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Developing Administrative Excellence for Enhanced Educational Service Quality in Islamic Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse the competency development process of administrative staff at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang and its implications for improving the quality of educational services. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, this research involved in-depth interviews with madrasah principals, administrative staff, and educators, as well as participatory observation and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model. The research findings indicate that administrative staff competency development is implemented structurally through four competency standards: personality, social, technical, and managerial. Development strategies include routine training programs, competency-based performance evaluations, continuous supervision, and implementation of digital service systems through One-Stop Integrated Services (PTSP). Despite challenges, particularly technology literacy gaps among staff, collaborative solutions through internal mentoring and adaptive training have proven effective in significantly enhancing administrative capacity. This research affirms that administrative staff are no longer merely support personnel, but essential actors in the success of madrasah management. Theoretically, this research extends the application of competency-based management and learning organisation models by positioning administrative staff as key subjects. In practice, these findings encourage madrasahs and similar educational institutions to design training programs that are better aligned with the real needs of administrative staff. Furthermore, this study makes a unique contribution to filling the literature gap on madrasah administrative management by providing an integrative model that connects digital transformation, competency-based development, and service quality improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

The support of human resources, facilities, infrastructure, and effective management is crucial for implementing quality education. (Goffar & Agustin, 2021; Rohmadi, Rahmat, & Ardianto, 2024). This is in line with Law No. 20 of 2003 of the Republic of Indonesia concerning the National Education System, which emphasises that education personnel, the community, funds, facilities, and infrastructure are important components in the implementation of education. (Kusnanto, Sukristyanto, & Rochim, 2023; Sudarmono, Hasibuan, & Kami, 2020). One of the human resources with a strategic role is school/madrasah administration personnel, whose existence is regulated by Permendiknas Number 24 of 2008 concerning Administrative Personnel Standards. The regulation emphasises that administrative personnel must possess competence in managing various aspects of administration, including staffing and exceptional services, as well as employee performance appraisals. (Selden & Sowa, 2011; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that the success of madrasahs is not only determined by the quality of teachers and principals, but also by the effectiveness of administrative staff. (Zaini, Barnoto, & Ashari, 2023) Abidin, Hilmiyati, & Zohriah, 2024; Shulhan, 2018). Professionally managed administration plays a crucial role in creating a conducive school climate, enhancing service quality, and supporting the achievement of educational goals. (Mahmood, Ismail, & Omar, 2024; Kurniady, Susilana, Widodo, & Halimi, 2024). The competence of administrative personnel includes four dimensions: personality, social, technical, and managerial. (Astereki, Mehrdad, & Ghobadiyan, 2021; Belov, Vaskov, Vorobyev, Burmistrov, & Samygin, 2020). These dimensions require integrity, practical communication skills, the ability to manage personnel, finance, and infrastructure, and the ability to plan and evaluate educational programs. However, the reality on the ground shows that the competence of administrative personnel often receives less serious attention (Farazmand, 2002; Sulhan, Gustini, Sambella, & Hali, 2024; Sungtong, Thupaang, & Ponlawat, 2025). The government's qualification standards have not been fully met, and they are not always required for hiring administrative staff. As a result, school administrative management often operates inefficiently.

Although numerous studies have been conducted in the field of educational management, most research still focuses on teachers and principals as the primary actors in improving educational quality. (Díez, Villa, López, & Iraurgi, 2020; Mincu, 2015). Research on the development of administrative staff competency is relatively limited, especially in the context of madrasahs. This indicates a significant research gap that needs to be addressed, particularly regarding how administrative staff can enhance their strategic role through competency development aligned with the demands of the digital era. In other words, the existing literature has not examined in depth the information technology-based administrative staff competency development model that can support more effective administrative services in the Islamic education environment.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on developing the competence of administrative staff at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang through a modern approach that emphasises the integration of information technology and innovation into administrative services. Unlike previous studies that focused on the pedagogical aspects of teachers or principal leadership, this research presents a new contribution by highlighting the technical and managerial dimensions of administrative staff as an important factor in improving the quality of madrasah services. Several previous studies (Zaini, Barnoto, & Ashari, 2023; Abidin, Hilmiyati, & Zohriah, 2024; Mahmood, Ismail, & