

LEADERSHIP STRATEGY OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS IN AN EFFORT TO REALIZE AN EXCELLENT MADRASAH AT MAN 1 NORTH KOLAKA

Firdaus Kuddus¹, Misykat Malik Ibrahim², St. Syamsudduha³

^{1, 2, 3} Program Studi Magister Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Alauddin, Makassar, Indonesia

¹ firdauskuddus877@gmail.com, ² misykat.mmi@gmail.com, ³ s.syamsudduha@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to determine: (1) what leadership strategies are implemented by madrasah principals in realizing superior madrasahs, (2) what is the role of madrasah principals in implementing strategies in realizing superior madrasahs, and (3) how teachers and staff are involved in implementing the madrasah principals' leadership strategies in realizing superior madrasahs. The results of the study indicate that madrasah principals implement vision and mission-based planning strategies that are aligned with the needs of the madrasah, participatory implementation through empowerment of teachers and education staff, and continuous evaluation through academic supervision and regular evaluation meetings. This strategy focuses on improving the quality of education, fostering student character, optimizing human resources, and strengthening collaboration with all madrasah members. Madrasah principals implement three main strategies, namely: (1) strengthening religious moderation through religious activities, habituating Yaumiyah worship, tadarus, and short-term Islamic boarding schools; (2) improving the quality of learning by implementing innovative curricula, digital learning (e-learning), and collaboration between teachers; and (3) developing educational facilities and infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, internet networks, and public facilities that support a conducive learning environment. These three strategies are implemented in an integrated manner through visionary, participatory leadership, and are oriented towards improving the quality of madrasahs.

Keywords: Madrasah Principal Leadership, Excellent Madrasah, Improving the Quality of Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: (1) bagaimana strategi kepemimpinan yang diterapkan kepala madrasah dalam mewujudkan madrasah unggul, (2) bagaimana peran kepala madrasah dalam melaksanakan strategi dalam mewujudkan madrasah unggul, dan (3) bagaimana keterlibatan guru dan staf dalam implementasi strategi kepemimpinan kepala madrasah dalam mewujudkan madrasah unggul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala madrasah menerapkan strategi perencanaan berbasis visi dan misi yang selaras dengan kebutuhan madrasah, pelaksanaan yang partisipatif melalui pemberdayaan guru dan tenaga kependidikan, serta evaluasi berkelanjutan melalui supervisi akademik dan rapat evaluasi rutin. Strategi ini berfokus pada peningkatan mutu pendidikan, pembinaan karakter siswa, optimalisasi sumber daya manusia, dan penguatan kolaborasi dengan seluruh warga madrasah. Kepala madrasah menerapkan tiga strategi utama, yaitu: (1) penguatan moderasi beragama melalui kegiatan keagamaan, pembiasaan ibadah yaumiyah, tadarus, dan pesantren kilat; (2) peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran dengan penerapan kurikulum inovatif, pembelajaran digital (e-learning), dan kolaborasi antar guru; serta (3) pengembangan sarana dan prasarana pendidikan seperti laboratorium, perpustakaan, jaringan internet, dan fasilitas umum yang mendukung lingkungan belajar kondusif. Ketiga strategi tersebut dijalankan secara terintegrasi melalui kepemimpinan visioner, partisipatif, dan berorientasi pada peningkatan mutu madrasah.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah, Madrasah Unggul, Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan



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INTRODUCTION

In general, strategy is a process that determines the planning of top managers that is directed at the company's long-term goals and accompanied by the preparation of efforts on how to achieve the desired goals. According to Fred R. David in M. Yusuf, Strategic Management is the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals.¹

The leadership of a madrasah principal plays a crucial role in building a superior madrasah that combines academic quality and character building. As a visionary leader, a madrasah principal creates a conducive learning culture and environment, encourages teacher innovation, and instills moral and spiritual values in learning. With inspirational and empathetic leadership, madrasahs are able to produce students who are intelligent, virtuous, and possess high integrity.² Teachers and educational staff play a crucial role in creating effective and meaningful learning. The principal of a madrasah (madrasah) optimally manages human resources and educational facilities to create synergy in improving academic quality and student character in accordance with Islamic values.³

The managerial abilities of the madrasah principal play an important role in improving the quality and progress of the institution through effective planning, organizing, directing and controlling.⁴ This will create a superior madrasah, an educational madrasah that excels in various aspects, including academics, character, and management, enabling it to perform better and be more competitive than others. This excellence can be achieved through the managerial skills of the madrasah principal in effectively planning, organizing, directing, and controlling all resources to achieve optimal educational quality.⁵

A superior madrasah requires dedicated, creative, and highly integrated teachers who wholeheartedly educate. The madrasah principal plays a crucial role in providing guidance and motivation so that teachers can carry out their roles optimally. With this guidance and support, a superior and high-quality madrasah is created.⁶ Innovation in superior madrasahs began to develop following the enactment of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which positioned

¹ M. Yusuf et al., "Strategi Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Digital Guru Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Intizam* 5, no. 2 (2022): 81–96.

² Nadiyah Najah and Makmur Syukri, "Peranan Dan Fungsi Kepala Madrasah Sebagai Pemimpin Pendidikan Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta Ikhwanul Muslimin Tembung Ii," *SKILLS: Jurnal Riset Dan Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.47498/skills.v3i1.3312>.

³ Mardiyah et al., "Bidang Garapan Administrasi Dan Manajemen Sekolah/Madrasah," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 6, no. 2 (2021).

