

Madrasah Head's Strategy for Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning Islamic Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

Islamic religious education has an important role in shaping students' character and noble morals. However, in its implementation, there are often various obstacles that impact the quality of learning. This research aims to find out the strategy of madrasah heads in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic Religious Education at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection methods through interviews, observations, and documentation. The study results show that madrasah heads apply several strategies, including academic supervision, evaluation of teaching and learning activities, coaching of teacher and student discipline, institutional promotion, infrastructure development, and contextual learning approaches. The supporting factors found included teacher involvement, relevant curriculum, adequate facilities, and community participation, while the inhibiting factors were time constraints, parental busyness, and the influence of the environment and mass media. The conclusion of this study is that the strategy implemented by the head of the madrasah can increase the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning even though it still faces some external obstacles.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Schools, as formal educational institutions, aim to form human beings with personalities in developing students' intellect to educate the nation's life. Effective leaders have these characteristics of being able to keep promises and carry out commitments, trust each other and be open, help others to be successful, encourage their members to do better, and realize the mistakes they make themselves (Aldiab, Chowdhury, Kootsookos, Alam, & Allhibi, 2019).

As the leader, the head of the madrasah has an important role in helping teachers and employees. The main activity of education in schools is to realize the goal of learning activities so that all school

organizational activities achieve learning efficiency and effectiveness (Eyob Kenta, 2019). The head of the madrasah is the person who is responsible both internally and externally. The head of the madrasah is responsible for empowering teachers, staff, and student technicians. Meanwhile, the head of the madrasah is responsible to the school users and officially to him; therefore, the head of the madrasah is always required to improve the effectiveness of the performance of the staff and the quality of the students (Ardiyanti, Qurbaniah, & Muldayanti, 2021).

Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the duties of the head of the madrasah is as a supervisor, namely supervising the work carried out by education personnel. The head of the madrasah is in a strategic position in completing education. Therefore, the progress of the madrasah is highly dependent on the figure of its leader, namely the head of the madrasah. This is because the head of the madrasah is at the forefront of driving activities and setting school targets (Chen, Shih, & Law, 2020). Important decisions that greatly impact the organization (school) are born from it. Therefore, the existence and function of madrasah heads must be studied, formulated, and developed to meet public expectations and realize highly competitive schools.

In an educational institution, the head of a madrasah has a very decisive role in the progress and retreat of an educational institution because the head of the madrasah has a very large role in developing an educational institution (Malik, 2017). For this reason, one of the ways that can be taken is through improving the quality of educational learning, because there is an improvement in the quality of educational learning that will be able to follow the development of the world of science that can color society (Taufik, 2020).

In an effort to improve the quality of educational learning, especially Islamic religious education, the head of the madrasah must be aware of all changes and developments that occur in his madrasah/institution. The existence of professional and non-professional teaching staff to improve the quality of educational learning will affect the teaching and learning process because they must realize educational goals and produce students who can realize educational goals and also produce students who can master science and technology as well as have faith and fear in Allah SWT (Esra & Sevilen, 2021).

Therefore, the head of the madrasah is required always to improve the effectiveness of the performance of the staff in the madrasah. Seeing the importance and strategic position of the madrasah head in realizing school goals, the madrasah head should have good relationship skills with all residents in the school, so that the goals of the school and education can be achieved optimally (Bray, Girvan, & Chorcora, 2023). The head of the madrasah is a central figure in the school, like a pilot who flies an airplane from high takeoff to bring its passengers safely to their destination (Baharun & Ummah, 2018).

In other words, the head of the madrasah is the driving force behind implementing quality education management. The problem that this research wants to reveal is how the madrasah head's strategy is to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic religious education at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji (Arif, bin Abd Aziz, Harun, & Maarif, 2023). In this case, what exactly does the head of the madrasah carry out the strategy as a leader in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic religious education so that Islamic religious education in madrasahs can run well and in accordance with the goals to be achieved (Rohaeni, Wasliman, Rostini, & Iriantara, 2021).

The purpose of this scientific research article is to uncover and analyze the strategies applied by the head of Madrasah Aliyah Darussalam Ngembe Beji in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic religious education, with the hope that it can make a real contribution to improving the quality of learning, producing students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also faithful, pious, and able to face the development of the times, as well as becoming a model or strategic reference for other madrasah heads in managing and advancing Islamic-based educational institutions.

