

Strategy for Improving Education Quality Through the Managerial Function of Madrasah Principals at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasonan

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Abstract. The quality of education is the primary indicator for achieving national education goals, including within the *madrasah* environment. This article aims to analyze the managerial strategies employed by *madrasah* principals in executing managerial functions—namely planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—to enhance the quality of education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, Central Kalimantan. This research utilizes a qualitative approach, employing data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and observations. The results indicate that the *madrasah* principal performs managerial functions in a participatory manner by involving all teachers in planning, assigning tasks based on individual competencies, and implementing programs through improving curriculum comprehension, teacher competencies, and strengthened supervision. Supervision is conducted periodically, emphasizing learning evaluation and coaching-based follow-up. Furthermore, the committee and parents are engaged through partnerships grounded in trust and communication. This approach demonstrates that within the context of *madrasah*, the strength of collegial culture and institutional spirituality serve as key factors for sustainably improving education quality. This research contributes significantly to the development of Islamic education management theory by offering a novel perspective on leveraging collegial culture and institutional spirituality as drivers for sustainable enhancement of education quality. The findings also reaffirm the critical role of collaboration among stakeholders in establishing a holistic educational system.

Keywords: quality management, head of madrasah, managerial strategy, Islamic education, Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq, POAC

INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundational pillar in developing superior human resources (Kemal & Rosyidi, 2019; Sahabuddin, 2015). In realizing this goal, the quality of education plays a crucial role in determining the success of the learning process, the caliber of graduate outcomes, and the achievement of national education objectives. The quality of education is not solely measured by academic results but also encompasses the quality of processes, governance, and leadership implemented within educational institutions (Brika et al., 2021; del Pilar Arjona-Granados et al., 2022; Falch et al., 2022; Pfeffer, 2015; Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018). Therefore, education quality management must be a primary concern at every level and type of educational unit, including *Madrasah*.

The head of the *madrasah* plays a pivotal role in managing educational institutions. Within the framework of education management, the *madrasah* principal functions as a manager responsible for carrying out managerial functions such as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The head of the *madrasah* holds a strategic position in implementing these functions effectively and systematically by formulating strategies to improve education quality (Martani, 2023; Moeis, 2022; Sali & Marasigan, 2020; Sudarto, 2023; Susanto et al., 2021). If managerial functions are not executed optimally, this can directly impact a decline in the quality of educational services.

Previous research by Sallis (2002) on Total Quality Management in Education and Heifetz & Laurie (1997) regarding The Work of Leadership provide a strong theoretical foundation in education quality management and adaptive leadership. However, both studies have limitations within the context of Islamic education, particularly *Madrasah*. Sallis (2002) insufficiently addresses the spiritual and

cultural aspects of TQM implementation, while Heifetz & Laurie (1997) do not thoroughly discuss adaptive leadership within faith-based educational settings. This research fills this gap by exploring the strategies employed by *madrasah* heads in executing managerial functions (POAC) integrated with Islamic values and a participatory approach.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, one of the medium-level Islamic educational institutions under the Ministry of Religion in Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan, faces challenges in enhancing education quality such as limited facilities and infrastructure, teacher competence, and the evolving dynamics of national education policies. Nevertheless, this *madrasah* remains committed to developing student potential and improving learning quality. Under these conditions, the managerial strategy of the *madrasah* head is a crucial factor in mobilizing all school components towards better education quality.

This research aims to explore in depth how the *madrasah* head's managerial strategies affect education quality improvement at MTs Nurul Haq Kasongan. By examining program planning practices, resource organization, implementation of quality improvement activities, and the supervision and evaluation processes conducted by *madrasah* heads, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a more effective educational management model.

The novelty of this study lies in identifying value-based quality management practices within the *madrasah* context, which have not been explicitly examined in Islamic education management literature. Confronted with organizational structure limitations and resistance to change, the *madrasah* head adopts a participatory leadership approach combined with informal coaching grounded in religious teachings and values. Additionally, strengthened supervision practices and active teacher involvement—even without formally establishing a quality team—represent local adaptations of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles within *Madrasah*. This research also introduces a perspective that, in *Madrasah* with limited resources, enhancing communication, institutional spirituality, and horizontal social relations among education stakeholders can serve as essential social capital to advance education quality. Thus, the managerial approach relies not only on formal mechanisms and technical documentation but also on a shared leadership culture based on sincerity, exemplarity, and mutual cooperation. Facing structural constraints and resistance to change, *madrasah* heads choose to implement a participatory leadership model integrated with an informal, value-based coaching approach grounded in religious principles.

