highlights the leadership aspect of madrasah heads in general, but also focuses more on how madrasah heads carry out managerial functions concretely in the context of improving the quality of education in religious-based madrasahs. This research also presents a field approach that describes the direct practice of madrasah heads in carrying out supervision, coaching, and evaluation of teachers, which has rarely been revealed in depth. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the exploration of the managerial practices of madrasah heads in the context of Islamic culture and contemporary madrasah challenges, while the gap that is to be filled is the lack of research that examines the management practices of madrasah heads in an applicative perspective of religious-based education quality (Sari et al., 2023).

This paper aims to examine in depth how the management of school principals plays a role in improving the quality of education in madrasas, by emphasizing aspects of supervision, teacher coaching, and decision-making strategies. This research is important to make a scientific contribution to strengthening Islamic education management as well as providing an overview of best practices that can be applied in various madrasas.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, which aims to describe in depth the implementation of the role of madrasah heads in improving teacher professionalism. The location of this study is MTs T Darul Huda, Medan Marelan. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The interviews were focused on the head of the madrasah as the main informant, as well as several subject teachers. Observations were carried out to see firsthand the leadership practices of madrasah heads in the field, while documentation was obtained from archives of madrasah activities and programs.

This study uses the design of a transformational leadership-based management model, which is a model that emphasizes the importance of motivation, direction, and closeness between leaders and subordinates. In this context, madrasah heads play an active role in fostering teachers through intensive communication, direction, and facilitation of professional development programs. The data was analyzed using triangulation techniques, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the analysis are presented narratively and naturally in accordance with the findings in the field.

Results and Discussion

Madrasa Head Planning

Planning and designing strategies constitute one of the key efforts in realizing the vision and mission of a school led by the head of a madrasah. To improve teacher professionalism, a madrasah principal must act creatively and adaptively in the planning process. One such effort involves organizing plans systematically while considering the conditions and context of the school environment (Zaini et al., 2023).

Before making any policy decisions, the principal needs to engage with all school-related aspects, aiming to enhance teacher professionalism. To explore how the madrasah head plans efforts to improve teacher professionalism, the researcher conducted an interview on April 22, 2024, with Anizar., the principal of MTs T Darul Huda. She stated:

"Since the beginning of this school, I have held the principle of implementing activities that benefit not only students but also teachers. For activities I consider beneficial, I involve teachers after first communicating with them. My planning usually begins by approaching the teacher and finding out whether they are willing to participate in the training. Typically, we discuss and finalize these plans during meetings. So, for me, what matters is a personal approach—first understanding whether the teacher is willing or not."

This interview illustrates that the principal applies a behavioral approach in planning. The initial step involves building communication with teachers through personal and group engagement. As Wina Sanjaya explains, a behavioral approach is a leadership concept aligned with educational principles. It represents a foundational step in which a leader directly engages with their subordinates to experience and understand the challenges educators face (Sugiri & Ma' shum, 2022).

Through such an approach, a principal is expected to identify problems and formulate appropriate solutions, ensuring that policy decisions align with the actual needs of teachers in their pursuit of enhanced professionalism.

In the planning process, the principal of MTs T Darul Huda Medan Marelan stated that decisions made during meetings are based on her considerations as a leader while also incorporating input from staff and teachers. Mrs. Anizar, explained:

"I enjoy leading. But I also make an effort to listen to the teachers and staff here. I believe that their comfort is the foundation for me to lead more confidently. When they already feel comfortable, it means the decisions we make are truly appropriate for implementation in this school environment. Therefore, before a meeting concludes, I always ask for their input, criticism, and suggestions regarding the decisions to be finalized. Unless the decision is a government policy, in which case we discuss and implement it accordingly."

This statement illustrates that, prior to finalizing decisions in meetings, the principal first engages in a preliminary approach to those who will be involved in the programs and activities—particularly the teachers. Such an approach makes it easier for the principal to formulate relevant policies to be discussed during official meetings. Following this approach, policies and program plans related to the school are developed collaboratively to be mutually agreed upon and implemented.

