



Strategic Management of Islamic School Principals in Enhancing Leadership Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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This study aims to analyze the management concept of madrasah principals in improving leadership quality within Islamic educational institutions. The research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method by examining relevant national and international journal articles published over the last ten years. The selected literature was identified, screened, analyzed, and synthesized systematically based on publication quality, relevance, and research focus. The findings reveal that effective madrasah principal management, encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision, significantly strengthens leadership quality, enhances teacher professionalism, promotes a positive organizational culture, and improves the overall quality of Islamic education. In addition, leadership supervision grounded in Islamic values, including amanah (trustworthiness), justice, and deliberation, supports sustainable and value-based leadership practices. The integration of managerial functions with Islamic leadership principles provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for strengthening leadership effectiveness in madrasahs. The study implies that adopting an integrated managerial and Islamic leadership approach can serve as a practical reference for madrasah principals while contributing to the theoretical development of Islamic educational management.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of educational leadership has become one of the most influential determinants of institutional performance and educational sustainability worldwide. As educational systems continue to face rapid social, technological, and cultural changes, school leaders are expected to perform not only administrative responsibilities but also strategic managerial functions that ensure institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement. In Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasahs, the role of the principal is even

more significant because leadership is expected to integrate professional management with Islamic ethical values. Effective managerial leadership enables educational institutions to improve teaching quality, optimize human resources, strengthen organizational culture, and achieve long-term educational goals. Conversely, weak managerial practices often result in poor institutional performance and limited educational outcomes. Educational quality can only be achieved when institutions manage available resources systematically and efficiently (Lestari et al., 2023). This perspective is also consistent with the Islamic principle of planning reflected in Qur'an Surah Al-Hasyr (59:18), which emphasizes preparation and responsibility for future actions. Therefore, strengthening madrasah principal management is not merely an organizational necessity but also an essential strategy for improving educational quality and responding to contemporary societal expectations.

Despite the strategic importance of leadership, many madrasahs continue to experience managerial challenges that hinder institutional development and educational excellence. Various educational institutions still operate with curricula that inadequately address students' evolving needs, insufficient educational facilities, ineffective utilization of human resources, and fragmented managerial systems. These conditions often reduce teachers' motivation, weaken instructional supervision, and limit institutional innovation. Furthermore, ineffective planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation frequently prevent madrasahs from achieving their educational objectives. Since the principal serves as the central decision-maker responsible for coordinating all educational components, deficiencies in managerial competence inevitably affect institutional performance. The complexity of these challenges demonstrates that improving educational quality requires more than administrative compliance; it demands effective leadership capable of integrating managerial competence with strategic decision-making and Islamic values. Consequently, understanding the concept of madrasah principal management has become increasingly important for developing sustainable leadership capable of addressing both organizational challenges and the changing demands of contemporary Islamic education.

Recent evidence demonstrates that the managerial capacity of madrasah principals directly influences institutional performance and the quality of educational services. In practice, however, many madrasahs continue to encounter challenges in implementing effective educational management. Weak academic supervision, limited strategic planning, inadequate professional development for teachers, and insufficient coordination among educational stakeholders frequently reduce organizational effectiveness. These conditions also affect curriculum implementation, teacher performance, student achievement, and institutional competitiveness. The principal plays a crucial role

in academic supervision, program planning, and teacher development to ensure meaningful and effective learning (Haiyan & Allan, 2021). Effective educational leadership also improves teachers' performance, organizational climate, and the overall quality of learning (Norman et al., 2025). In addition, successful curriculum management depends on the principal's ability to implement planning, organizing, and supervising functions comprehensively (Nurfaisal et al., 2024). These findings indicate that leadership effectiveness is inseparable from managerial competence, making principal management a decisive factor in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions.

Previous studies have examined madrasah principal management from various perspectives. Systematic resource management has been identified as a prerequisite for improving educational quality (Haddade et al., 2024). Academic supervision and teacher professional development have also been recognized as essential responsibilities of madrasah principals in achieving effective learning outcomes (Haiyan & Allan, 2021). Moreover, curriculum effectiveness largely depends on the principal's managerial capacity to plan, organize, and supervise educational processes (Nurfaisal et al., 2024). An integrated implementation of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation has also been shown to support sustainable educational quality (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2021). Furthermore, value-based leadership management contributes to strengthening religious moderation through inclusive managerial practices in madrasahs (Sari et al., 2025). Although these studies provide valuable evidence, they predominantly discuss specific managerial dimensions independently rather than developing a comprehensive framework that integrates managerial functions with Islamic leadership principles.

