

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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**Abstrak:** Mutu pendidikan Islam di madrasah masih menghadapi tantangan seperti rendahnya kedisiplinan guru, kurang optimalnya sarana prasarana, dan minimnya keterlibatan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kepala madrasah dalam mengembangkan mutu pendidikan Islam melalui perencanaan strategis, pengembangan kompetensi guru, serta pelibatan orang tua dan masyarakat. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, data diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan mutu dilakukan melalui musyawarah tahunan dengan yayasan, guru, dan staf, lalu dituangkan dalam aplikasi ERKAM. Untuk meningkatkan kompetensi guru, kepala madrasah melakukan supervisi, motivasi, dan pengarahan pelatihan, meski masih ditemukan guru yang tidak disiplin. Pengembangan sarana prasarana dilakukan melalui perencanaan, pemanfaatan, dan perawatan, namun sebagian fasilitas masih belum lengkap. Hubungan dengan masyarakat cukup baik, ditandai dengan partisipasi dalam kegiatan madrasah. Pelibatan orang tua turut mendukung pencapaian mutu pendidikan. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya kepemimpinan partisipatif dan berorientasi mutu dalam mendorong kemajuan madrasah secara menyeluruh.

**Kata Kunci:** Mutu Pendidikan, Kepala Madrasah, pendidikan Islam

**Abstract:** The quality of Islamic education in madrasahs still faces challenges such as low teacher discipline, suboptimal infrastructure, and minimal community involvement. This study aims to analyze the strategies of madrasah principals in developing the quality of Islamic education through strategic planning, teacher competency development, and parent and community involvement. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that quality planning is carried out through annual meetings with the foundation, teachers, and staff, and then implemented through the ERKAM application. To improve teacher competencies, the madrasah principal conducts supervision, motivation, and training guidance, although some teachers are still found to be undisciplined. Facility development is carried out through planning, utilization, and maintenance, but some facilities are still incomplete. Community relations are quite good, as indicated by participation in madrasah activities. Parent involvement also supports the achievement of educational quality. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of participatory and quality-oriented leadership in promoting the overall progress of madrasahs.

**Keywords:** Educational Quality, Madrasah Principal, Islamic Education

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a central role in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually and morally strong. Madrasah as a formal Islamic education institution has a great responsibility in educating the nation's children to have a correct understanding of religion while being able to adapt to the times (Mashar, 2019). In practice, madrasahs in various regions, including in rural areas such as Tengah Village, Pantai Labu Subdistrict, still face various challenges in improving the quality of education. Low teacher competence, limited infrastructure, and lack of parental and community involvement are common problems. In these conditions, the madrasah head has a strategic role to manage and develop the quality of education in a planned and systematic manner. This role is not only administrative, but also includes visionary leadership functions and the ability to mobilize all components of the madrasah towards the goal of quality education.

Strategic management is a very relevant approach to be applied in the context of developing the quality of education in madrasah. This approach requires the madrasah head to be able to conduct long-term planning, manage resources effectively and establish cooperation with various parties, including teachers, parents and the surrounding community. In this context, this research was conducted at MIS Nidaul Insan, a private madrasah ibtidaiyah located in a rural area, to examine how the madrasah head applies strategic management in improving the

quality of Islamic education. The research focused on institutional planning strategies, teacher competency development and community involvement. It is hoped that through this research effective and contextual managerial practices can be found, as well as making a real contribution to improving the quality of Islamic education, especially in private madrasahs located in remote areas.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Nidaul Insan, located in Tengah Village, Pantai Labu Sub-district, is one of the Islamic educational institutions that has an important role in shaping the character and religious knowledge of the younger generation in the area. In the context of the national education system, madrasahs are not only required to provide education with Islamic values, but are also required to have good quality education that is competitive and relevant to the times. However, the reality faced by many madrasahs, including MIS Nidaul Insan, shows that improving the quality of education is still a challenge that has not been fully resolved. Some of the problems that are often found include limitations in institutional management, low motivation and competence of teaching staff, less than optimal utilization of facilities and infrastructure, and low community participation in supporting the education programs carried out.

In facing these challenges, the role of madrasah principals as strategic leaders becomes very vital (Sodiqin & Nurdin, 2016). The madrasah head is required not only to carry out administrative functions, but also to be able to design and implement

effective strategies in improving the quality of Islamic education. Strategic management is an important approach that can be used by madrasah heads to formulate vision, mission, goals, and operational steps in quality development efforts. At MIS Nidaul Insan, the extent to which the madrasah head carries out this strategic role still needs to be studied in depth, especially in the aspects of planning, developing human resources (teachers), and involving parents and the community as educational stakeholders.