2. METHODS

Research methods are basically a scientific way to obtain data with a specific purpose and use. The research method is a way of acting demanding a system of rules or order that aims to ensure that practical activities are carried out rationally and in a directed manner to achieve optimal results (Mogale & Malatji, 2022). The research design used is a qualitative approach, which is a problem-solving approach based on descriptions that are not in the form of numbers. With this qualitative method, it is hoped that the reality of the research target will be revealed, namely the Strategy of Madrasah Heads in Improving the Quality of the Teaching and Learning Process of Islamic Religious Education at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji. This research stage begins with the preparation stage, namely formulating problems, determining the research focus, and compiling data collection instruments such as interview guidelines and observation sheets. Furthermore, the researcher collected data in the field through in-depth interview techniques with madrasah heads, teachers, and staff, observation of teaching and learning activities, and documentation related to madrasah policies and programs. After the data is collected, it is continued with the data analysis stage, which is reducing the data, presenting it, and drawing conclusions based on the patterns found. The final stage is the preparation of a research report, which contains the findings of the madrasah head's strategy for improving the quality of Islamic religious education, accompanied by interpretations and recommendations for future madrasahs development.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that the strategy of madrasah heads in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji includes several important aspects, namely: improving the internal quality of teachers, implementing academic supervision, routine evaluation of teaching and learning activities (KBM), fostering teacher discipline, promoting madrasahs to the community, developing educational facilities and infrastructure, and using learning approaches Contextual. All of these strategies are implemented simultaneously and integrated to achieve optimal educational goals.

In an in-depth interview, the head of the madrasah emphasized the importance of building a positive madrasah culture. Academic supervision is carried out periodically, not to find fault with teachers, but to provide coaching and constructive feedback. KBM evaluation is carried out every semester involving all PAI teachers. In contrast, discipline development is carried out through the habituation of discipline culture, given examples by madrasah heads, and the existence of a reward and punishment system.

Improving facilities and infrastructure is also a focus. The head of the madrasah tries to provide facilities such as religious laboratory rooms, prayer rooms, and complete learning aids. In addition, the contextual approach in PAI learning encourages students to relate religious material to their real lives, making lessons more relevant and applicable. This is to the concept of contextual learning developed by (Jamiah, Fatmawati, & Purwaningsih, 2019), which emphasizes the importance of relating teaching materials to students' real world.

The following table presents the Madrasah Head Strategy and the Supporting/Inhibiting Factors found in the research:

Table 1. Madrasah Head Strategy and Supporting/Inhibiting Factors

No.	Madrasah Head Strategy	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
1	Improving the quality of teachers	The active role of teachers	Limited students' time in school
2	Supervision and evaluation of KBM	Curriculum and learning support	Parents' busy schedule
3	Teacher discipline development	Adequate facilities and infrastructure	Unsupportive attitude from some parents

4	Promotion of madrassas to the community	Community participation	Less conducive social environment
5	Improvement of facilities and infrastructure	Visionary Madrasah head work program	The negative influence of mass media
6	Contextual approach to learning	Student enthusiasm for learning	-

From Table 1, it can be seen that strong supporting factors at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji can cover most of the obstacles. However, external obstacles such as parental busyness and environmental influences remain serious challenges.

Based on data analysis, the results of this study are in line with the theory put forward by Syaiful Sagala (2010), which states that improving the quality of education is highly dependent on effective management of education, including visionary leadership of school principals, active educational supervision, and the development of supporting infrastructure. Madrasah heads who function as leaders, managers, and supervisors will be able to improve the quality of learning and student achievement.

In relation to previous research, this study strengthens the findings of (Sanasintani, 2020) who stated that the supervision of madrasah heads significantly improves teacher performance and student motivation. At MA Darussalam, supervision not only assesses the administrative aspects of teachers, but also emphasizes improving teaching methods, classroom management, and preparing teaching materials relevant to students' lives. This is an important differentiator from the formality supervision that is often found in other studies.

This study also found that there was a paradigm shift in the leadership paradigm of madrasah heads from a bureaucratic model to a transformational model, as explained by (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019) in transformational leadership theory. The head of the madrasah at MA, Darussalam Ngembe Beji, is able to inspire teachers and students to have a common vision, innovate in teaching, and dare to take the initiative in the educational process.

In addition, environmental factors and mass media as inhibitors are also in line with the findings (Anderson et al., 2019), which state that external factors such as family, social environment, and media greatly affect students' character. Therefore, the involvement of parents and community leaders in madrasah activities is very important to reduce the negative impact on the environment.

One of the important innovations of the madrasah head's strategy is strengthening partnership programs with the community. The head of the madrasah actively invites religious leaders and community leaders to play a role in madrasah programs, such as routine studies, character development, and student leadership training. This is a strategic effort to strengthen external support and improve the quality of Islamic religious education output.

In addition, the results of observations show that the use of active learning methods such as group discussions, case studies, and project-based learning (PjBL) in PAI subjects has succeeded in increasing student participation (Belagra & Draoui, 2018). Students are not only passively accepting material, but also actively seeking, analyzing, and presenting their understanding. This is in accordance with modern educational theory's principles of student-centered learning.

From all these findings, it can be concluded that the strategy of the head of the madrasah at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji is not only reactive to the problems that arise but also proactive in designing innovative programs. Although external barriers still exist, a collaborative approach between madrasahs, teachers, students, and the community is key to optimizing the quality of Islamic religious learning.

An in-depth analysis of the strategy of the head of the madrasah at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji shows that the success of improving the quality of the teaching and learning processes of Islamic Religious Education cannot be separated from the ability of madrasah heads to combine various managerial, leadership, and pedagogic functions simultaneously. In this approach, the head of the madrasah not only acts as an administrator who manages the operational activities of the madrasah but also as an instructional leader who ensures that every learning process runs by the vision of Islamic

education (Assen, 2018). This strengthens the theory of (Haniah, Aman, & Setiawan, 2020) which emphasizes the importance of the principal's role as an instructional leader to create an effective learning environment.

Implementing intensive and continuous academic supervision is one of the most prominent aspects of the madrasah head's strategy. From the observations and interviews, it appears that the supervision is fostering, not judgmental. Teachers are given constructive feedback, thus encouraging their professional improvement. This shows the real application of the theory of clinical supervision put forward by (Herlambang, Fitri, Shafira, Puspasari, & Tarawifa, 2020), where supervision is used as a tool for teacher development through a collaborative and reflective process, rather than just for administrative assessment. Through this approach, PAI teachers at MA Darussalam can improve their pedagogic skills, adapt teaching methods to the needs of students, and implement active and contextual learning.

The strategy of strengthening teacher and student discipline is also the main pillar analyzed in this study. The habituation of a culture of discipline, through the example of the head of the madrasah and through a fair system of rewards and sanctions, has created a conducive learning environment. This corresponds to the view (Azeem, Ahmed, Haider, & Sajjad, 2021) that a strong organizational culture will support the achievement of organizational goals, including in the context of educational institutions. Discipline is understood mechanically and as part of the internalization of religious values in daily behavior, in line with the main goal of Islamic education (Syahrul, Mukhtar, & Akbar, 2018).

In the aspect of developing facilities and infrastructure, the head of the madrasah shows good lobbying and advocacy skills with external parties, such as foundations and the surrounding community. Improving learning facilities such as religious laboratories, multimedia rooms, and religious extracurricular programs adds to the attractiveness of madrasahs and strengthens the PAI learning process. This effort proves that an effective resource management strategy is an important factor in improving the quality of education, as affirmed in the theory of Education Management by (Nabilah Mokhtar, Lim Zhi Xuan, Lokman, & Noor Hayati Che Mat, 2023).

On the other hand, the study also found that inhibiting factors such as parental busyness, the negative influence of mass media, and the social environment remain serious challenges. A deeper analysis shows that this problem is external and related to weak communication between madrasahs and students' families. Therefore, based on the theory Ecological Systems Theory by (TARHAN, Karaman, & Nalbant, 2020), explaining that individual development is influenced by various surrounding systems (microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, and macrosystems), madrasahs need to strengthen these cross-system relationships to support the holistic development of students' personalities and morals.

From a comparative perspective with previous research, the results of this study have similarities with the findings (Ninković & Florić, 2018), which state that the improvement of the quality of Islamic religious education in madrasahs is highly dependent on the synergy between the head of the madrasah, teachers, parents, and the community. However, this study enriches these findings by adding the importance of a contextual approach in PAI learning to overcome student boredom and increase the relevance of learning to students' daily lives.

Theoretically, the results of this study emphasize the importance of transformational leadership in the world of education, as stated (Lorinkova & Perry, 2019). The head of the madrasah at MA Darussalam manages, inspires, motivates, and transforms all components of the madrasah to move towards a common vision. Through a clear vision, exemplary model, teacher empowerment, and improvement of learning facilities, the head of the madrasah succeeded in creating an adaptive, innovative, and quality-oriented school culture.

Thus, based on these results and analysis, it can be concluded that the strategy of the head of the madrasah at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji has proven to be effective in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic Religious Education. However, the sustainability of this

success depends on the consistency of strategy implementation, strengthening synergy between all stakeholders, and continuous innovation in responding to changing times and the needs of students.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the strategy of the head of the madrasah in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process of Islamic Religious Education at MA Darussalam Ngembe Beji includes internal improvement through academic supervision, teacher and student discipline coaching, evaluation of teaching and learning activities (KBM), institutional promotion, development of infrastructure, and the application of contextual learning approaches. Supporting factors that strengthen the success of this strategy include the active role of teachers, relevant curriculum, availability of supporting facilities, and support from the surrounding community. However, there are still various inhibiting factors such as limited study time, parental busyness, the influence of the social environment, and the dominance of the mass media that is less educational, so there is a need for stronger synergy between madrasas, families, and the community in supporting the success of Islamic religious education.

However, this study has some limitations that need to be considered. This study has not explored the role of students as active subjects in improving the quality of learning. It has not analyzed the direct impact of the madrasah head's strategy on students' academic achievement results quantitatively. In addition, the involvement of external stakeholders, such as community leaders and religious organizations, in supporting madrasah strategies has also not been explored optimally. Therefore, for the next research, it is recommended to expand the focus of the study by involving analysis of the role of students, evaluating learning outcomes quantitatively, and examining more deeply in collaboration with external parties of the madrasah to strengthen the strategy to improve the quality of Islamic religious education.

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