

# Effective Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education in Madrasah Tsnowiyah

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## ABSTRACT

The principal's efforts in improving the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo can be seen from various aspects, including curriculum objectives, teaching staff, teaching methodologies, facilities, and evaluations. These aspects still contain problems that have yet to be resolved entirely. Therefore, to enhance the quality of education at the madrasa, strong leadership from the head of the madrasa is essential. The research findings indicate the following: improving teacher professionalism, enhancing the quality of facilities, improving the quality of learning, and increasing student achievement. The head of the madrasa includes position themselves as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators. Supporting factors include a charismatic and authoritative leadership style, managerial skills, effective communication abilities, and a flexible, non-authoritarian attitude. On the other hand, inhibiting factors include limited and inadequate facilities, minimal support from the institution, and a lack of training in managerial or leadership styles.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today's education phenomenon in Indonesia shows significant changes, especially in Islamic educational institutions such as madrasah (Agus, Juliadharna, & Djamaluddin, 2023; Ahyar & Zumrotun, 2023; Ansori, 2020; Arif & Sulistianah, 2019). People increasingly realise the importance of quality education, which can prepare the younger generation to face global challenges (Alimohammadlou & Eslamloo, 2016; Anwar, Rahman, Nurwahidin, Sutrisno, &

Saputra, 2023). However, there is still a negative stigma among the public that madrasahs are “second class” educational institutions compared to public schools (Ashari et al., 2023; Basir et al., 2024). This results in the need for serious attention to management and leadership in madrasah in order to compete with other educational institutions. The madrasah head as an educational leader must have creative, innovative and dynamic abilities to answer these challenges (Baso & Alwy, 2023; Dirani et al., 2020).

Previous research has shown that the leadership of madrasah principals plays an important role in improving the quality of education. According to research (Basri, Nasir, Fiqiyah, Rizal, & Zainuddin, 2024; Djalilah, Muzakar, Suhardi, & Kartiko, 2024; Puspitasari, Sulaiman, & Supriyanto, 2020; Sutrisno, Hayati, Saputra, Arifin, & Kartiko, 2023), madrasah principals who have a clear vision and mission, as well as good managerial skills, can encourage the progress of educational institutions. Another study by (Rachman, Kawakip, Fadhillah, Saputra, & Zulkifli, 2023; L. Rahmawati, Latif, & Rosadi, 2022; T. Rahmawati & Purnomo, 2023) revealed that madrasah principals who were able to apply the principles of transformational leadership succeeded in creating a conducive learning environment, increasing teacher and student motivation, and student learning outcomes. This research shows a positive relationship between the leadership style of madrasah principals and the quality of education produced.

However, although several studies examine the role of madrasah principals, gaps still need to be filled, especially in the context of educational management and innovation. Therefore, this study aims to explore more deeply the role of madrasah principals in improving the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Probolinggo. This research will also identify the supporting and inhibiting factors faced by the madrasah principal in an effort to improve the quality of education.

In this research, the author will explain various aspects that contribute to effective madrasah management, including leadership strategies, teacher professionalism, quality of facilities and infrastructure, and learning methodology. It is hoped that this research will not only provide new insights into leadership in madrasahs but also serve as a reference for madrasah principals and policymakers in their efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

For this reason, this research uses a qualitative approach with a type of case study. The case study itself can be defined as: an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. This definition means that, basically, a case study is a research strategy that examines in detail a setting or one particular subject or event. In qualitative research humans are the main source and the results of the research are in the form of words or statements that are in accordance with the actual circumstances (natural). In accordance with the opinion of Denzin and Lincoln (in the book *Lexy J (Moleong, 1989)* which states that: “qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving existing methods.”

According to Donal Ary, said that: “Qualitative research has six characteristics, namely: 1) care about the context and situation, 2) Natural setting, 3) human as the main instrument, 4) data is descriptive, 5) research design appears simultaneously with observation, 6) inductive data

analysis. Qualitative descriptive research with a type of case study research (case study) is a study conducted intensively, in detail and in-depth on an organization, institution or certain symptoms. In terms of its area, case study research only covers a narrow area or subject, but in terms of the nature of the research, case study researchers are more in-depth. The purpose of the case study is to provide a detailed description of the background, typical character traits of the case or status of the individual, which then from the typical characteristics above will be made a general thing. In case of study research, the emphasis is on understanding why the subject does this and how behaviour changes when the subject responds to the environment by finding important variables in the history of the subject's development.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Improving teacher professionalism at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo**

In improving the professionalism of teachers at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, *first* the madrasah head creates a binding rule for all teachers. One of them is that all teachers must be disciplined. As stated by (Annisa, Akrim, & Manurung, 2020; Choi & Mao, 2021), professional teachers are those who have teaching experience, intellectual capacity, morals, faith, piety, discipline, responsibility, broad educational insight, managerial ability, skills, creativity, and professional openness in understanding the potential, characteristics and problems of students and have the ability to develop curriculum. Therefore, the attention of the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo to the discipline of school members needs to be applied. Islam also teaches that everything must be done neatly, correctly, orderly, and regularly. The internal rules set by the head of the madrasah for all teachers, such as arriving on time and if they cannot teach, they must ask permission first, show that the principal has a good leadership attitude as a manager who pays attention to the people he leads.

*Second*, the madrasah head monitors the conditions. This statement is in line with the opinion expressed by Suryosubroto that what needs to be done by the principal as a leader is to know the condition of the teacher in the background of his environmental and socio-economic life, this is important for his leadership actions. Therefore, the efforts of the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo by monitoring teachers are in accordance with his duties as a leader in schools, namely paying attention to teachers and guiding them to be able to become professional teachers.

*Third*, the madrasah head's efforts in improving teacher professionalism at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo involve teachers in various activities both outside and inside the school. In these activities, all teachers are placed in positions that are in accordance with their abilities.

*Fourth*, the principal instils in each teacher to have a friendly, polite, and competent attitude in all matters. A teacher must be a good role model for his students. *Fifth*, the madrasah principal gives awards to outstanding teachers in various forms. These can include promotion or additional finances, which increases teacher professionalism (Rahman, 2019). The performance of the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo is in accordance with his duties and functions as a leader, where the madrasah head tries to motivate teachers to improve their professionalism in working in the madrasah by giving awards. In addition, the head of the madrasah also builds an openness among all madrasah residents and creates a family

atmosphere towards teachers, staff, and students. Because this will create a good communication between all madrasa residents (Akmalia, Nst, & Siahaan, 2023).

*Sixth*, the madrasah head's efforts in improving the professionalism of teachers by conducting coaching for teachers inside and outside the madrasah. Coaching activities within the madrasah such as training and regular meetings are always held in the madrasah, while coaching outside the madrasah such as sending teachers in various activities organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or other institutions. For example, by sending teachers to participate in MGMP (Subject Teacher Conference) activities, upgrading, training, seminars, and other activities for self-development and adding insight to the teachers at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo.

*Seventh*, the madrasah head increases the motivation of teachers to work in the madrasah. Teachers are motivated by giving awards to those who achieve. Meanwhile, teachers who violate the rules and code of ethics will be subject to sanctions. The researcher argues that the madrasah head's efforts to improve the quality of teachers' work by rewarding teachers who excel and sanctioning teachers who violate the rules is one of the strategies that can increase teachers' initiative, creativity, and competitive spirit of the teachers. By looking at the efforts of the madrasah head, the researcher believes that the head of MTs, Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, has a great sense of responsibility and has carried out his duties as an educational personnel manager well.

### **Improving the quality of education infrastructure**

Facilities are arguably the most basic means of supporting the success of an educational institution. When the infrastructure is complete, the teaching and learning process will automatically occur effectively and efficiently. An effective learning process guarantees the quality of the output of educational institutions and ensures that they are reliable in the community. Based on researcher observations, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo has learning facilities and madrasah buildings that are strategic, clean and comfortable to use as a place of learning.

The first effort of the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in improving the quality of educational infrastructure by creating a comfortable and clean madrasah culture. The above statement is in line with the opinion expressed by Faisal Mubarak in his journal that efforts to improve the quality of schools or madrasah need to be done one of them by creating a conducive school/madrasah climate and culture. Then Muhaimin mentioned that a strong school/madrasah culture is a strength for a school/madrasah and a characteristic for schools or madrasahs that excel (Sutrisno et al., 2023; Yurieva, Voropaeva, Beliakova, & Adamchuk, 2021).