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the strategy of the madrasah principal in developing the quality of Islamic education at MIS Nidaul Insan, Central Village, Pantai Labu Sub-district. The main focus of this research lies on three strategic aspects: short-term and long-term planning formulated by the madrasah head to improve the quality of education, strategies in developing teacher competence as the spearhead of the learning process, as well as strategies in building synergy between madrasah with parents and the surrounding community in order to create a supportive educational environment. This research is expected to provide a factual picture of strategic management practices at the private madrasah ibtidaiyah level in rural areas with all its limitations and potential.

This research has a clear distinction from several previous studies. First, research conducted by Yanto & Fathurrochman (2019) entitled *The Role of Madrasah Principals in Improving the Quality of Education at MI Al-Falah Lamongan* shows the importance of the role of madrasah principals in improving quality through a

transformational leadership approach, but has not highlighted many community involvement strategies. Second, the study by Mubarrok & Bisri (2024) in *Principal Management in Education Quality Development at MI Negeri 1 Palembang* focuses more on administrative aspects without emphasizing long-term strategies and social synergy. Third, the study by Sa'diyah et al., (2021) entitled *Madrasah Principal Strategy in Improving Teacher Competence at MTs Nurul Hikmah* emphasizes more on aspects of improving teacher professionalism but does not discuss aspects of institutional planning as a whole. Fourth, research by (2021) Adilah & Suryana examined participatory management in school development but was conducted at the general elementary school level, not madrasah. Fifth, research by Mashar (2019) on *The Strategic Role of Principals in Improving the Quality of Graduates* only highlights the output aspect of education and has not yet reached the process dimension and the involvement of the education community.

Different from these five studies, this research integrates three important aspects of strategic management holistically, namely: institutional strategic planning, human resource development, and external involvement (parents and community). The novelty target of this study lies in the integrative approach to the strategy of madrasah principals in developing quality, especially in the environment of private madrasah ibtidaiyah operating in rural areas. This research also emphasizes the importance of digitizing planning through

platforms such as ERKAM (Evaluation of Madrasah Work Plan and Budget) as a managerial tool that has not been studied much in depth in the context of small madrasahs. By examining these aspects, this research not only contributes empirical findings but also encourages innovative practices in data-driven and collaborative Islamic education planning.

The contribution of this research is expected to provide benefits in several aspects. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of strategic management of Islamic education, especially at the private madrasah ibtidaiyah level, which has so far received less attention in academic research. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for madrasah principals, madrasah supervisors, and managers of other Islamic education institutions in designing quality improvement strategies that are more effective, adaptive, and contextual. For policy makers, the findings of this study can provide input in formulating policies for fostering and developing private madrasahs in rural areas so that they are able to compete healthily and productively with other educational institutions. This research is also expected to encourage increased community participation in supporting the sustainability of quality Islamic education through a synergistic relationship between madrasahs and their social environment.

Thus, research on the strategic management of madrasah principals in developing the quality of Islamic education at MIS Nidaul Insan is an effort to answer the contextual needs of Islamic educational institutions that want to develop sustainably

and professionally in the midst of various resource limitations. Through a comprehensive approach, this research seeks to present a strategic management model that is not only ideal on paper, but also applicable in real field practices.

## **METHOD**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand in depth how the strategic management of madrasah principals is implemented in a specific and real context (Creswell, 2007, 2018), namely in the environment of MIS Nidaul Insan, Tengah Village, Pantai Labu District. Qualitative research provides space for researchers to explore social dynamics, behavior, and managerial strategies carried out by madrasah principals in developing the quality of Islamic education.

The selection of MIS Nidaul Insan as the research location was based on several considerations. Firstly, this madrasah is located in a rural area with limited educational facilities and human resources but is still actively working to improve the quality of education. Secondly, the madrasah principal at MIS Nidaul Insan is known to have an important role in designing and implementing various madrasah development strategies that are worthy of study. Thirdly, the madrasah has a good relationship with the surrounding community, making it a representative location to study community involvement in Islamic education.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from the main informants, namely the madrasah principal, teachers, parents of students, and community leaders who have direct involvement in the education process in the madrasah. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from madrasah policy documents, activity reports, and literature sources relevant to strategic management and quality development of Islamic education.

