



## Exploring Madrasah Principal Leadership Management in Enhancing Teacher Performance

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### ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the leadership management of a madrasah principal in improving teacher performance. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method was employed. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the madrasah principal and teachers as research participants. The data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that the principal's leadership management is implemented through four main managerial functions: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Supporting factors include effective collaboration among school members and strong teacher commitment, whereas inhibiting factors consist of low discipline among some teachers, limited facilities and infrastructure, and insufficient motivation for professional self-development. To address these challenges, the principal applies several strategies, such as strengthening communication, conducting academic supervision and guidance, providing motivation, and involving teachers in decision-making processes. This study implies that effective leadership management plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance and can serve as a reference for improving leadership practices in madrasah education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the quality of human resources and in determining the progress of society (Dewi & Manshur, 2026; Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Holidi, 2025; Khofsah & Rozi, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, madrasahs are not only institutions for knowledge transmission but also centers for character building and moral development. The success of madrasah education is closely related to the effectiveness of leadership management implemented by the madrasah principal. Strong leadership is

required to ensure that educational goals are achieved through well-organized learning processes and professional teacher performance (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). Various studies indicate that ineffective leadership contributes to low teacher productivity and unsatisfactory educational outcomes. Therefore, leadership management in madrasahs becomes a crucial issue that directly affects the quality of education and societal development (Ataman & Safitri, 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Khotimah & FahmiSuhermanto, 2024; Safitri, 2024). This condition highlights the importance of examining how madrasah principals manage, guide, and motivate teachers. Understanding leadership management practices is essential to provide solutions for improving teacher performance and strengthening the role of madrasahs in responding to the growing demands of society for quality education.

Despite the strategic role of madrasahs in society, many educational institutions still face persistent managerial and leadership problems (Badriyah, 2025; Rahmat et al., 2023; Saleha & Sholihah, 2024; Suroiyah & Wahyudi, 2023). One of the main challenges is the limited capacity of madrasah principals to implement effective leadership and management functions. Weak planning, poor coordination, ineffective supervision, and lack of systematic guidance often result in suboptimal teacher performance. In many cases, teachers experience difficulties in maintaining discipline, improving instructional quality, and developing professionally. These problems are exacerbated by limited facilities, inadequate training opportunities, and insufficient motivation provided by school leaders. As a result, educational performance in madrasahs has not fully met expected standards. This general problem reflects the need for strong leadership management to address systemic weaknesses within educational institutions. Without effective leadership, efforts to improve teacher performance and educational quality will remain fragmented and unsustainable, making leadership management a critical issue that requires serious academic investigation.

Empirical observations in various madrasahs reveal that leadership management practices are not always implemented optimally. In practice, some madrasah principals tend to focus more on administrative tasks than on instructional leadership and teacher development. This situation leads to limited academic supervision, minimal professional guidance, and weak motivation among teachers. Field data also show that poor work discipline, lack of innovation in teaching methods, and low enthusiasm for self-development remain common issues. Teachers often perform their duties routinely without sufficient reflection or improvement. These phenomena indicate a gap between the expected role of madrasah principals as educational leaders and the actual

practices in the field. According to Hadidah (2023), madrasah principals are expected to direct, guide, and motivate teachers to perform their professional duties optimally (Khoiroh, 2025; Putri et al., 2024; Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025). However, these expectations are not always realized, highlighting the urgency of examining leadership management practices to understand their effectiveness in improving teacher performance.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of leadership management in improving educational performance. Adelia et al. (2021) state that madrasah leadership management involves the implementation of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising functions in all educational activities. These managerial functions serve as the foundation for improving both instructional and administrative performance. Similarly, Siregar and Lubis (2022) argue that effective leadership management significantly influences teacher discipline, motivation, and professional competence. Although these studies provide valuable insights, most of them focus on general leadership roles without exploring how leadership management is practically implemented in specific madrasah contexts. Moreover, existing research often emphasizes outcomes rather than processes, leaving limited understanding of how leadership strategies are applied to overcome real challenges faced by teachers. This limitation indicates a need for in-depth qualitative studies that examine leadership management practices more comprehensively.

