



Dynamics of Madrasah Principals' Managerial Practices in Managing Educational Personnel

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to explore the dynamics of madrasah principals' managerial practices in managing educational personnel. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to capture managerial processes, leadership interactions, and personnel management practices in natural settings. The findings reveal that principals enact managerial practices dynamically through adaptive planning, flexible organization and coordination, context-sensitive supervision, and inclusive decision-making. These practices enable principals to respond effectively to organizational challenges, align personnel management with institutional goals, and foster a collaborative and supportive work environment. The study highlights that managerial effectiveness in madrasahs is not determined solely by technical competence, but by the ability to adapt leadership practices to contextual and human resource conditions. The implications of this study suggest that leadership development programs for madrasah principals should emphasize dynamic managerial capabilities, reflective supervision, and participatory decision-making. By advancing a dynamic perspective on managerial leadership, this research contributes to educational management scholarship and provides practical insights for improving personnel management in Islamic educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid social transformation, educational institutions are increasingly expected to produce graduates who are academically competent, morally grounded, and socially adaptive, which places school leadership at the center of educational quality and societal development. Educational leadership is no longer limited to administrative supervision but extends to the strategic management of educational personnel as key agents of change within learning organizations. In this regard, principals are required to demonstrate adaptive managerial practices that respond to complex organizational demands, human

resource diversity, and accountability pressures. The effectiveness of personnel management directly affects teaching quality, institutional sustainability, and public trust in education. Research has shown that principals' managerial competence and leadership behavior significantly influence organizational performance and educational productivity across diverse contexts (Azainil et al., 2021; Janse Van Vuuren & Van Der Bank, 2023). In Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, managerial leadership plays an even more strategic role because it integrates educational goals with religious values and social responsibility, making effective personnel management a matter of broad societal importance (Ajigoena & Hisbullah, 2022; Amini, 2022).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of managerial leadership, many educational institutions continue to struggle with persistent problems related to the management of educational personnel, including low work discipline, limited professional growth, and uneven performance among teachers and staff (Safitri & Lateh, 2024). These issues often stem from weak managerial systems, unclear role distribution, and insufficient leadership capacity at the school level. In madrasah settings, such problems are further intensified by structural constraints, limited resources, and the dual mandate to maintain both academic and religious standards (Maulidah et al., 2024). The complexity of these demands frequently exceeds the managerial readiness of principals, resulting in ineffective coordination and suboptimal personnel utilization. Studies indicate that inadequate managerial competence and weak leadership practices negatively affect teacher productivity and institutional effectiveness (Munawarah & Murniati, 2021; Azainil et al., 2021). Furthermore, the absence of systematic personnel management in Islamic educational institutions has been identified as a major barrier to improving educational quality and organizational performance (Dian et al., 2022; Sodikin et al., 2024).

Field observations conducted at MTs Negeri 2 Sarolangun indicate that principals' managerial practices in managing educational personnel tend to be routine-oriented and compliance-driven, with a strong emphasis on administrative completion rather than strategic human resource development (Ma'isyah et al., 2024). Managerial activities are often centered on scheduling, reporting, and procedural supervision, while systematic planning for personnel capacity building receives limited attention (Rahman et al., 2024). This situation results in fragmented personnel management, where teachers and staff perform their duties without clear long-term performance targets or structured professional support. Consequently, levels of motivation, discipline, and productivity vary across individuals, affecting institutional coherence and instructional consistency (Makiyah, 2024). Empirical evidence suggests that principals' managerial competence is closely related to teacher discipline, motivation, and productivity, highlighting the practical implications of leadership quality in everyday school operations (Azainil et al., 2021; Dauly et

al., 2024). Moreover, studies on personnel management practices emphasize that ineffective managerial approaches contribute to inconsistent teaching quality and weakened school performance, particularly in educational institutions facing organizational and resource constraints (Llemit, 2024; Nargis & Firmansyah, 2024).

Previous research has extensively explored the relationship between principals' managerial competence and educational outcomes, emphasizing leadership effectiveness, teacher performance, and organizational productivity. Many studies conceptualize managerial competence as a set of measurable skills related to planning, organizing, and supervising educational activities. Within Islamic education, scholars have examined leadership capacity building, institutional management, and quality improvement strategies in madrasahs. These studies highlight the importance of structured management systems and competent leadership in enhancing institutional performance and educational quality. Empirical findings consistently show that managerial competence and achievement motivation significantly influence leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes in schools (Daulay et al., 2024; Munawarah & Murniati, 2021). In addition, research on Islamic educational institutions underscores the role of leadership and knowledge management in fostering organizational learning and sustainable development (Dian et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022).