The data collection techniques used in this study include direct observation of madrasah principal activities and the learning process, in-depth interviews with key informants, and documentation studies of various madrasah archives and policies. All data collected were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

To ensure data validity, this research uses data triangulation and member cross-check techniques. Triangulation is done by comparing data from various sources, techniques, and different times, while member cross-check is done by confirming the results of interviews with the informants concerned to ensure the accuracy of the information.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research questions that have been stated previously, the discussion of this research is described to answer the three questions. This description will also be supported by the opinions of experts and related theories.

## **Quality Planning for Islamic Education**

Planning the quality of Islamic education at MIS Nidaul Insan is carried out through annual deliberations involving elements of the foundation, madrasah head, teachers and administrative staff. This deliberation is a strategic forum in determining the overall direction of madrasah development, both in terms of curriculum, infrastructure and human resource development. The results of the deliberation are then compiled in the form of a madrasah work plan as outlined in the ERKAM-based digital application (Evaluation of Madrasah Work Plan and Budget).

The planning model applied by the madrasah head reflects the participatory and collaborative principles as stated by Hasanah (2016), that good planning must be carried out systematically, rationally, and involve all interested parties. In the context of Islamic education, planning that includes participatory values shows harmony between managerial principles and the values of shura in Islam, as confirmed in the Qur'an surah Ali Imran verse 159, which emphasizes the importance of deliberation in decision making (Sholihah et al., 2021).

Quality planning is a very important foundation in the long-term development of an educational institution such as madrasah. With careful and structured planning, madrasah has a clear direction in developing educational programs, improving the quality of learning, and achieving overall institutional goals. Quality planning allows each element of the madrasah to understand the goals to be achieved and the strategies that must be carried out (Khuliyati, 2022). In the context of

MIS Nidaul Insan, this quality planning has been formulated through a joint deliberation process between the madrasah head, foundation, teachers and staff, then systematically outlined in the ERKAM application. This shows a collective awareness in designing the progress of Islamic education in a participatory manner.

However, the success of such planning is highly dependent on implementation in the field. In reality, program implementation still faces a number of serious challenges, especially related to limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure, and limited funding, which has a direct impact on the implementation of various programs. Some learning support facilities are still incomplete, and educators do not all have ideal qualifications and competencies. This indicates that good planning will not produce optimal results without strong implementation capabilities.

Therefore, quality planning needs to be supported by realistic and flexible implementation strategies, sufficient financial support, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Regular monitoring of the implementation of the plan is very important to identify obstacles, make improvements, and ensure that every program that has been designed really contributes to improving the quality of Islamic education in a real and measurable way (Basuki & Pranata, 2023).

### **Teacher Competency Quality Development**

The madrasah head of MIS Nidaul Insan has a fairly structured strategy in developing teacher competence. One of the main strategies is through academic supervision activities that are carried out

regularly. Supervision is carried out in the form of classroom visits, observation of the learning process, and providing feedback to teachers. In addition, the madrasah head also plays an active role in motivating and directing teachers to attend training or workshops relevant to teaching and Islamic education (Mulyasa, 2007).

This approach is in line with Robins & Judge's theory (2013) on the importance of developing human resource competencies in organizations. Teachers as the spearhead of the learning process must constantly improve their quality through professional training, coaching and mentoring. In the context of Islamic education, teacher development is also closely related to improving spirituality and religious understanding, not just pedagogical skills.

Although these strategies have been carried out systematically, this study also found that some teachers still show low discipline and lack of responsiveness to the evaluation results given by the madrasah head. Some teachers arrive late, do not prepare teaching materials, and have not shown significant improvement efforts after being evaluated. These findings suggest that developing teachers' competencies requires not only administrative strategies, but also personal approaches and a strong organizational culture (Efendi, 2020; Oktavia et al., 2021; Suryani et al., 2023).

According to Glickman's theory (1985), the effectiveness of educational supervision is largely determined by the quality of interpersonal relationships between leaders and teachers. Supervision that is only formal and administrative tends

to be less effective in encouraging changes in teaching behavior and improving teacher professionalism. Therefore, madrasah heads are required to develop a communicative, dialogic and participatory approach to supervision. This approach places teachers not as mere objects of evaluation but as partners in the process of developing the quality of education. In the context of MIS Nidaul Insan, the principal's supervision includes direct classroom observation, constructive feedback and motivation to attend professional training. However, the effectiveness of this supervision has not been fully optimized because there are still teachers who show a lack of discipline and do not follow up the evaluation results with real improvements.