Therefore, the efforts of the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah in improving the quality of infrastructure by creating a comfortable and clean madrasa culture, is a form of attention and supervision of the madrasah head to the completeness of madrasah infrastructure.

Second, the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo continues to make improvements in facilities, namely the madrasah building was upgraded to two floors, and other improvements as well.

Based on this, the educational infrastructure facilities at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo need to get serious attention from the madrasah head as a leader. The improvement

of infrastructure facilities is a form of management of educational facilities and infrastructure carried out by the principal of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in an effort to improve the quality of the madrasah. In addition, the facilities in the madrasah must make students feel satisfied with the services provided by the madrasah.

Third, the madrasah principal shows the characteristics of the madrasah by requiring students to dress Islamically and wear madrasah alma mater suits. As explained by Damopolii that Islamic education is guiding students in their development, both physically and spiritually towards the formation of the main personality in students later based on Islamic laws (Atstsaury, Hadiyanto, & Supian, 2024).

The madrasah head's efforts are one form of religious culture development in the madrasah. Education is an effort to develop the potential of children to have religious spiritual strength, therefore in Islamic educational institutions such as madrasah, the efforts of madrasah principals to develop a religious culture are very important in increasing students' religious observance.

Fourth, the madrasah head is looking for added value for the madrasah so that it continues to develop more advanced. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Rosdianti in her journal that the sources and ways of procuring facilities and infrastructure in madrasahs are adjusted to the needs and available budget. The source can come from both the government and the private sector. The method of procurement is through the budget procurement process, submission of needs, and agreement (Helwah, Arisati, & Mufidah, 2023).

Fifth, in his efforts to improve the quality of educational infrastructure, the madrasah principal also carries out his role as an entrepreneur. Therefore, the head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo tries to innovate, namely by collaborating with other institutions / agencies in the procurement of infrastructure facilities, such as with Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI), Amidis (mineral water company), and PT Pertamina.

Sixth, the head of the madrasah formed a special team for the maintenance and care of facilities in the school. Rosdianti argues that the maintenance and care system for facilities and infrastructure is carried out by all madrasah personnel. While those that are specialized, maintenance and care are carried out by specialized experts as well.

Based on this, all madrasah residents need to maintain and care for the existing infrastructure in the madrasah. Because infrastructure is a support for the creation of effective learning. Without the maintenance of the madrasah community, the infrastructure will likely be damaged which causes the learning process to be disrupted. The infrastructure at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo is fairly good, because all madrasah residents are able to maintain it well. In addition, the head of the madrasah also continues to strive to improve infrastructure that supports the creation of better learning.

Seventh, the head of the madrasah made many visits to other madrasahs to conduct comparative studies. By conducting comparative studies to other madrasahs, the Head of MTs, Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, can find out what the advantages of other madrasahs are and can be used as an evaluation for madrasahs in improving the quality of education.

### **Improving the quality of the learning process**

As an implementation, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Nurul Hidayah is a formal educational institution equivalent to junior high school with Islamic characteristics; this madrasah emphasizes educational patterns and basic teaching skills that are based on Islamic values as a basis for behaviour. To improve the quality of the learning process, the madrasah has a Curriculum and Learning Outcomes (KHB) which describes the factors guiding the implementation of the learning, teaching, and assessment process to help students achieve learning outcome (Colthorpe, Gray, Ainscough, & Ernst, 2021)s.

The first effort of the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in improving the quality of the learning process is by organizing activities to improve teachers' teaching skills. Teachers are encouraged to take part in many trainings, such as participating in MGMP activities, upgrading activities, seminars, and so on. The opportunity to participate in these activities is given to every teacher, because teachers are required to have good teaching skills (Ababneh, 2022).

According to Makawimbang, in an effort to improve the quality of teacher performance, madrasah heads must improve the quality of teacher teaching in terms of strategies, expertise, and teaching tools. Based on this, it can be concluded that the madrasah principal must guide teachers in using teaching methods when in class. In addition, teachers are required to use technology in learning to facilitate the learning process. In this case, the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo also tries to provide good guidance to all teachers in teaching.