Although existing studies provide valuable insights into managerial competence and leadership outcomes, most of them adopt a static and outcome-oriented perspective, focusing on measurable results rather than the dynamic processes underlying managerial practices. Such approaches tend to overlook how principals continuously adapt their management strategies in response to changing organizational contexts, personnel characteristics, and institutional challenges. Recent research in educational management has begun to emphasize dynamic perspectives, yet empirical applications in madrasah contexts remain limited. Studies on school culture, knowledge management, and system dynamics suggest that leadership practices evolve through complex interactions between individuals, structures, and environments (Nehez & Blossing, 2022; Mohammadi & Faskhodi, 2022). Moreover, research on personnel management and organizational productivity highlights the need to understand management as a dynamic process rather than a fixed competency, particularly in developing educational systems (Lemos et al., 2024; Gawusu et al., 2022). This gap indicates the need for research that explicitly examines the dynamics of principals' managerial practices in managing educational personnel within madrasahs.

This study introduces a novel analytical lens by framing principals' managerial practices in madrasahs as dynamic, adaptive, and context-sensitive processes rather than static managerial competencies. By emphasizing managerial dynamics, the study captures how principals respond to organizational pressures, personnel diversity, and institutional change over time.

This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of leadership as an ongoing process shaped by interaction, negotiation, and adaptation. The focus on educational personnel management highlights the human-centered dimension of leadership, positioning teachers and staff as active agents within the management system. Through this approach, the study advances the state of the art in educational leadership research by integrating dynamic management theory with the unique context of madrasah education. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discourse and provide a more nuanced understanding of leadership practices in Islamic educational institutions.

Based on the preceding discussion, the main research problem addressed in this study concerns how madrasah principals enact and sustain dynamic managerial practices in managing educational personnel. This study seeks to explore the patterns, strategies, and adaptive processes that characterize principals' managerial actions in real institutional contexts. It is argued that principals who adopt dynamic managerial practices are better positioned to align personnel management with institutional goals, respond to contextual challenges, and enhance organizational effectiveness. By examining these dynamics, the study contributes conceptually by expanding leadership and management frameworks within Islamic education. Practically, it offers insights that can inform leadership development programs and personnel management policies in madrasahs. Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of managerial practices is essential for strengthening educational leadership and improving the quality and sustainability of madrasah education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the dynamics of madrasah principals' managerial practices in managing educational personnel. A qualitative case study was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of leadership practices as complex social phenomena embedded within real-life organizational contexts. This design is particularly suitable for investigating managerial dynamics, as principals' practices are shaped by continuous interaction, institutional culture, and contextual constraints that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures. By focusing on a single bounded case, the study aimed to generate rich and contextualized insights into how managerial practices are enacted, adapted, and sustained over time within a madrasah setting.

The research was conducted at MTs Negeri 2 Sarolangun, a public Islamic junior secondary school located in Sarolangun Regency, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected because it represents a typical madrasah context in which principals are required to manage educational personnel while balancing administrative demands, instructional leadership, and institutional values. Data

were collected using multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and credibility, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews involved the madrasah principal and selected teachers and administrative staff who were directly engaged in personnel management processes. Observations focused on daily managerial activities, coordination practices, and leadership interactions, while document analysis included institutional policies, organizational structures, personnel records, and work programs relevant to personnel management.

Data analysis followed an interactive and iterative process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents to identify meaningful patterns related to managerial practices. The condensed data were then organized into thematic displays to facilitate interpretation and comparison across data sources. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous verification by revisiting the data, comparing emerging themes, and ensuring consistency across findings. This systematic process enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis and enabled a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic managerial practices implemented at the research site.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Adaptive Managerial Planning in Managing Educational Personnel

The findings show that managerial planning at MTs Negeri 2 Sarolangun was implemented as a flexible and responsive process rather than a fixed annual routine. The principal regularly reviewed work programs and adjusted planning decisions based on teachers' workload, institutional priorities, and emerging organizational challenges. Planning activities were closely linked to the availability and capacity of educational personnel, allowing the madrasah to respond effectively to changing conditions without disrupting instructional activities.

In addition, planning was carried out through a participatory approach involving senior teachers and administrative staff. This collaborative process enabled the principal to identify personnel needs more accurately and to distribute tasks according to individual competencies. Participants reported that their involvement in planning increased their sense of responsibility and commitment to institutional goals, as they felt their professional perspectives were acknowledged.

Furthermore, adaptive planning supported better coordination among educational personnel by clarifying roles and expectations. Clear communication of planning outcomes helped reduce role ambiguity and ensured that personnel understood their responsibilities within the organizational structure. As a result, managerial planning functioned not only as an administrative tool but also as a strategic mechanism for aligning human resources with the madrasah's educational objectives.

Dynamic Organization and Coordination of Educational Personnel

The results indicate that the principal applied dynamic organizational practices by assigning roles and responsibilities based on individual competencies rather than strictly adhering to formal job descriptions. Teachers and administrative staff were often entrusted with additional responsibilities aligned with their skills and experience. This approach allowed the madrasah to utilize human resources more effectively, particularly in situations involving limited personnel or increased workloads.