For this reason, madrasah principals need to strengthen their role as inspirational leaders who are able to set an example in discipline, work ethic, and a spirit of lifelong learning. It is not enough to develop teachers' competencies through instructions or administrative assignments alone, but also through a transformative approach that raises awareness, fosters commitment, and creates a collaborative work culture in the madrasah environment.

### **Parent and Community Involvement for Quality Development**

The involvement of parents and the community at MIS Nidaul Insan is quite good. The madrasah head establishes a harmonious relationship with the surrounding community, both through social and religious activities, student guardian meetings, as well as routine activities such as

taking report cards and commemorating Islamic holidays. In these activities, the community is not only present as guests, but also as parties who contribute in the form of material, energy, and constructive suggestions.

The community engagement model implemented by the madrasah principal reflects a community-based management approach, as explained by Walker & Dimmock (2012), that community participation in education can increase accountability, transparency, and emotional attachment to educational institutions. In the Islamic tradition, community involvement in education is part of a collective responsibility (*fardhu kifayah*), where educating children is a joint task between the family, school and community.

However, although community involvement has been ongoing, not all parties can be involved optimally. There are still some parents who are passive and leave education matters entirely to the madrasah. The low level of education of some parents, their busy work schedules and lack of understanding of the importance of education are factors that inhibit active participation.

To overcome this, madrasah principals need to strengthen two-way communication that is educational in nature. Through parenting forums, socialization of madrasah programs, and open dialogue, the school can build a common understanding that the success of children's education requires synergy between schools and families. According to Epstein & McPartland(1976) , one of the important components in school development is school

partnerships with families and communities, which create a conducive and mutually supportive learning environment.

Community participation can also be encouraged through the establishment of an active and representative madrasah committee, which is not only tasked with overseeing the budget, but also designing work programs with the madrasah. This committee becomes an extension of the community in conveying aspirations, as well as strengthening the transparency and accountability of school management (Ruhayat, 2017; Suradi, 2018; Taufiqurrohman, 2010).

### **Research Implications and Contributions**

The findings in this study indicate that the strategic management of madrasah principals at MIS Nidaul Insan has been carried out in a structured and participatory manner, although there are still obstacles in implementation and limited resources. The managerial approach used by the madrasah head reflects visionary and Islamic values-based leadership practices, especially in building cooperation and communication with various parties.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the importance of participatory leadership approach in Islamic education management, as developed by Bass and Avolio (1994) in the concept of transformational leadership. This kind of leadership is able to drive change by involving all existing elements, as well as building a culture of quality in educational institutions.

In terms of contribution, this research provides a real picture of strategic management practices in rural madrasahs, which have rarely been studied in depth. The results of this study can serve as a reference for other madrasah principals, especially in remote areas, in designing quality development strategies that are appropriate to the local context. In addition, the findings can also be taken into consideration by policy makers in designing relevant and applicable madrasah leadership training.

Thus, strategic management is not only an administrative demand, but also an important instrument in realizing superior, competitive Islamic education, rooted in societal values and Islamic spirituality.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of research conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Nidaul Insan Desa Tengah, Pantai Labu Subdistrict, it can be concluded that the strategic management of the madrasah head in developing the quality of Islamic education is carried out through three main aspects, namely quality planning, developing teacher competence, and involving parents and the community. Quality planning is carried out in annual meetings involving the foundation, teachers and staff, then outlined in the ERKAM digital planning system. This strategy shows a collaborative commitment in setting the direction and priorities of madrasah development. In terms of improving teachers' competencies, the madrasah head conducts classroom supervision, provides motivation and directs teachers to attend training, although there are

still obstacles in the form of a lack of discipline from some teachers. On the other hand, the development of infrastructure and facilities has been planned and managed, but not yet fully adequate. The involvement of parents and the community shows a positive trend, as seen from their enthusiasm in madrasah activities. The implication of this study is that the success of Islamic education quality development is determined by the leadership style of the madrasah principal who is participative, communicative and quality-oriented. Madrasah principals who are able to build synergy with all parties, strengthen social relations, and maintain program continuity will be able to encourage the overall progress of madrasah. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to strengthening the strategic role of madrasah principals in presenting superior Islamic educational institutions that are responsive to the demands of the times.

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