⁴ Maya Ayu Komalasari et al., "Fungsi Manajerial Kepala Madrasah Dalam Menciptakan Madrasah Efektif Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Kecamatan Jati Agung Kabupaten Lampung Selatan," *Jurnal Mubtadiin* 7, no. 2 (2021): 29–45.

⁵ Marselius Sampe Tondok, "Becoming a Superior Human Being in the Third Millennium," 2019, 1–8.

⁶ Najib Habibi, *Manajemen Pengembangan Madrasah Yang Unggul Dan Kompetitif*, 2507, no. February (2020): 1–9.

madrasahs as part of the national education subsystem. Madrasahs are required to innovate in their institutions and output quality, in line with Article 31, Paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution, which emphasizes that national education must foster faith, piety, and noble character.⁷

Based on the results of an interview with the Principal of Madrasah MAN 1 Kolaka Utara, Mr. Rasman, S.Ag., M.Pd., it is known that the leadership strategy he implemented is oriented towards efforts to create a superior madrasah through visionary, collaborative, and sustainable management. He emphasized that strategic steps were taken by optimizing the potential of teachers and staff through coaching, competency improvement, and structuring an effective work system so that each program runs in accordance with the madrasah's vision. In addition, he focused on developing facilities and infrastructure, technology-based learning, and strengthening the religious character of students through routine and directed religious activities. His leadership also emphasized the importance of collaboration between madrasah components to create a conducive, inspiring, and highly competitive learning environment. With this approach, the madrasah principal succeeded in fostering a spirit of change and innovation at MAN 1 Kolaka Utara, making it an Islamic educational institution that is not only academically superior, but also has character and is relevant to the demands of the times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Leadership Theory

Each leadership theory has its own relevance depending on the situation of the educational institution. The principal plays a crucial role in selecting an effective and adaptive leadership style that meets the needs of teachers, students, and the community, creating a conducive learning environment.⁸ The leadership theories that are relevant based on the situation and conditions of educational institutions are:

1. Transformational Leadership

In the context of Islamic educational institutions as organizations, effective leadership is needed to drive significant change toward improving quality and service. Tavfelin, in Roni Harsuyo, asserts that transformational leadership is one promising leadership model for managing change in social service organizations, including education.⁹ Transformational leadership is a leadership style that transforms vision into concrete actions and enhances the

⁷ Fahrina Yustiasari Liriwati, "Manajemen Sekolah Menuju Sekolah Unggulan," *Al-Afkar: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Peradaban*, preprint, n.d. Fahrina Yustiasari Liriwati, "School Management Towards a Leading School," *Al-Afkar: Journal of Islam and Civilization*, 9, no. 1 (2021): 3-4.

⁸ Wardah Hanafie Das and Abdul Halik, *Kompetensi Manajerial Kepala Madrasah & Relasinya Terhadap Profesionalisme Guru* (2021).

⁹ Roni Harsoyo, "Teori Kepemimpinan Transformasional Bernard M. Bass Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management* 3, no. 2 (2022): 247-62, <https://doi.org/10.21154/sajiem.v3i2.112>.

motivation and morale of followers. In the educational context, a madrasah principal with this style is able to inspire teachers, staff, and students to innovate, develop character, and commit to positive change to achieve a superior and high-quality madrasah.¹⁰

The principal's transformational leadership creates an inspiring and collaborative work environment, where teachers, staff, students, and the community unite to realize a shared vision. The principal is able to motivate all members of the school community to go beyond routine tasks, commit to educational quality, and play an active role in shaping student character through genuine participation and a sense of shared purpose.¹¹

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the madrasah principal's strategy in realizing a superior madrasah lies in the application of transformational leadership oriented towards positive change and improving the quality of education. The madrasah principal acts as a driving force capable of transforming the madrasah's vision into concrete actions through motivation, collaboration, and moral development of all madrasah members.

2. Instructional leadership

As instructional leaders, madrasah principals are responsible for ensuring improvements in the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes through collaboration with teachers and staff. They encourage the formulation of clear and participatory academic objectives, provide guidance in curriculum development, and optimally utilize resources. By facilitating effective training, monitoring, and communication, madrasah principals create a conducive learning environment. This collaboration is key to realizing a superior madrasah, both in terms of academic achievement and student character development.¹²

Instructional leadership is key to improving educational quality because it focuses on the teaching and learning process. The principal plays an active role in directing, supervising, and ensuring the effective implementation of the curriculum, methods, and assessments. By supporting teacher professional development, this leadership emphasizes the madrasah's focus on academic quality and optimal achievement of learning objectives.¹³ The instructional leadership of the madrasah principal plays a vital role in improving the quality of learning by

¹⁰ Luthfi Akbar and Nani Imaniyati, "Gaya Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah Terhadap Kinerja Guru," *Jurnal Pendidikan Manajemen Perkantoran* 4, no. 2 (2019): 176, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jpm.v4i2.18012>.

¹¹ Mudatsir Mudatsir, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Lulusan," *Educational Journal of Islamic Management* 1, no. 2 (2021): 55–67, <https://doi.org/10.47709/ejim.v1i2.1192>.

¹² Yudo Dwiyono et al., "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Efektivitas Pembelajaran," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 4, no. 3 (2022): 319–34, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v4i3.2107>.