Coordination among educational personnel was maintained through both formal and informal communication channels. Regular coordination meetings provided a structured space for discussing tasks, challenges, and progress, while informal interactions facilitated timely problem-solving and strengthened interpersonal relationships. Participants described this coordination style as supportive and inclusive, enabling them to respond quickly to emerging issues.

Moreover, dynamic coordination practices contributed to a collaborative organizational climate. Personnel reported feeling valued and trusted, which encouraged initiative and cooperation. These findings suggest that flexible organization and coordination enhanced teamwork, minimized operational disruptions, and supported the smooth implementation of educational programs within the madrasah.

Context-Sensitive Supervision and Personnel Development

The study found that supervision of educational personnel was conducted in a context-sensitive manner, emphasizing guidance and professional growth rather than strict evaluation. The principal adopted a mentoring-oriented supervision approach, providing feedback that was tailored to individual needs and professional backgrounds. Supervision activities were integrated into daily interactions and classroom observations, making them more natural and less intimidating for teachers.

Teachers reported that this supervision style increased their motivation and confidence, as feedback was delivered constructively and focused on improvement rather than fault-finding. Opportunities for reflection and dialogue allowed teachers to discuss instructional challenges openly and to seek guidance without fear of negative judgment.

In addition, the principal supported personnel development through internal training activities, peer learning, and collaborative discussions. These initiatives contributed to continuous professional improvement and reinforced a culture of learning within the madrasah. As a result, supervision functioned as a developmental process that strengthened instructional quality and professional competence among educational personnel.

Flexible Decision-Making in Addressing Personnel Management Challenges

Another important finding relates to the principal's use of flexible decision-making strategies when addressing challenges in managing educational personnel. Decisions related to workload distribution, task assignments, and performance issues were made through dialogue and consultation with relevant personnel. This approach allowed the principal to consider contextual factors and individual circumstances before reaching decisions.

Participants indicated that involving personnel in the decision-making process increased acceptance of managerial decisions and reduced resistance. Transparent communication regarding the rationale behind decisions enhanced trust and fostered a sense of fairness within the organization. Personnel felt that their concerns were acknowledged and respected.

Furthermore, flexible decision-making enabled the principal to balance institutional demands with personnel well-being. By prioritizing consensus and adaptability, the principal was able to maintain organizational stability while addressing ongoing challenges. These findings highlight the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in sustaining effective personnel management in a dynamic madrasah environment.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with the growing body of literature emphasizing that leadership in Islamic educational institutions must integrate managerial effectiveness with value-based orientations rooted in Islamic principles. Islamic-oriented leadership models highlight the importance of ethical grounding, contextual sensitivity, and strategic management as essential components of effective madrasah leadership (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Said et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2024).

The adaptive managerial planning practices identified in this study support previous research indicating that strategic management plays a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources in madrasahs. Strategic and policy-driven management approaches enable madrasah principals to align personnel management with institutional goals and respond effectively to organizational challenges (Basri et al., 2022; Sulistyorini et al., 2022; Haddade et al., 2024).

The dynamic organization and coordination of educational personnel observed in this study reflect human resource management models that emphasize flexibility, collaboration, and competency-based role distribution. Prior studies have shown that effective personnel management in madrasahs is closely linked to leadership effectiveness, work motivation, and the optimal utilization of human resources (Basari et al., 2023; Bachtiar et al., 2024; Simbolon et al., 2023).

Context-sensitive supervision and professional development practices identified in this research resonate with studies highlighting the role of principals in fostering continuous improvement and research-oriented school cultures. Madrasah leadership that prioritizes professional growth and reflective supervision has been shown to enhance institutional quality and innovation capacity (Sari et al., 2023; Umah et al., 2023).

Finally, the flexible and dialogical decision-making practices found in this study are consistent with leadership approaches that view school management as a dynamic and learning-oriented process. Such approaches emphasize adaptability, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability in educational management, reinforcing the importance of responsive leadership in complex educational environments (Jääskä et al., 2021; Haddade et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the effectiveness of madrasah principals' managerial practices lies in their ability to operate dynamically and adaptively in managing educational personnel. The most important insight gained from this research is that managerial leadership in madrasahs is not merely a matter of technical competence, but a continuous process of adjustment, dialogue, and contextual decision-making that responds to institutional needs and human resource conditions. Through adaptive planning, flexible organization, context-sensitive supervision, and inclusive decision-making, principals are able to foster a collaborative organizational climate and enhance personnel commitment. These findings highlight the importance of viewing managerial practices as evolving processes that integrate strategic, human, and ethical dimensions within Islamic educational institutions.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study advances educational leadership literature by offering a dynamic perspective on principals' managerial practices in madrasah contexts, moving beyond static competency-based models. The study provides empirical evidence that enriches theoretical discussions on leadership dynamics in Islamic education and offers practical insights for leadership development programs. However, this research is limited by its focus

on a single case study, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is encouraged to examine multiple madrasah contexts, employ comparative or longitudinal designs, and explore the influence of organizational culture and policy environments on the dynamics of managerial practices.

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