In formulating strategies, careful planning is essential to achieve institutional goals. Therefore, as the principal of MTs T Darul Huda Medan

Marelan, any policy aimed at improving teacher professionalism must be designed with careful consideration of various factors. One such plan includes involving teachers in activities such as trainings, seminars, workshops, MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum), infrastructure planning, drafting of teacher regulations, planning for evaluations, and requiring teachers to prepare teaching tools at the beginning of each academic year.

Organizing the Madrasah Head

Organizing is a decisive step toward achieving targeted goals. Accordingly, the talents possessed by a teacher will continue to develop in line with their area of expertise. This process naturally enhances teacher professionalism. Therefore, the principal of a madrasah must ensure a clear division of labor among the teachers under their leadership. With a proper division of tasks, a fair delegation of authority and responsibility, and adherence to organizational principles, school activities can run smoothly and objectives can be achieved effectively (Suriyati et al., 2023).

Regarding the organization process, Mrs. Anizar, the principal of MTs T Darul Huda, explained the following:

"This is the purpose of the annual opening meeting. It serves to align all teachers' ideas to facilitate the teaching and learning process going forward. And those who teach must do so according to their educational background. This aligns with the policy of the Ministry of Education, which mandates that teaching assignments correspond to the teacher's qualifications."

Based on the above interview, it is evident that assigning teachers according to the subjects they are qualified in is a fundamental stage in organizing the school's work programs. In this case, the principal of MTs T Darul Huda adopts a policy of placing teachers in roles that align with their academic backgrounds. This policy is appropriate, considering that educational objectives are more likely to be achieved when teachers possess specialized competencies related to their assignments—namely, teaching in accordance with their field of study.

Placing teachers based on their academic discipline has become an initial requirement when applying for a teaching position at the school. According to the researcher, this is a commendable policy. As evidence, the researcher reviewed documentation indicating that the teachers at this institution indeed teach subjects that correspond with their academic qualifications, as shown in the list of teacher names and administrative data presented earlier.

As stipulated in the Teachers and Lecturers Law, a teacher is defined as a professional role requiring specific expertise. This job cannot be

performed by individuals lacking the necessary competencies to carry out educational responsibilities. Teachers are regarded as professional educators whose primary duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education, both at the basic and secondary levels. It is essential for teachers to master the intricacies of education and pedagogy, along with other related areas of knowledge that must be cultivated. Consequently, a teacher's capabilities can be fully explored, allowing them to focus more deeply on their subject matter and continuously improve themselves in line with educational developments in Indonesia (Abidin et al., 2024).

Enhancing teacher professionalism is not limited to participating in professional development activities and teaching in accordance with one's field of expertise. The principal of MTs T Darul Huda also assigns teaching responsibilities to one teacher in a subject that does not match their academic background.

Implementation of Madrasah Head

The head of the madrasa plays a crucial role in providing guidance in various aspects, which impacts the teachers' performance, one of which is the professionalism that needs to be fostered among the teachers. With guidance, encouragement, and enthusiasm, a sense of care develops between superiors and subordinates, creating an environment that supports one another in realizing professional teachers. Mrs Anizar, the Head of MTs T Darul Huda explained:

"Once the program is planned and tasks are assigned, the next step is implementation. In the implementation of this program, I usually go directly to the field. Starting from the administration system, the teachers, and how the activities and programs of the school are carried out."

From the interview above, it is evident that the head of the madrasa uses planning and organizing as the initial steps to implement the program. The implementation carried out by the head of the madrasa involves direct monitoring in the field. According to the researcher, this is very beneficial for the head of the madrasa because the planning supports communication, which is then followed by direct observation.

"If I participate in activities and directly observe in the field, this actually also makes it easier for me. I get to know what is needed and what is happening with my school. Usually, if there are obstacles or problems in the field, I call and direct them."