¹³ Ni Putu Prema Swandewi et al., "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional, Literasi Digital, Kecerdasan Emosional, Kecerdasan Intelektual Terhadap Kinerja Guru," *Jurnal Sosial Teknologi* 4, no. 1 (2024): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.59188/jurnalsostech.v4i1.1094>.

setting clear academic targets, ensuring the curriculum is relevant, and creating a conducive learning climate through support, teacher collaboration, and ongoing evaluation.¹⁴

The conclusion from instructional leadership is that the madrasah principal is a key factor in improving educational quality. Through collaboration, supervision, and support for teachers, the madrasah principal can ensure that the teaching and learning process is effective and results-oriented.

3. Participative Leadership

Participative leadership is a leadership style that involves subordinates in the decision-making process without diminishing the leader's primary role. This style encourages collaboration, consultation, and shared responsibility between the leader and organizational members. Participative leaders not only solicit input but also create an open and respectful work environment, so that subordinates feel they have a significant role in achieving shared goals.¹⁵ By involving all elements of the madrasah, motivation, a sense of responsibility, and a shared commitment to improving the quality of learning are created. This strategy fosters an inclusive, harmonious work environment oriented toward continuously improving the quality of education.¹⁶

A principal who adopts this style fosters two-way communication, listens to aspirations, and creates space for collaboration and innovation. By transparently involving the entire madrasa community, this leadership fosters a sense of responsibility, motivation, and shared commitment to realizing the vision and mission of an excellent madrasa.¹⁷

Thus, it can be concluded that the integrated application of transformational, instructional, and participatory leadership is an effective strategy for madrasah principals in realizing excellent madrasahs. These three leadership styles complement each other: transformational inspires change and innovation, instructional ensures sustainable learning quality, and participatory fosters collaboration and shared commitment.

¹⁴ Riris Sapitri et al., "Kepemimpinan Instruksional Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru Dan Mutu Pembelajaran," *Cendikia Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 2, no. 9 (2024): 546–58.

¹⁵ Bahrum Mustakim, "Psychological Perspectives on Decision-Making in Educational Leadership," *Irsyad: Journal of Islamic Guidance, Counseling, and Psychotherapy* 8, no. 2 (2020): 187–202.

¹⁶ Endang Komara et al., "Implementasi Kepemimpinan Partisipatif Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Di TK Radhi Ibrahim Nurfadilah (RIN) Baleendah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 9, no. 3 (2023): 1567–71, <https://doi.org/10.58258/jime.v9i3.5205>.

¹⁷ Bahrum Mustakim, "Perspektif Psikologi Pengambilan Keputusan Dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan," *Irsyad: Jurnal Bimbingan, Penyuluhan, Konseling, Dan Psikoterapi Islam* 8, no. 2 (2020): 187–202, <https://doi.org/10.15575/irsyad.v8i2.1965>.

Leadership Strategy in Realizing Excellent Madrasahs

The word "strategy" comes from the Latin *strategia*, meaning the art of using plans to achieve goals. According to Mc. Leod, the term is translated into English as the art of implementing a strategy or action plan. Thus, strategy encompasses a focused process of planning, implementation, and evaluation to ensure success in achieving organizational or institutional goals, including in the context of education and the development of superior madrasahs.¹⁸ Meanwhile, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), strategy is a careful plan to achieve a specific goal. In general, strategy is the art of utilizing resources and capabilities effectively and efficiently to achieve goals. In the context of leadership, strategy plays a crucial role as a guideline for planning and implementation to maximize performance and achieve organizational goals.¹⁹

A madrasah is an educational organization that involves collaboration between various parties to achieve learning goals. As a leader, the madrasah principal plays a crucial role in directing, influencing, and overseeing all activities to ensure that educational goals are achieved effectively and efficiently.²⁰ The head of the madrasah acts as an administrative leader and supervisor who is responsible for all aspects of madrasah management.²¹ The head of the madrasah is also a leader who is responsible for managing and leading the educational institution in accordance with the vision and mission of the madrasah.²² The leadership strategy in realizing superior madrasahs has 2 determining factors, namely:

1. The Role of Leadership in Improving the Quality of Madrasahs

The leadership strategy of a madrasah principal plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education and creating a superior madrasah. The madrasah principal serves not only as a manager but also as a motivator, able to mobilize all components of the madrasah to work synergistically to achieve a shared vision and mission.²³ The madrasah principal plays a strategic role in ensuring the madrasah curriculum remains relevant and adaptive to current developments. Together with teachers, the madrasah principal is responsible for developing and

¹⁸ Nanang Gustri Ramdani et al., "Definisi Dan Teori Pendekatan, Strategi, Dan Metode Pembelajaran," *Indonesian Journal of Elementary Education and Teaching Innovation* 2, no. 1 (2023): 20, [https://doi.org/10.21927/ijeeti.2023.2\(1\).20-31](https://doi.org/10.21927/ijeeti.2023.2(1).20-31).

¹⁹ Asri Andriana Lituhayu, "Strategi Kepemimpinan Lurah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Pegawai Di Kelurahan Ciganjur," *AL AQIDAH (Jurnal Studi Islam)* 3, no. 2 (2023): 101–11.

²⁰ Aep Saepul Anwar and Fatkhul Mubin, "Reaktualisasi Dan Implementasi Sistem Pendidikan Islam Pada Madrasah Unggulan (Pengembangan Dan Strategi Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan)," *ANDRAGOGI : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 3 (2022): 573–88.

²¹ Riyuzen Praja Tuala et al., "Kepemimpinan dan Kompetensi Kepala Madrasah (Studi Ekploratif Di MAN Kota Bandar Lampung)," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 13, no. 02 (2023).

²² M. Athoiful Fanan Tri Wahyu Ningsih, "Strategi Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Siswa Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Yayasan Pendidikan Sosial Dan Ma'arif 2 Sidoarjo," *Paper Knowledge . Toward a Media History of Documents* 1 (2010): 99–105.

²³ Prema Swandewi et al., "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Instruksional, Literasi Digital, Kecerdasan Emosional, Kecerdasan Intelektual Terhadap Kinerja Guru."(2022)

adapting the curriculum to align with educational standards, student needs, and 21st-century demands.²⁴

2. Human Resource Management in Realizing Excellent Madrasahs

The strategy implemented by the madrasah principal in managing human resources to create a superior madrasah is to improve the teaching abilities of teachers.²⁵ Pedagogical competence is the fundamental skill teachers must possess to effectively manage learning. With this competence, teachers can create a learning process that is conducive, relevant, and aligned with the developmental needs of students.²⁶

Student character development is carried out through the integration of spiritual and social values into all aspects of education, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons, activities such as Scouting, Red Cross (PMR), and Rohis (Islamic Student Spirit) contribute to fostering empathy, responsibility, and cooperation. This holistic approach encourages students to apply religious teachings in real life, developing individuals with morals and faith who contribute positively to society.²⁷

It can be concluded that the madrasah principal's leadership strategy in realizing a superior madrasah focuses on improving educational quality through adaptive curriculum management and empowering professional human resources. The madrasah principal plays a key role in building collaboration, fostering motivation, and creating a religious and conducive learning environment.

Involvement of Teachers and Staff in the Implementation of Madrasah Principal's Strategy

Teachers and principals play a crucial role in optimizing the teaching and learning process. Teachers not only deliver material but also guide and model learning for students, while principals act as visionary leaders who create a productive and collaborative work environment. Synergy between the two is key to creating quality and meaningful learning.²⁸ The Principal of Madrasah, as the leader of the educational institution, is obliged to carry out academic supervision, including helping teachers

²⁴eilinda Ade Prastiwi and Agus Widodo, "The Leadership Role of Madrasah Principals in the 5.0 Era, Education and Technology, in 21st Century Competence," *PRIMER: Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 1, no. 5 (2023): 536–44.

²⁵ Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad et al., "Strategi Kepala Madrasah Dalam Mewujudkan Madrasah Unggulan Di MIN 3 Simpang Tiga Kecamatan Bukit Raya Kota Pekanbaru," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 14, no. 2 (2017): 136–59, [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2017.vol14\(2\).1026](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2017.vol14(2).1026).

²⁶ Gunawan Wibisana, "Penerapan Lesson Study Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Mengajar Guru Pada Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh Di Smp Negeri 3 Ngrambe," *EDUCATIONAL : Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan & Pengajaran* 1, no. 3 (2021): 114–21, <https://doi.org/10.51878/educational.v1i3.377>.

²⁷ Aso Samsudin and Ukhtul Iffah, "Menumbuhkan Sikap Sosial Dan Spiritual Siswa Di Sekolah," *Edupedia* 4, no. 2 (2020): 59–69.

²⁸ Mar'atul Azizah and Miranda Nur Apdila, "Peran Kepala Madrasah Sebagai Supervisor Dalam Peningkatan Kinerja Guru," *Chalim Journal of Teaching and Learning* 1, no. 1 (2021): 73–84, <https://doi.org/10.31538/cjotl.v1i1.90>.

prepare learning plans.²⁹ The focus of academic supervision is the achievement of educational goals by the principal and teachers, with the aim of fostering teacher understanding, training their skills, and improving the quality of their work. The primary functions of academic supervision (Research, Assessment, Improvement, and Enhancement) are specifically aimed at achieving educational effectiveness.³⁰

Improving the quality of educational institutions centers on the professionalism of human resources, particularly teachers and administrative staff. Madrasah principals must have effective strategies to enhance their competencies to meet educational challenges.³¹ As a leader, the principal is tasked with enhancing the professionalism of staff and teachers by actively involving them in meetings and decision-making. This is achieved by delegating initiative and responsibility to competent staff.³²

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the key roles of teachers and madrasah principals are essential in optimizing the quality of education. Teachers act as mentors and role models, while the madrasah principal acts as a visionary leader. This synergy is realized through mandatory academic supervision by madrasah principals, with a focus on coaching, training, and improving the quality of teacher work (including research, assessment, improvement, and enhancement).

RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used by the researcher is a managerial and phenomenological approach. *phenomenology* In this research, it is a study of knowledge that comes from awareness or how researchers interpret an object and event that is a person's conscious experience, which was carried out by researchers at MAN 1 North Kolaka. So that researchers can find out clarity of a phenomenon that occurs in a natural situation experienced by individuals related to the leadership strategies of madrasah principals in realizing superior madrasahs.

The location of this research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Kolaka Utara, Jl. Trans Sulawesi No. 2, Lasusua Village, Lasusua District, North Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The reason the researcher chose this location was based on several reasons, namely that the location was close to the researcher's residence. Furthermore, the researcher's access to the location was

²⁹ Achmad Karimulah and Nur Ittihadatul Ummah, "Pelaksanaan Supervisi Akademik Kepala Madrasah Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru Untuk Memotivasi Belajar Siswa MTs Muqoddimatul Akhlak Curah Wungkal Silo Jember," *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management* 3, no. 1 (2021): 13–34, <https://doi.org/10.21154/sajiem.v3i1.74>.

³⁰ Ahmad Sunaedi and Hamdi Rudji, "Supervisi Akademik Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru Di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Tolitol," *Journal of Educational Management and Islamic Leadership* 02, no. 02 (2023): 1–17.

³¹ Anita Oktavia, "Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru Dan Tenaga Kependidikan Di Madrasah Aliyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Sidoharjo Jati Agung Lampung Selatan," *Http://Journal.an-Nur.Ac.Id/7* (2021): 23.

³² Abdul Kholiq, *Peningkatan Kinerja Tenaga Pendidik Dan Kependidikan Melalui Komunikasi Interpersonal Kepala Madrasah Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Di Kabupaten Ponorogo*, 5, no. 1 (2024): 107–24.

easy, so the researcher could conduct research effectively and efficiently in obtaining data and information related to the leadership strategies of the madrasah principal in realizing a superior madrasah at MAN 1 Kolaka Utara.

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Data collection methods are carried out to obtain the required information, which include Observation, Interviews, and Documentation. The Observation method is applied in a structured manner, where researchers go directly to MAN 1 North Kolaka to observe objective conditions and refer to the observation guide. The Interview method is carried out in depth which involves interaction with sources such as the Principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka, the deputy head of curriculum, educators, and students. Finally, the Documentation method is used to collect data in the form of writings, images, or relevant works, such as collecting photos of the implementation of the activities of the principal, teachers, and students, as well as formal madrasah data such as profiles, vision-mission, organizational structure, and teacher/employee data at MAN 1 North Kolaka.

Research instruments are the tools used in this research to collect data to solve research problems and achieve research objectives. Regarding data collection instruments, researchers directly ask informants, listen, request, and collect data and information related to the research.

The data management technique used by the researcher was descriptive qualitative, while data analysis involved systematically searching and organizing the interview results, notes, and collected materials to enhance understanding of all the data collected and to enable the presentation of what was found. The purpose of data analysis is simply to simplify the data into a form and language that can be understood and comprehended.

This study employed triangulation, a multi-method approach employed by the researcher to collect and analyze data. Regarding data verification, triangulation in this study refers to a technique for verifying data validity by utilizing other data sources, methods, researchers, and theories. These sources, methods, researchers, and theories were used for verification and comparison.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Strategies Implemented by the Principal of Madrasah in Realizing a Superior Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka

The discussion in this section relates to the first problem formulation, namely the leadership strategies implemented by madrasah principals in realizing superior madrasahs. The researcher will outline the components required to implement superior madrasah development, including strategic planning, strategic implementation, and evaluation.

1. Strategic Planning of the Madrasah Principal in Realizing a Superior Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka

The strategic planning implemented by the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka is oriented towards the madrasah's vision as an institution for developing quality human resources who are faithful, pious, mastering science and technology, skilled, and environmentally conscious. The main strategies developed include Islamic values-based education, improving educator competence, providing adequate learning facilities, and strengthening talent and skills development programs, particularly in the field of language. This planning is carried out systematically through collaboration with various parties to support the realization of graduates who are noble, intelligent, and competitive.

Based on the interview results, the madrasah principal confirmed that the implemented strategy aligns with the madrasah's vision and mission. However, regular evaluation and adjustments are still being conducted to ensure it remains relevant to current developments and educational needs. One form of this adaptation effort is revising the vision and mission every four years, as required by applicable regulations.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the strategic planning carried out by the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka is aligned with the school's vision and mission. This strategy is realized through improving the competency of teaching staff through ongoing training, updating facilities and infrastructure to support innovative learning, and strengthening partnerships with various parties. This sustainable and adaptive approach is a strategic step in realizing a superior school capable of producing students who are devout, have noble character, and are highly competitive.

Strategic planning at MAN 1 North Kolaka is based on the school's vision and mission, outlined in its Strategic Plan (Renstra). Key strategies include improving educational quality by strengthening religious moderation, employing innovative learning methods, and enhancing teacher competency through training and certification. Furthermore, the school emphasizes the importance of a culture of quality education by improving accreditation standards and encouraging student participation in various competitions. In terms of infrastructure,

improvements to facilities and infrastructure are continuously being made to support an effective and conducive learning process.

The strategic planning at MAN 1 North Kolaka is based on the school's vision and mission, outlined in its Strategic Plan (Renstra). Key strategies include improving educational quality by strengthening religious moderation, implementing innovative learning methods, and enhancing teacher competency through training and certification. Furthermore, the school emphasizes the importance of a culture of quality education by improving accreditation standards and encouraging student participation in various competitions.

The strategies implemented are reflected in various flagship programs, such as promoting Islamic worship, fostering faith and piety, outing classes, outdoor learning, and character development through Student Leadership Training (LKS). These programs not only support the strengthening of religious values and character but also encourage student innovation and competitiveness in both academic and non-academic fields. By involving all stakeholders and conducting regular evaluations, the strategic planning implemented at MAN 1 North Kolaka provides a strong foundation for realizing a superior and competitive madrasah.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the strategic planning of the madrasah principal at MAN 1 North Kolaka is carried out systematically and oriented towards the madrasah's vision and mission to realize a superior madrasah. This strategy is realized through improving the quality of education, strengthening Islamic values and religious moderation, innovation in learning, improving teacher competency, updating infrastructure, and implementing flagship programs relevant to student needs. The active involvement of all stakeholders and regular evaluation are key to ensuring each program runs effectively and contributes to improving the quality and competitiveness of the madrasah.