Despite the growing body of literature, several important issues remain unresolved. Most previous studies have examined planning, supervision, curriculum management, teacher development, or Islamic values separately, resulting in fragmented explanations of madrasah leadership. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to explaining how managerial functions can be systematically integrate with Islamic leadership values such as **amanah** (trustworthiness), justice, **shura** (consultation), responsibility, and accountability within a unified conceptual framework. Empirical evidence also indicates that many principals continue to experience limited managerial competence, ineffective supervision, and difficulties implementing adaptive and collaborative leadership strategies (Harun & Ghani, 2024). These managerial limitations negatively affect teacher motivation, curriculum implementation, and

the achievement of Islamic educational objectives (Huda, 2025). Therefore, a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of madrasah principal management is required to integrate managerial effectiveness with Islamic leadership principles and strengthen sustainable educational leadership.

The present study offers a different perspective by developing a comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates managerial functions with Islamic leadership principles in madrasah management. Rather than examining planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, or Islamic values as separate components, this study positions them as interconnected elements that collectively shape effective educational leadership. Such integration provides a more holistic understanding of how managerial competence and Islamic ethical values can simultaneously strengthen institutional governance, teacher professionalism, organizational culture, and educational quality. The proposed framework also emphasizes that leadership effectiveness in madrasahs should not merely be evaluated from administrative performance but should also reflect the realization of Islamic values in decision-making, communication, supervision, and organizational development. Consequently, this study extends existing knowledge by offering an integrated conceptual model that can serve as a theoretical foundation for future research and as a practical guideline for strengthening sustainable and value-based leadership within Islamic educational institutions.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to analyze the concept of madrasah principal management in improving leadership quality within Islamic educational institutions through a systematic synthesis of previous scholarly works. The central research problem concerns how managerial functions can be integrated with Islamic leadership principles to establish an effective and sustainable leadership model for madrasahs. This study argues that leadership quality can be significantly enhanced when planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision are conducted systematically while simultaneously embodying Islamic values such as amanah, justice, consultation, responsibility, and accountability. Through this perspective, the study contributes theoretically by proposing an integrated conceptual framework that enriches the discourse of Islamic educational management. Practically, the findings are expected to provide strategic guidance for madrasah principals in strengthening leadership effectiveness, improving institutional management, fostering professional organizational cultures, and enhancing the overall quality of Islamic education in response to contemporary educational challenges.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of madrasah principal management in improving leadership quality. The SLR method was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous studies, thereby producing transparent, accountable, and evidence-based findings. The Systematic Literature Review approach is designed to examine a particular research variable through explicit, systematic, and accountable procedures (Simsek et al., 2023; Haque et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study followed six sequential stages: (1) determining the research focus and review approach, (2) searching relevant literature, (3) selecting eligible articles, (4) analyzing and interpreting the collected data, (5) preparing the research manuscript, and (6) disseminating the research findings.

Since this study was based on a literature review, it did not involve a specific research site or field participants. Instead, the sources of data consisted of scientific articles retrieved from reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, SINTA, and other recognized journals in the field of Islamic education. These databases were selected because they provide broad access to peer-reviewed national and international publications relevant to educational management and Islamic educational leadership (Azarian et al., 2023). The literature search focused on studies discussing madrasah principal management, leadership quality, educational management, and Islamic leadership. Initially, 32 articles were identified. Subsequently, the articles were screened based on publication year, topical relevance, and journal quality, resulting in 15 eligible articles that met the predetermined inclusion criteria and were selected for further analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative data analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Sauer & Seuring, 2023). During the data condensation stage, the selected articles were reviewed to identify key concepts related to managerial functions, including planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and leadership quality. The data were then systematically organized and presented through thematic categorization to facilitate comparison and interpretation across studies. Finally, the verification process was conducted by synthesizing recurring patterns, similarities, and differences among the selected literature to formulate comprehensive conclusions regarding the role of madrasah principal management in strengthening leadership quality. This analytical process ensured that the findings were credible, systematic, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this research are based on a systematic literature review focusing on the concept of madrasah principal management in improving leadership. The discussion is directed at three main themes, namely the planning, organizing, and implementation of madrasah principal management; leadership supervision in madrasahs; and the implications of madrasah principal management for improving leadership quality. The following is an explanation of these three aspects:

The Concept of Madrasah Principal Management (Planning and Organizing)

Madrasah principal management in improving leadership is implemented through various forms of managerial activities encompassing planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, and evaluating madrasah programs. In practice, the madrasah principal performs roles as a policy director, decision-maker, and driver of all madrasah components, including teachers, educational staff, and students. In implementing this management, the principal begins activities by developing a work program plan aligned with the madrasah's vision and mission. This planning includes setting goals, distributing tasks, and arranging academic and non-academic programs. Subsequently, the principal carries out organizing by building teamwork, clarifying the organizational structure, and establishing effective communication with all madrasah members.