The same was stated by Nuir Isnawati, a subject teacher, as follows:

"Indeed. Mrs often sees us directly. However, if Mrs has an official visit or training outside the city, we only have online meetings. But still, Mrs often gives us directions if, for example, there

is an event without Mrs's presence. Even if Mrs is not there, the event must be good and run well. So, Mrs has prepared everything in advance for the activity, and we are always given direction."

This was also confirmed by Mrs Juuli Feiryeini Sari, a subject teacher, as follows:

"Meetings have become one of the good activities because we are asked about the development of teaching and others. The challenge is if Mrs is away, we substitute it with an online meeting. According to me, this becomes a challenge, because it is more effective when done in person. But Mrs is quick if there are issues, always guiding us well and communicating until the obstacles or problems can be resolved."

From the interviews above, it is clear that the head of the madrasa implements school activities with the assistance of the teachers. The head of the madrasa is directly involved in carrying out these activities. Additionally, the researcher concludes that the head of the madrasa is active in monitoring the situation and conditions within the school environment (Nurul Hidayat & Rugaiyah, 2023).

The implementation of the principal's role in enhancing teacher professionalism is carried out through direct guidance, encouragement, and motivation provided to the teachers. The principal actively builds close relationships with subordinates to foster mutual care and support. In addition, the principal offers opportunities for teachers to continue learning and developing through various educational activities. These efforts are reinforced by the provision of facilities that support the teaching and learning process, enabling teachers to explore and enhance their professionalism in teaching according to their respective subject areas (Ya' cub & Ga' a, 2021).

Madrasah Head Supervision

The role of the madrasah principal is one of the most crucial aspects in the continuity and quality of an educational institution. The success of program implementation within the school environment heavily depends on the policies, direction, and leadership style of the principal. One of the strategic roles of the principal is to supervise all activities taking place in the school. This supervision is not only related to discipline but also directly contributes to the improvement of teacher quality and professionalism (Huda & Rokhman, 2021).

Based on an interview with Ms. Anizar, the Principal of MTs T Darul Huda, it was found that supervision is carried out by directly observing the activities of teachers and ongoing school programs. Whenever an issue arises, the principal immediately intervenes to resolve it without delay. She emphasized that she does not like to let problems pile up, especially those concerning school matters.

The principal adopts a hands-on and participatory supervision approach. She actively monitors classroom situations, checks teachers' attendance records at the end of each month, and occasionally conducts unannounced classroom observations. If any irregularities or discrepancies are found, the respective teacher is summoned and provided with guidance before any firm measures are taken.

This supervisory practice is supported by the statement of a subject teacher, Ms. Anisah Majidah who mentioned that the principal regularly calls in teachers with poor attendance records. At times, the principal also enters classrooms without prior notice to observe teaching activities. Teachers who are found to be underperforming in class are usually given direction, and even coaching, on how to teach effectively or handle students in the classroom (Nurhayati et al., 2021).

From these findings, it can be concluded that the principal's supervisory actions reflect a deep concern for improving teacher professionalism—both in terms of discipline and pedagogical competence. Teacher attendance is used as an initial indicator of discipline that influences professionalism. Through consistent supervision and proper coaching, the principal actively contributes to creating a professional and high-quality learning environment at MTs T Darul Huda, Medan Marelan.

Conclusions

Based on the results of research that examines the stages of management carried out by madrasah principals, starting from the process of planning, organizing, implementing to supervising, it can be concluded that the implementation of management significantly contributes to improving the quality of education in madrasah. Every managerial step taken by the madrasah principal shows the integration of institutional vision, responsive leadership, and a consistent evaluation system for teacher performance and educational programs. This success is evidence that effective management of madrasah principals is not only administrative, but also touches substantial aspects in the formation of a professional and quality work culture. These findings can serve as valuable lessons as well as a model of managerial practice that can be adapted by other madrasahs, especially in their efforts to improve the quality of education based on Islamic values and teacher professionalism.

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