2. Implementation of the Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Realizing a Superior Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka

The principal's strategy to create a superior madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka is implemented through various programs focused on improving the quality of education, such as strengthening religious moderation, implementing innovative learning methods, and improving educator competency. Featured programs such as Yaumiyah worship, outing classes, character building, and participation in competitions are essential to the strategy's implementation. The principal also involves the vice principal according to their respective duties, conducts regular evaluations, and continuously encourages improvements in facilities and infrastructure. The successful implementation of this strategy is supported by synergy between all elements of the madrasah, including teachers, students, parents, the government, and the community.

. The implementation steps of the madrasah principal's strategy at MAN 1 North Kolaka are carried out through systematic management stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning is carried out through meetings with the vice principal and teachers to formulate flagship programs aligned with their respective visions, missions, and duties. The programs are then implemented with a clear division of tasks and direct supervision from the madrasah principal, and are periodically evaluated to assess effectiveness and make improvements.

In implementing strategic planning at MAN 1 North Kolaka, the principal faces significant challenges, including limited human resources, a lack of awareness of the importance of innovation, and a lack of infrastructure to support modern learning. Furthermore, external support from the community and parents remains limited, especially compared to urban areas. Internal challenges also arise from some teachers who appear to be verbally supportive but have not yet made a concrete contribution to program implementation.

My conclusion is that the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka in implementing the strategy faces significant challenges: limited human resource competency, minimal infrastructure, and suboptimal external support and teacher contributions. The principal continues to evaluate and seek solutions to ensure the strategy's optimal implementation for the school's advancement.

3. Evaluation of Madrasah Principals in Realizing Excellent Madrasahs at MAN 1 North Kolaka

Regular and structured strategy evaluation by the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka is a crucial factor in realizing a superior madrasah. The principal directly supervises the implementation of programs involving teachers, staff, and students, and coordinates with the vice principal to ensure each department carries out its duties according to its responsibilities.

Interviews revealed that madrasah principals emphasized the importance of evaluation as a tool for continuous control and strategy development. An evaluation system involving all stakeholders creates synergy within the madrasah, enabling them to work together to achieve their vision and mission. With this approach, madrasahs can continuously improve the quality of education and ensure that each program is effective and positively impacts the institution's progress.

The success of the principal's strategy in realizing a superior madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka is evident in the improvement in academic achievement, character, and student discipline, as well as the positive response from the community, which has grown to trust and support the madrasah. Furthermore, direct evaluations from madrasah supervisors, who expressed appreciation for the program's implementation, provide concrete evidence that the

implemented strategy is effective and has a real impact. These indicators demonstrate that the strategy has successfully improved the quality of the madrasah overall.

To realize a superior Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka, follow-up on evaluation results is crucial to ensure each program is running effectively and on target. The madrasah principal, along with all stakeholders, routinely conducts periodic evaluations to assess target achievement and identify programs that need improvement.

Based on the interview results, any suboptimal strategies were immediately addressed by involving all relevant parties to devise solutions, such as additional coaching, facility upgrades, and management system improvements. This approach enabled the school to optimize program implementation to positively impact all members of the school community, including teachers, staff, and students. This demonstrates MAN 1 North Kolaka's commitment to creating a quality and continuously evolving educational environment.

Observation and documentation, particularly the Strategic Plan (Renstra), confirm that evaluations are conducted consistently at the end of each academic year. These evaluations serve as the primary basis for developing future program improvements and developments, enabling the madrasah to sustainably maintain and improve the quality of education, in line with its established vision and mission.

The Role of the Madrasah Principal in Implementing Leadership Strategies to Create an Excellent Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka

Interviews with the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka revealed that the leadership strategy was implemented through a systematic approach to management, encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation. The principal emphasized that no specific steps were taken, but that each management function was carried out diligently to ensure the strategy's effectiveness. Regular evaluations were conducted to identify obstacles and implement improvements, ensuring that each program met its objectives and positively impacted the school.

Observations and documentation confirm that the RENSTRA of MAN 1 North Kolaka serves as the primary guideline for implementing a focused and sustainable leadership strategy. This document serves as a reference for planning, implementing, and evaluating the madrasah's work program, ensuring that all activities align with the vision, mission, and goals of national education. With the RENSTRA, the madrasah principal is able to direct teachers, staff, students, and stakeholders to work synergistically to improve the quality of education, strengthen student character, and develop effective and competitive madrasah management.

Based on the RENSTRA MAN 1 Kolaka Utar, activities that support the realization of superior madrasahs and are part of the role of the madrasah head in implementing leadership strategies include:

1. Strengthening Religious Moderation Through Religious Activities, Habitualization of Yaumiyah Worship, Fast Islamic Boarding Schools, Tadarus, and Recitation of Asmaul Husana.

Interviews with the Deputy Principal for Curriculum, Ms. Ammase.s, and teacher Afrianti Sa'it indicate that strengthening religious moderation at MAN 1 North Kolaka is carried out systematically and in a coordinated manner. Religious activities such as the habituation of Yaumiyah worship, short Islamic boarding school, Quran recitation, and the recitation of Asmaul Husana are carried out routinely, involving all components of the school. Close coordination between the principal, the deputy principal for curriculum, and teachers ensures that this strategy for strengthening religious values is implemented effectively, in line with the vision and mission of the school, and fosters the character of faith, discipline, and togetherness among students.