This study enriches the literature on Islamic education management and offers a practical leadership model for *Madrasah* with limited resources. Its purpose is to analyze strategies in improving education quality and their usefulness as references for developing value-based education policies and collaboration in the *madrasah* environment. Moreover, this research is expected to provide inspiration and practical guidance for stakeholders in education, particularly at the *madrasah* level, to cultivate proactive, collaborative, and quality-oriented managerial leadership. Hence, this study is highly relevant to strengthening the scientific discourse on leadership in *madrasah* education quality management within a distinctive local context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was conducted at the Islamic Education Institute of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, located in Galunggung, Kasongan Lama Village, Katingan Hilir District, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, which was under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In this study, a qualitative approach was used with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategy of *madrasah* heads in carrying out managerial functions to improve the quality of education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan. This approach was chosen because it allowed the researchers to explore phenomena contextually and holistically in a real setting. Data were collected through (1) in-depth interviews with *madrasah* heads, teachers, and staff about the

implementation of POAC functions; (2) participatory observation of learning activities and work meetings; and (3) study of documents such as the RKM and evaluation reports. Data analysis was carried out interactively through data reduction, presentation in the form of narratives and matrices, and verification by triangulation of sources. This technique allowed the researchers to comprehensively identify patterns of managerial strategies based on Islamic values while validating findings through cross-method and data source confirmation. This research provided a methodological framework to examine the effectiveness of educational leadership in the context of a typical *madrasah*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Strategy in Designing Superior Programs (Planning Function)

Quality of education is one of the main benchmarks in achieving national education goals. The high and low quality of an educational institution is highly dependent on the ability of its leaders to manage and design quality improvement programs on an ongoing basis. The head of the madrasah as the leader of an Islamic educational institution has a strategic role in carrying out managerial functions, one of which is the planning function.

The planning function is the initial and very decisive stage in the overall education quality management process. In the realm of madrasah education, planning is not only directed at achieving academic achievements but must also include strengthening the spiritual and moral values that characterize Islamic education. Thus, it is important to trace how the head of the madrasah compiles superior programs as part of the quality improvement strategy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, the planning function is carried out systematically and participaly. The head of the madrasah explained that program planning and annual agendas are carried out through deliberative forums and work meetings involving the entire teacher council and staff. This process results in a joint decision that reflects the real conditions and needs of the madrasah.

One of the flagship programs designed is to improve learning and teaching competencies, with a focus on strengthening learning methodologies, improving the quality of teacher-student interaction, and fostering character values based on Islamic teachings. This program is expected to produce graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have noble morals and strong religious awareness.

This planning model is in line with the participatory management approach, where all elements of educational institutions are involved in the decision-making process. Where it is emphasized that the active participation of teachers and staff in the planning process will increase the sense of collective responsibility for the success of the program.

Furthermore, the planning of madrasah heads also reflects the approach of Islamic values in management, as conveyed by Azra that Islamic education must be able to integrate knowledge, faith, and charity in the entire process of implementing education. Therefore, the quality indicators used by the head of the madrasah are not only based on academic grades, but also the spirituality and ethics of students.

The planning function carried out by the head of MTs Nurul Haq Kasongan shows that the strategy to improve the quality of education in *Madrasah* can run effectively if it is carried out collaboratively, contextually, and based on values. The involvement of teachers and staff in the planning process makes the designed program more realistic and can be implemented

with a shared commitment.

In addition, the program's orientation to improving teacher competence and student character illustrates a madrasah leadership model that not only pursues academic achievements but also upholds Islamic values. These findings provide an idea that planning is a very crucial first step in efforts to improve the quality of *Madrasah* and can be used as a model for other Islamic educational institutions.

Management of Structures and Tasks to Support the Quality of Education (Organizing Function)

The organizational function is an important stage in education management related to how human and structural resources are organized to achieve common goals. In the context of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, the head of the madrasah has developed an organizational structure that is quite systematic and includes various managerial functions within the madrasah.