Second, the head of the madrasah structured the quality of the curriculum which includes the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation as well. As for improving the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, the curriculum must be specifically designed in accordance with the situation and conditions of student education. Ruwiah Abdullah explained that the framework for implementing the 2013 curriculum, teachers are expected to be able to read the vision of a curriculum, namely the main ideas contained in the curriculum objectives.

In terms of structuring this curriculum, the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah tries to assist teachers in using good strategies or methods and preparing materials that will be given to students by fostering teachers or by attending trainings. In addition, he also builds positive communication among teachers by trying to be open in every matter related to the madrasah. He also creates a good family atmosphere for teachers and other staff.

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communication among teachers by trying to be open in every matter related to the madrasah. He also creates a good family atmosphere for teachers and other staff.

Third, the madrasah head emphasizes an educational pattern that is based on Islamic values as the basis for behaving in accordance with the vision and mission of the madrasah. This is in accordance with the vision and mission of MTs Nurul Hidayah itself, which is to become a superior educational institution in order to produce generations who are pious, noble, knowledgeable, and live in society. This shows how the principal tries to apply Islamic education patterns to improve the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo.

Fourth, the principal guides the teachers to improve in using learning methods and models. The method most applied by teachers in learning is visualization with group work (Roll Playing), so teachers use a group learning model because it is adjusted to the 2013 Curriculum.

Based on the above opinion, it can be concluded that to improve the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, the head of the madrasa must try to direct teachers in implementing Islamic learning methods and models because they are considered very effective in shaping students' personalities. The madrasah head must also foster and direct ways of using media and educational facilities that support learning, so that the results of this guidance and direction each teacher can use the media and educational facilities properly in learning.

### **Improving student achievement at MTs Nurul Hidayah**

The efforts of the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in improving student achievement are first, to improve student academic achievement, when approaching the National Examination, the steps are by holding stabilization, additional lessons, cooperation with tutoring institutions. This is in accordance with the general objectives of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, namely that students are able to pass the National Examination well and be accepted at the next level as desired and have better abilities.

The efforts of the madrasah head are in line with Hasbi's opinion that the high competence of graduates based on the results of the national exam and the output of education in madrasas, many of which are accepted in favorite schools, is one of the supporting factors for improving the quality of education in madrasas (Siregar, Mesiono, & Neliwati, 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2023).

Second, the head of the madrasah provides debriefing to teachers, with the hope that the National Exam scores can increase. In increasing student achievement, it cannot be denied that the most influential human resource is the teacher. Therefore, the madrasah head must try to guide and direct teachers in creating an effective learning atmosphere.

Third, to improve the quality of students, when admitting new students, there is a selection in advance in the form of a Read and Write Al-Qur'an Test, an interview with BK to students and their parents, and also a written knowledge test. Every year the number of students who enroll to study at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo.

Fourth, the madrasah head creates a disciplined school culture. Starting from the students themselves, the students at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo are very few who come late to the madrasah. From 06.30 WIB all madrasa residents have walked to the mosque to perform Dhuha prayers, of course preceded by the head of the madrasa. Then at MTs Nurul

Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo, no students ever go home first, even though there are no teachers, because they are ready to picket, they still go home at a predetermined time.

Fifth, the madrasah provides various religious extracurricular activities such as Tahsin Al-Qur'an, Marawis, Qosidah, Nasyid, PAI Club and other general extracurricular activities. There are also extracurricular activities that are carried out ahead of competitions, such as science olympiads. From year to year, extracurricular activities also continue to grow, such as angklung, theater, etc.

If the output produced by MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo has good achievements, then it shows that the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo has succeeded in improving the quality of education and the madrasah can be said to have good quality.

Sixth, special competitions are always held in the madrasah. In addition, teachers involve students in various activities, both inside and outside the madrasah. In this case, to improve the quality of education, it is necessary to commit the school/madrasah to move in the field of student quality, therefore the school/madrasah often participates in various competitions at the national level (Badrun, Sugiarto, Rachmadhani, & Sh, 2022). Based on this, it can be concluded that the efforts of the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in improving student achievement by including students in various competitions both curricular and extracurricular, are in accordance with their duties and functions.

Seventh, in improving student achievement, the Head of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo also provides a forum for student self-development, namely every year the NHMB (Nurul Hidayah Mencari Bakat) event is always held. This event is a talent search stage conducted by the madrasah to find students who are talented in the arts.