Observations and documentation of the Strategic Plan of MAN 1 North Kolaka corroborate these findings by noting that in addition to routine activities, the madrasa also holds short-term Islamic boarding schools and reflection nights as a means of intensively fostering faith and piety. This program not only strengthens students' religious character but also instills the values of moderation, tolerance, and peace as part of a moderate-perspective education. All of these activities serve as an important foundation in building a strong religious culture and noble morals, as well as an indicator of MAN 1 North Kolaka's success in realizing a superior, highly competitive madrasa.

2. Improving the Quality of Learning by Implementing Innovative Curriculum, Digital Learning (E-Learning), Outing Classes, and Collaboration Between Teachers

Based on an interview with the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka, improving the quality of learning is a primary focus in realizing a superior madrasa. The principal emphasized that every learning evaluation result is always followed up with concrete steps, such as teacher development, improving digital learning facilities, and improving the management system. The involvement of all stakeholders, including teachers, staff, and the madrasa committee, is key to ensuring that policies have a positive and sustainable impact on improving the quality of education at the madrasa.

Observations and documentation from the RENSTRA MAN 1 North Kolaka show that the implementation of an innovative curriculum is a key strategy in the learning process. Teachers are encouraged to use creative and contextual learning methods that not only develop students' religious character but also 21st-century skills relevant to today's needs. The use of digital learning (e-learning) continues to be strengthened with information technology training for teachers and the provision of supporting facilities such as computers and internet

connections. In addition, outing class activities provide learning experiences outside the classroom that enrich students' understanding in a practical and real way.

Collaboration between teachers is also a crucial part of improving the quality of learning at MAN 1 North Kolaka. Teachers share strategies, experiences, and innovative learning methods in regular meetings and discussions, creating an interactive and dynamic learning environment. The synergy between the innovative curriculum, digital learning, outing classes, and collaboration between teachers reflects the school's commitment to creating an effective, adaptive, and sustainable learning process. These efforts strengthen the foundation of MAN 1 North Kolaka as a leading school ready to compete nationally.

3. Development of educational infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, internet networks, and public facilities that support a conducive learning environment.

The development of educational facilities and infrastructure at MAN 1 North Kolaka is one of the principal's priority strategies in realizing a superior madrasah. Interviews with the principal revealed that the availability of adequate facilities significantly impacts the quality of the teaching and learning process. This is reinforced by the MAN 1 North Kolaka Strategic Plan document, which emphasizes the development of biology, physics, chemistry, and computer laboratories, as well as a 120 m² library, to support student literacy and skills.

Observations revealed that the madrasah has a variety of representative and well-maintained supporting facilities, such as a teachers' lounge, a multimedia room, a mosque, a hall, and public facilities like clean water, sanitation, a garden, and a parking area. These facilities are optimally managed to create a safe, comfortable, and conducive learning environment for all members of the madrasah community.

Overall, documentation and interviews show that the madrasah principal leads the development of infrastructure with a planned and participatory approach. The focus is not only on physical development but also on improving the overall quality of educational services. With adequate educational facilities and a supportive learning environment, MAN 1 North Kolaka has demonstrated real progress in creating a superior, competitive, and adaptive madrasah to meet the demands of the times.

Involvement of Teachers and Staff in the Implementation of Leadership Strategies Applied by the Principal of Madrasah at MAN 1 North Kolaka

The involvement of teachers and staff in the implementation of leadership strategies at MAN 1 North Kolaka has been proven to be active and systematic. Based on interviews with the principal, each designed program always goes through a meeting process with all stakeholders, where teachers and staff are given space to discuss and express their views. Once the strategy is agreed upon, the

principal divides tasks in a structured manner according to their respective areas, then conducts direct supervision to ensure implementation is on track. Observations show that teachers are not only tasked with teaching, but also with guiding students personally and helping to maintain the quality of learning through interactive and innovative approaches.

Teachers feel deeply involved in various madrasah programs. One teacher noted that structured guidance and regular coordination from the madrasah principal make task implementation clearer and more focused. Training, workshops, and regular evaluations facilitated by the madrasah also strengthen teacher professionalism in facing educational challenges. Madrasah staff also support the smooth operation and administration of the program as a whole. Activity documentation shows that collaboration between teachers, staff, and the madrasah principal has created a synergistic work system that helps realize a superior and high-quality madrasah.

From the student perspective, an interview with one student revealed that the principal and teachers' support were highly appreciated, particularly in fostering academic achievement. Students were provided with weekly Olympiad tutoring and facilitated participation in competitions at regional and national levels. This demonstrates that the involvement of teachers and staff in implementing leadership strategies extends beyond the internal sphere and directly impacts student achievement. This synergy between elements of the madrasah is key to MAN 1 North Kolaka's success in building a superior, adaptive, and competitive educational ecosystem.

1. Teacher Involvement in the Implementation of Madrasah Principal Strategies

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted at MAN 1 North Kolaka, teacher involvement in implementing the principal's strategy is a key factor in realizing a superior madrasah. The principal demonstrates participatory leadership by involving teachers in every process of planning and strategic decision-making at the madrasah. Teachers not only act as policy implementers but also as active partners in formulating and evaluating educational programs. Through regular meetings, discussions, and academic supervision, the principal encourages open, two-way communication, so that teachers feel valued and have a moral responsibility to contribute to the progress of the madrasah.