Based on the results of the interview, the organizational structure at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq consists of: the Head of Madrasah (Kamad), the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Curriculum, Student Affairs, Infrastructure, and Public Relations, and supported by the Chairman of the Madrasah Committee, the Treasurer, the Administrative Staff/Operator, the Homeroom Teacher, and the Subject Teacher. This structure shows that the division of duties and functions in *Madrasah* has followed the general principles of educational organizations, namely a clear and specific division of work according to the field.

The duties and responsibilities of each personnel are determined by the head of the madrasah through a Decree (SK) on the division of duties. Assignments are carried out based on individual competencies and capacities, which reflect a capacity-based approach to organizing. The head of the madrasah considers the background of each teacher/staff in determining the workload, so that everyone can contribute optimally in their respective fields.

Although there is no special team formally formed to improve quality, the head of the madrasah involves the entire teacher council in the process of developing the quality of education. This collective involvement reflects the spirit of teamwork even though it is not structured in the form of a quality improvement team as in the Quality Control Group model in modern management.

The coordination system between divisions in madrassas is carried out through informal and formal communication between the teachers' council. The head of the madrasah explained that communication between the sections went well and was carried out flexibly. Open coordination is an important factor in maintaining the continuity of task implementation and decision-making. It reflects the practice of horizontal coordination, i.e. a cross-field work pattern without relying too much on formal bureaucracy.

In general, the organization carried out by the head of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan reflects the basic principles of effective educational organization, which emphasizes the importance of clear structure, delegation of authority, and open communication in supporting the achievement of quality education.

Strategies for Mobilizing School Components in Realizing the Quality of Education (Implementation / Actuating Function)

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The actuating function in education management includes the ability of a leader to mobilize, direct, and motivate all institutional resources to work optimally to achieve common goals. In the context of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, the head of the madrasah carries out this function with a communicative approach and encourages the active participation of all madrasah residents.

The results of the interviews showed that the head of the madrasah directly motivated teachers and staff to be actively involved in the quality improvement program. The forms of motivation provided are more psychological, such as providing encouragement, moral support, and strengthening commitment to professional responsibility. This is in line with the concept of intrinsic motivation in educational leadership, where the principal acts as an inspiration and driver of teamwork spirit (Mulyasa, 2022).

The implementation strategy of the quality program includes several concrete steps, namely:

1. Increase understanding of the curriculum, so that teachers can design relevant and contextual learning.
2. Improvement of teachers' pedagogic skills through informal training and guidance.
3. Provision of source books and lesson references to support a quality teaching and learning process.
4. Improvement of supervision activities, both in the form of academic supervision and administrative supervision.

These efforts show that madrasah heads not only give direction but also prepare facilities and opportunities for teachers to develop. In instructional leadership theory, this action is an important part of learning leadership, where the leader of the institution is responsible for improving the quality of the teaching and learning process.

In terms of coaching, the head of the madrasah emphasized the importance of scheduled and incidental supervision of the implementation of teacher duties and student development. Supervision is carried out not only for assessment, but also as a form of assistance. This approach reflects the practice of formative supervision, which is supervision that is fostering and developing, not just assessing (Sergiovanni, 2017).

In addition, the involvement of school committees and parents in supporting the quality of education is also a concern. The head of the madrasah explained that the relationship between the madrasah and the committee and the student's guardians was built on the basis of good cooperation and communication. The committee and parents support various programs through participation in meetings, contribution of ideas, and material support. This is in accordance with the principles of school-based management (MBS), which encourages community involvement in the management of educational units (Permendikbudristek Number 47 of 2023, 2023)

Overall, the implementation of the quality improvement program at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq shows that the head of the madrasah has played the role of an active, collaborative, and responsive learning leader to the needs of the school. The implementation of this actuating function is an important key in bridging planning and achieving desired results.

Evaluation and Follow-up in Ensuring the Quality of Education (Supervisory/Controlling Function)

The function of control is an important aspect of education management which aims to

ensure that all programs run in accordance with the plan and objectives that have been set. At Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan, the head of the madrasah carries out this function with a simple but continuous improvement-oriented approach.

In the evaluation process of the implementation of the quality improvement program, the head of the madrasah uses various assessment instruments which include daily tests, observation assessments, assignment assessments, Mid-Semester Assessments (PTS), Final Semester Assessments (PAS), try outs, and final school exams. This evaluation serves as a benchmark for student learning outcomes and as a basis for designing improvements in the next learning period.