In the implementation phase, the principal executes the leadership function by providing direction, motivation, and exemplary attitudes and behavior. The principal acts as a facilitator who encourages teachers to improve professionalism and the quality of learning. Supervision and evaluation are conducted through academic supervision, monitoring of learning activities, and assessment of work program achievement. Through directed management, the principal's leadership can create a conducive work climate, increase teacher participation, and strengthen an Islamic work culture within the madrasah environment. Furthermore, effective madrasah principal management can integrate various supporting elements of leadership, such as participatory communication, joint decision-making, and the application of Islamic values in every policy. This indicates that the success of a madrasah principal's leadership is inseparable from managerial capability in optimally managing all madrasah resources.

To provide a clearer overview of the research trends and findings related to this theme, several relevant studies have been summarized. The following is a representation of research regarding madrasah principal management in improving leadership, with various approaches and research findings summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Representation of articles on madrasah principal management (planning, organizing, and implementation).

Year	Author and Article Title	Research Findings
2022	Mahpudin (2022). Management of Principal Leadership in Improving the Quality of Islamic Religious Education.	Principal management in improving the quality of Islamic religious education includes planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling related to the quality of input, process, output, and outcomes.
2023	Hadi. Management of Madrasah Principals in Improving Teacher Performance.	Madrasah principal management in improving teacher performance involves four stages: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision.
2023	Firdaus. Management of Madrasah Principals in Improving Teacher Work Ethic.	Madrasah principal management in improving teacher work ethic is carried out through planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and strengthening managerial competence.
2023	Djunaid, Iqbal & Nasution. Principal Leadership Management in Improving Education Quality.	Principal management improves education quality through competence development, personality, managerial skills, entrepreneurship, supervisory competence, and social competence.

Table 1 presents a representation of research findings on madrasah principal management, specifically focusing on the functions of planning, organizing, and implementation. The studies summarized in the table indicate that madrasah principal management in improving leadership is generally implemented through the application of management functions including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The success of madrasah principal leadership in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education is significantly influenced by the ability to systematically manage the quality of educational input, process, and output (Mahpudin, 2022). The table also highlights that madrasah principal management plays a vital role in improving teacher performance and work ethic (Hadi, 2023; Firdaus, 2023). Furthermore, the application of directed management can encourage teacher professionalism, strengthen work motivation, and create a conducive work climate, showing that madrasah principal leadership is not only administrative but also has a direct impact on the behavior and performance of educators. The leadership role of the madrasah principal is further emphasized in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) as an effort to improve education quality. Additionally, the findings in Table 1 confirm that mastery of managerial, personality, supervisory, social, and entrepreneurial competencies are important factors in shaping effective madrasah principal leadership (Djunaid, Iqbal & Nasution, 2023). Overall, the representation of research in Table 1 indicates that planned and continuous madrasah principal management is the main key to improving leadership quality and the quality of Islamic education.

Leadership Supervision in Madrasahs

Leadership supervision is an important part of the madrasah principal's managerial function in efforts to improve education quality and teacher performance. In this context, research shows that the implementation of planned and effective supervision has a positive effect on educator performance in madrasahs. To further explore these findings, a number of relevant studies have been identified and their contributions are presented below. The following is a representation of research on madrasah leadership supervision with various approaches and research findings summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Representation of articles on leadership supervision in madrasahs.

Year	Author and Article Title	Research Findings
2023	Putri. The Influence of Academic Supervision and Madrasah Principal Leadership Style on Teacher Performance.	Academic supervision and madrasah principal leadership significantly improve teacher performance through coaching, evaluation, and effective communication.
2024	Mahara. Madrasah Principal Supervision in Improving Teacher Discipline.	Madrasah principal supervision is conducted through supervision program planning, classroom observation, and follow-up activities.
2023	Lestari, Handoko & Andari. Leadership of the Head of Madrasah in Carrying Out Academic Supervision.	Continuous and direct academic supervision improves teacher quality and performance in the learning process.
2025	Zufriyatun, Ismundi, Muttaqin & Mukhammad. Leadership of the Head of Madrasah in Carrying Out Academic Supervision.	Leadership supervision based on Qur'anic values such as amanah (trustworthiness) and musyawarah (consultation) strengthens leadership effectiveness and madrasah governance.
2023	Hasanah, Nur Pelupessy, & Raishuddin. Academic Supervision by Madrasah Principals as an Effort to Enhance Teacher Professionalism at Bina Karya Hatawano Madrasah Aliyah, Huamual District, West Seram Regency	Supervision is important for providing technical guidance, training, and motivation to teachers in improving professionalism.