Further analysis of existing literature reveals that many studies adopt quantitative approaches to measure the relationship between leadership and teacher performance. While these studies offer statistical evidence, they often fail to capture the complexity of leadership management processes in madrasahs. Kurniawati (2019) highlights that leadership in Islamic educational institutions requires contextual understanding, considering cultural, organizational, and religious dimensions. However, few studies explore how madrasah principals integrate managerial functions with daily leadership practices to guide teachers effectively. Additionally, limited attention has been given to identifying supporting and inhibiting factors that influence leadership effectiveness. This research addresses these gaps by employing a qualitative approach to explore leadership management practices in depth. By focusing on planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising functions, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of how leadership management influences teacher performance in madrasahs.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of leadership management practices from a qualitative perspective, emphasizing managerial functions and contextual challenges in madrasahs. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine leadership outcomes, this research focuses on the

processes and strategies implemented by madrasah principals to improve teacher performance. It also identifies supporting and inhibiting factors that influence leadership effectiveness, providing practical insights for educational leaders. By integrating leadership theory with empirical findings, this study offers a state-of-the-art contribution to the field of Islamic educational leadership. The findings are expected to enrich existing literature by presenting a contextualized model of leadership management that can be applied in similar educational settings. Addressing leadership challenges at the managerial level is essential for improving teacher performance and ensuring sustainable educational quality in madrasahs.

Based on the issues and gaps identified, this study seeks to answer the research problem: how is leadership management implemented by madrasah principals in improving teacher performance, and what factors support or hinder its effectiveness? The main argument of this study is that effective leadership management, characterized by systematic planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising, significantly contributes to improving teacher performance. By strengthening communication, providing academic guidance, motivating teachers, and involving them in decision-making processes, madrasah principals can enhance professional commitment and instructional quality. This research contributes theoretically by expanding the discourse on leadership management in Islamic education and practically by offering recommendations for improving leadership practices in madrasahs. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, educational leaders, and future researchers concerned with enhancing teacher performance through effective leadership management.

## **RESEACH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive case study approach. Qualitative research was selected because it allows an in-depth understanding of social phenomena based on real conditions occurring in the field (Niam et al., 2024; Nurfajriani et al., 2024). The case study design was chosen to explore comprehensively the leadership management practices of a madrasah principal in improving teacher performance within a specific institutional context. This approach enables the researcher to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the leadership strategies, policies, and efforts implemented by the madrasah principal. By focusing on a single case, this study provides a detailed and contextualized analysis of leadership management processes, which are difficult to capture through quantitative methods. The descriptive nature of the study supports the objective of portraying leadership practices as they naturally occur, without manipulation of variables.

The research was conducted at a madrasah selected purposively based on several considerations. First, the madrasah is an Islamic educational institution that emphasizes improving educational quality through strengthening the leadership role of the madrasah principal. Second, the institution demonstrates leadership characteristics that align with the scientific focus of this study, particularly in the implementation of managerial and leadership functions. The selected madrasah also provides accessibility to relevant data and informants who possess sufficient knowledge of leadership practices and teacher performance. These considerations ensure that the research site is appropriate for obtaining rich and meaningful data related to leadership management in madrasah education.

Data were collected using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by directly observing the leadership activities of the madrasah principal, interactions between the principal and teachers, and the implementation of teaching and learning activities. In-depth interviews were carried out with the madrasah principal as the key informant and teachers as primary informants. The selection of informants was purposive, based on their direct involvement and understanding of leadership practices and teacher performance. Documentation was used to support observational and interview data, including official madrasah documents such as work programs, organizational structures, activity schedules, learning tools, and other relevant records.

Data analysis was conducted continuously from the beginning of data collection until the completion of the study. The analysis followed three stages: data condensation (data reduction), data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data obtained from the field. Data display was presented in the form of systematic narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding. Conclusion drawing was carried out by interpreting the displayed data to obtain clear findings related to leadership management practices. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques by comparing data from different sources and data collection methods, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Madrasah Principal Leadership Management in Improving Teacher Performance

The findings indicate that madrasah principals implement leadership management by applying core management functions, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. These functions serve as the fundamental basis for improving teacher performance in a structured and sustainable manner. In the planning stage, the madrasah principal formulates work programs that are directly related to enhancing learning quality and teacher professionalism. This planning process includes designing academic programs, preparing instructional schedules, and arranging academic development activities (Simanjuntak & Prasetia, 2024).

The planning process is not merely formalistic but is developed based on the actual conditions of the madrasah and the results of teacher performance evaluations. The principal considers teacher readiness in developing instructional tools, maintaining work discipline, and conducting classroom learning. Well-prepared planning provides clear direction for leadership actions and teacher development. This finding aligns with educational management theory, which emphasizes planning as a fundamental foundation for organizational activities.

At the organizing stage, the madrasah principal distributes tasks proportionally according to teachers' educational backgrounds, competencies, and professional experiences. These assignments include main teaching responsibilities as well as additional roles such as homeroom teachers, supervisors of religious activities, and committee members for madrasah programs. Proper task allocation fosters responsibility, professionalism, and accountability among teachers, thereby supporting improved performance.