Observations show that the principal consistently provides motivation, coaching, and guidance to teachers to encourage continued innovation in the learning process. This support is realized through training, workshops, and professional development activities tailored to teachers' needs. A conducive and appreciative work environment makes teachers more enthusiastic in teaching and improves the quality of learning. This is in line with the statement of MAN 1 Kolaka Utara teacher, Mrs. Afrianti Sa'id, who said that their active involvement in the planning and implementation of madrasah programs makes them more motivated and feel

appreciated. This teacher involvement has a direct impact on improving discipline, learning effectiveness, and student learning outcomes.

Documentation of madrasah activities also shows that collaboration between the madrasah principal and teachers has resulted in various educational innovations, such as the development of superior programs, the implementation of technology-based learning methods, and extracurricular activities that support student character building. The madrasah principal acts as a director and facilitator in optimizing teacher potential, while teachers spearhead the implementation of these programs in the field. This synergy between the madrasah principal's leadership and the active role of teachers creates a productive, harmonious academic environment oriented towards improving the quality of education. Thus, teacher involvement in the implementation of the madrasah principal's leadership strategy is a strategic element that strengthens MAN 1 North Kolaka's steps towards becoming a superior, competitive madrasah with Islamic values.

Overall, the principal's strategy of empowering teachers and building a collaborative work culture has proven effective in creating a productive and high-quality educational environment. Support provided through ongoing coaching, open communication, and constructive evaluations fosters motivation, responsibility, and a spirit of innovation among teachers. With the synergy established between the principal, teachers, and the entire madrasa community, MAN 1 North Kolaka has successfully built a strong foundation towards becoming a superior madrasa with high competitiveness and Islamic character.

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation at MAN 1 North Kolaka, it was concluded that the active involvement of teachers in the implementation of participatory and collaborative leadership strategies of the principal is a key factor in realizing an excellent madrasah. The principal empowers teachers as active partners in planning, decision-making, and educational innovation through open communication, continuous coaching, and professional support, which has been proven to increase motivation, responsibility, learning effectiveness, and produce various innovations, so that this synergy creates a productive academic environment and becomes a strategic element for MAN 1 North Kolaka towards an excellent madrasah that is competitive and has an Islamic character.

2. Staff Involvement in the Implementation of Madrasah Principal's Strategy

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation at MAN 1 North Kolaka, staff involvement in the implementation of the principal's strategy is a crucial factor in realizing a superior madrasah. The principal demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the competency of educational staff, both in personality, social, technical, and managerial aspects. Through a participatory approach, the principal not only provides direction and

supervision but also creates an open and collaborative work environment. This is evident in the principal's habit of involving staff in program planning and implementation, so that each individual feels equal responsibility in achieving the institution's goals.

Field observations reveal that the principal consistently provides guidance and support to staff through routine coaching and supervision. These activities focus not only on improving technical skills but also on fostering professionalism in carrying out their duties. The principal strives to ensure that each staff member clearly understands their roles and responsibilities, thus fostering positive work synergy within the madrasah. This approach reflects a leadership strategy focused on human resource development as the primary foundation for building a superior madrasah.

Furthermore, an interview with a staff member, Mrs. Heriati, revealed that the principal consistently provides clear and measurable direction in every program implementation. According to her, the principal not only provides instructions but also listens to staff input before making strategic decisions. This involvement fosters a sense of appreciation and boosts staff morale in carrying out their duties. Staff feel they have made a real contribution to the school's success, fostering a sense of responsibility and loyalty to the institution.

Based on documentation and regular meetings, the principal of MAN 1 North Kolaka consistently involves all stakeholders, including staff and teachers, in designing the school's flagship programs. Each meeting conducts open discussions to accommodate ideas and suggestions from various parties. This demonstrates democratic and transparent leadership, where the principal acts as a facilitator, coordinating the potential of all school members to achieve common goals. This process strengthens a sense of community and accelerates the implementation of effective work programs.

Observations also show that the madrasah principal creates a healthy and harmonious work atmosphere by encouraging cooperation among staff and teachers. This positive work environment is a key driver of increased motivation and productivity. When staff feel valued, supported, and involved in decision-making, they demonstrate greater dedication to their duties. This directly impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative services, ultimately contributing to the creation of superior educational quality.

Thus, the results of interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that the leadership strategy of the madrasah principal at MAN 1 North Kolaka successfully created synergy between leaders and staff through communication, collaboration, and active involvement in every madrasah program. This inclusive leadership not only strengthens staff performance but also creates a conducive and quality-oriented work environment. The implementation of this strategy is an important foundation in realizing a superior madrasah that

is not only academically qualified but also has professional and character-based institutional governance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research at MAN 1 North Kolaka, it can be concluded that the leadership strategy of the madrasah principal plays a very significant role in realizing superior madrasahs through improving the quality of education, strengthening teacher competencies, and managing a targeted curriculum. Leadership that is carried out in a visionary, participatory, and systematic manner is able to create a conducive learning environment and build synergy between the madrasah principal, teachers, staff, and all madrasah stakeholders. Open communication and effective coordination are the keys to creating harmonious collaboration, where each element feels a shared responsibility for the success of the institution. In addition, the implementation of routine evaluations accompanied by concrete follow-up, such as improving facilities and innovating learning methods, shows that the madrasah principal is not only focused on administrative management, but also on the continuous development of educational quality. Thus, effective and collaborative leadership has proven to be the main driving force in creating superior madrasahs that are highly competitive, professional, and have an Islamic character.

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