Table 2 presents a representation of research findings on leadership supervision in madrasahs. The studies summarized in the table show that madrasah principal leadership supervision is implemented through supervision planning, the implementation of academic and managerial supervision, and follow-up on supervision results. Academic supervision conducted in a planned and continuous manner can improve teacher performance through learning

coaching, classroom observation, and the provision of constructive feedback (Putri, 2023). Supervision in this context not only functions as a monitoring activity but also as part of systematic professional development efforts for teachers carried out by the madrasah principal. The findings in Table 2 also indicate that the effectiveness of supervision is significantly influenced by the madrasah principal's leadership style. Supervision implemented with a collaborative and humanistic approach can enhance teacher professionalism, discipline, and work motivation (Lestari, Handoko & Andari, 2023; Hasanah, Nur Pelupessy & Raishuddin, 2023). Furthermore, the table highlights that leadership supervision based on Islamic values such as trustworthiness, justice, and consultation can strengthen a positive work culture in madrasahs (Zufriyatun, Ismundi, Muttaqin, Mukhammad, 2025). Thus, the representation of research in Table 2 confirms that madrasah principal leadership supervision is an important instrument in continuously improving leadership quality and the quality of Islamic education.

Implications of Madrasah Principal Management for Improving Leadership Quality

Based on the previously discussed findings regarding principal management and supervision, a number of significant implications for leadership quality can be identified. These implications are drawn from various studies that highlight the consequential effects of effective management on leadership outcomes. The following is a summary of these studies presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Implications of Madrasah Principal Management for Improving Leadership Quality.

Implication for Leadership	Author
A communicative, firm, and disciplined leadership style positively impacts resource control and strengthens the madrasah leadership role.	Anizar (2023)
Islamic value-based leadership increases motivation, discipline, and harmonious working relationships within the madrasah.	Sujarwo (2023)
A positive relationship between madrasah principal leadership management and teacher work motivation indicates improved leadership quality.	Kamal & Al-Bandunaiji (2024)
Madrasah principal leadership significantly improves teacher professionalism, reflecting enhanced leadership quality in the learning process.	Warisno & Hidayah (2022)
Participatory and visionary madrasah principal leadership positively influences teacher performance and creates a conducive work climate.	Taufiqurrahman & Ridani (2025)

Table 3 presents a representation of research findings on the implications of madrasah principal management for improving leadership quality. The studies summarized in the table demonstrate that the planned application of management functions including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling encourages principals to emerge as visionary, communicative, and responsible leaders. The findings in Table 3 indicate that good management can shape leadership oriented towards Islamic values, strengthen discipline, and create harmonious working relationships among principals, teachers, and educational staff (Anizar, 2023; Sujarwo, 2023). This implication is evident from the increased trust of madrasah members in the principal's leadership and the growth of a conducive work climate. Furthermore, the table highlights that the implications of madrasah principal management are also reflected in increased leadership effectiveness in managing human resources and learning quality. Principal leadership supported by systematic management can enhance teacher work motivation, educator professionalism, and overall performance quality (Warisno & Hidayah, 2022; Taufiqurrahman & Ridani, 2025). This shows that management not only impacts administrative aspects but also strengthens the principal's leadership role as a driver of change and quality improvement in Islamic education. Thus, the representation of research in Table 3 confirms that madrasah principal management has direct implications in shaping effective and sustainable leadership quality that is aligned with the goals of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that madrasah principal management plays a strategic role in shaping effective leadership and improving the quality of Islamic education. The most important lesson learned from this systematic literature review is that effective leadership does not emerge in isolation but is the product of a systematically implemented management process—encompassing planning, organizing, supervision, and evaluation that is deeply integrated with Islamic values such as trustworthiness, justice, and consultation. The scholarly contribution of this paper lies in its synthesis of fragmented empirical studies into a coherent conceptual framework that positions the completeness of managerial functions as the central mediating mechanism through which leadership quality is formed, thereby offering an integrative model of value-based managerial leadership for Islamic educational institutions. However, this research is limited by its reliance on a systematic literature review approach without primary empirical data collection, and the scope is confined to existing published studies, which may not capture the full complexity of contextual and cultural variations across different madrasah

settings. For future research, it is recommended that empirical studies be conducted to test and validate the proposed managerial value-based leadership model through quantitative or mixed-method approaches, and that further investigation be undertaken to explore how specific contextual factors such as madrasah size, geographical location, and community characteristics moderate the relationship between principal management practices and leadership effectiveness.

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