In addition to task distribution, the principal strengthens cooperation and maintains intensive communication with teachers. Open communication facilitates the delivery of information, guidance, and evaluation related to instructional practices. A harmonious working relationship creates a conducive work environment and encourages teachers to actively improve their performance.

The implementation of leadership management is further realized through continuous coaching, academic supervision, and motivation. The madrasah principal routinely provides guidance related to teaching implementation, discipline, and professional responsibilities. Coaching is conducted through formal meetings as well as personal approaches for teachers facing difficulties. This demonstrates that the principal functions not only as a supervisor but also as a mentor who supports teacher development (Hasanah et

al., 2024; Jannah & Rizquha, 2025; Maisuroh & Jamil, 2024).

Academic supervision is carried out through classroom observations, examination of instructional documents, and constructive feedback. The results of supervision are used as evaluation materials to improve teaching quality and professional competence. Continuous supervision helps teachers identify areas for improvement and encourages professional growth (Manajemen & Pendidikan, 2018). Monitoring of teacher performance is conducted systematically by observing attendance, discipline, instructional quality, and administrative responsibilities to ensure that educational objectives are achieved optimally.

### **Supporting Factors in Improving Teacher Performance**

The findings reveal several supporting factors that contribute to improved teacher performance. One key factor is the existence of a positive working relationship between the madrasah principal and teachers, characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and trust. This condition creates a positive work climate and encourages responsible professional behavior.

Teacher commitment and a strong sense of responsibility also play a significant role. Teachers demonstrate seriousness in preparing and implementing learning activities and in following directions set by the madrasah principal. In addition, collaboration among teachers in implementing madrasah programs strengthens solidarity and facilitates the achievement of institutional goals.

### **Inhibiting Factors in Improving Teacher Performance**

Despite the supporting factors, this study also identifies several obstacles to improving teacher performance. One major inhibiting factor is the lack of discipline among some teachers, particularly in terms of punctuality and attendance. This condition presents a challenge for madrasah principals in fostering a professional work culture.

Another significant obstacle is the limited availability of educational facilities and infrastructure (Aisyah & Trianingsih, 2023; S et al., 2023; Widad & Munif, 2025). Inadequate learning resources hinder teachers from implementing instructional methods optimally. Additionally, the limited time available for principals to conduct intensive supervision due to extensive administrative responsibilities reduces the effectiveness of continuous teacher guidance.

### **Strategies and Solutions Implemented by the Madrasah Principal**

To overcome these challenges, madrasah principals implement various adaptive strategies. Strengthening communication and coordination is

prioritized to discuss instructional challenges and identify appropriate solutions. Through intensive communication, principals gain a deeper understanding of teacher needs and challenges.

Sustainable coaching and supervision are also carried out to enhance teaching performance. Principals provide motivation and set examples of discipline to encourage professional behavior. Involving teachers in planning and decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and increases participation in achieving the madrasah's vision and mission.

Leadership motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging teacher performance improvement. Principals provide moral support through appreciation, recognition, and constructive feedback, which fosters enthusiasm and commitment. Consistent motivation encourages teachers to enhance responsibility and professionalism.

Academic leadership activities conducted by madrasah principals positively impact instructional quality. Through supervision, principals directly observe classroom practices and provide balanced feedback. Teachers become more aware of their instructional weaknesses and are encouraged to make improvements. Continuous guidance helps teachers enhance teaching skills and readiness in designing learning tools.

Although limitations in infrastructure remain a challenge, madrasah principals strive to optimize existing facilities and encourage creative instructional approaches. Issues related to teacher discipline are addressed through proactive leadership and exemplary behavior, emphasizing awareness rather than pressure.

Overall, the findings indicate that effective madrasah leadership management plays a vital role in improving teacher performance. Communicative, participatory, and exemplary leadership creates a conducive work climate that encourages continuous professional improvement and sustainable educational quality.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that effective leadership management of madrasah principals plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance through the systematic implementation of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising functions. The key insight of this research is that leadership effectiveness is not merely determined by formal authority but by the principal's active involvement in continuous coaching, academic supervision, and performance monitoring. Supportive relationships, strong teacher commitment, and open communication emerge as essential elements in creating a conducive work climate that encourages professional growth. These findings highlight the

importance of participatory, communicative, and exemplary leadership as a practical foundation for sustainable improvement in teacher performance within madrasah institutions.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the field of educational leadership by providing a contextualized qualitative analysis of leadership management practices in Islamic educational institutions. It enriches existing literature by emphasizing leadership processes rather than outcomes and by identifying both supporting and inhibiting factors that influence teacher performance. However, this research is limited to a single madrasah, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are recommended to involve multiple madrasahs, apply comparative or mixed-method approaches, and examine the long-term impact of leadership management on teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

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