### **The Role of the Principal of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in Efforts to Improve the Quality of Education**

The research findings show that the role of the principal as an educator is to encourage effective use of learning time at the Madrasah by motivating teachers to start and end lessons according to the designated schedule and use the time effectively and efficiently for the benefit of learning.

The duties and responsibilities of the principal in the scope of management include carrying out managerial functions, starting from planning, coaching, development, to evaluation of all areas within the Madrasah institution. In the field of educational staff management, the principal's roles are as follows: 1) Identifying the characteristics of effective educational staff, 2) Planning the staffing needs of the Madrasah, 3) Recruiting, selecting, placing, and orienting new educational staff, 4) Developing the performance of educational staff, 5) Utilizing and maintaining the educational staff, 6) Assessing the performance of educational staff.

The research findings indicate that coordination has been carried out, which involves connecting all organizational personnel with their respective tasks to ensure unity and alignment, resulting in appropriate policies and decisions. Coordination actions include supervision, evaluation, direction, and guidance for each member of the organization (Karim, Siregar, Prayoga, Suyitno, & Kartiko, 2022).



The research also shows that supervision has become a program focused mainly on monitoring, as the learning process is already considered effective. However, the development of supervision programs for classroom activities, extracurricular activities, library supervision, laboratory supervision, and examinations has been successfully implemented. The supervision process, through a monitoring system, aims to develop the Madrasah.

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Principal**

The supporting or driving factors for the Principal of MTs Nurul Hidayah in improving the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo are as follows: 1) Individual factors, which include a positive attitude, strong abilities, and high motivation to excel in their duties; 2) Support from subordinates (teachers and staff), as they can create a dynamic and harmonious atmosphere at the Madrasah through approaches that foster discipline, cooperation, and a sense of community; 3) Support from the Madrasah committee in addressing various challenges and applying open management practices; 4) Challenging work that fosters shared commitment to realizing the vision and mission of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo.

The challenges faced by the Principal of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo in implementing leadership performance to realize the school's vision and mission or to improve the quality of the school are as follows: 1) Some staff members are still not responsive in carrying out their duties effectively; 2) There is still a shortage of permanent teaching staff; 3) The financial budget is limited; 4) Teaching and learning facilities are still inadequate.

Despite these circumstances, the Principal of MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo continues to motivate subordinates to work productively by using the following approaches: 1) A persuasive approach, where the Principal builds a harmonious relationship among subordinates to ensure that no one becomes disengaged in performing their duties; 2) A participative or democratic approach, involving all members in activities and decision-making, so that they share the success or outcome of the work, making them responsible for the school's image and the educational environment, rather than viewing the results as solely the Principal's achievements; 3) An emotional approach, which is built individually, ensuring that previous approaches are not seen as coercive.

In addition to these approaches, the Principal of Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo also has methods to improve the quality of education by: 1) Providing rewards to outstanding teachers, 2) Conducting evaluations and monitoring subordinates, so that if there are less active staff members, guidance and coaching can be provided to help them perform their duties more effectively, 3) Providing facilities to make it easier for teachers and staff to carry out their tasks.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The various efforts made by the head of Madrasah in improving the quality of education at MTs Nurul Hidayah Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo include several important aspects. First, the improvement of teachers' professionalism can be seen from their educational background and experience, which on average has an S1 or S2 education. These teachers are not only disciplined and responsible but also have broad educational insights. This was reflected in classroom observations, where teachers showed enthusiasm and succeeded in attracting students' attention

to study seriously, so that the learning process took place effectively and efficiently. In addition, the madrasah head also made improvements to educational facilities and infrastructure, such as the construction of a two-storey madrasah building, which made students feel satisfied with the services provided.

Secondly, efforts to improve the quality of the learning process and student achievement are visible in implementing the Curriculum and Learning Outcomes (KHB) designed to support students in achieving optimal learning outcomes. The students at MTs Nurul Hidayah show good achievement in the academic field, with exam results increasing every year and many graduates being accepted into favourite schools. In addition, students' success in non-academic fields, such as sports and arts, also adds positive value to the madrasah. Thus, the madrasah head acts as an educator, manager and innovative leader, providing motivation and support to achieve the institution's vision, mission and overall goals.

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