Supervision activities for teachers are carried out twice in one semester. The focus of supervision includes an examination of learning tools (such as lesson plans, syllabus, and teaching materials), as well as direct observation of the delivery of materials and teaching methods. The head of the madrasah seeks to assess the extent to which the teacher has carried out the learning process effectively and according to standards.

Although carried out simply, this supervision practice shows the fulfillment of the basic principles of academic supervision, namely the supervision process that aims to help teachers improve their professional competence. This supervision is not just administrative control, but also a form of mentoring and coaching.

However, in practice, there is no periodic report or formal documentation system regarding quality achievements. The head of the madrasah only makes a brief note as an internal evaluation material. This condition shows that even though supervision is running, the reporting and quality tracking system is not fully structured. In fact, in the education quality management system, the existence of achievement reports and development data is very important for data-driven decision making.

However, this limitation can be understood considering the condition of resources and the administrative structure of *Madrasah* that are still developing. In the future, it is necessary to strengthen the aspect of documenting evaluation results so that supervision is not only personal but can also be the basis for policies and advanced planning.

Supporting Factors and Obstacles to Managerial Strategy in Improving the Quality of Education

The success of the implementation of the managerial strategy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Haq Kasongan to improve the quality of education is inseparable from the existence of supporting factors that strengthen and hinder the challenges in the implementation process. The results of the interviews show that the head of the madrasah views the success of the managerial strategy as highly determined by the ability to manage resources effectively, both human resources, facilities, and social relations with external parties.

The main supporting factor for the success of the managerial strategy of madrasah heads is the existence of planning that is based on real needs and carried out collaboratively. The head of the madrasah is able to direct and manage the teacher council through a persuasive approach, deliberation, and motivation. In addition, the joint commitment of the teacher council and good cooperation with the school committee and the parents of students are strengths in supporting various quality improvement programs. On the other hand, the approach of madrasah heads that is open, communicative, and oriented towards strengthening Islamic values also

strengthens the aspect of cultural leadership that is very important in the context of *Madrasah*. According to Bush & Glover, managers who are responsive to the socio-cultural context of educational institutions will be better able to build a harmonious and productive work climate. However, in the process of implementing managerial strategies, *Madrasah* faces several significant obstacles, including:

1. Resistance to change, both from some teachers and other parties who do not fully understand the urgency of innovation in education.
2. Limited understanding of quality management among some teachers/staff, which has an impact on the lack of active participation in some activities.
3. Limited facilities and infrastructure, including learning facilities and completeness of supervision administration, which affect the effectiveness of program implementation.

This situation reflects that in a thriving educational environment, the biggest challenges are not only technical, but also cultural and structural. This is in line with Fullan's opinion which emphasizes that educational changes often experience obstacles at the implementation stage due to resistance and limited implementation capacity.

To overcome these obstacles, the head of the madrasah seeks to clearly identify the root of the problem that hinders the implementation of the strategy. This process is carried out through internal reflection and open dialogue with teachers and staff. By objectively identifying obstacles, madrasah heads can develop more appropriate improvement steps, such as improving teachers' understanding through informal coaching, and wider involvement in program planning to grow a sense of ownership. This effort reflects an adaptive management approach, which is the ability of leaders to adjust strategies based on internal dynamics of the institution. This kind of leadership model is considered effective in dealing with the challenges of educational organizations that are complex and changing.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the improvement of education quality at MTs Nurul Haq Kasongan was significantly influenced by the effective implementation of managerial functions (POAC) by the *madrasah* head. Strategies grounded in Islamic values, participatory approaches, and adaptation to limited resources effectively fostered a quality educational environment despite infrastructural constraints. Key findings highlight the critical integration of modern management principles with spiritual values in Islamic education, alongside the vital role of stakeholder collaboration in supporting success. For future development, it is suggested that *madrasahs* strengthen data-based documentation and evaluation systems and establish quality development teams; researchers conduct multi-site or quantitative studies to test the generalizability of these findings; and the government provide integrative leadership training and targeted funding for *madrasahs*. Implementing these recommendations is expected to cultivate a *madrasah* education ecosystem that excels both spiritually and academically.

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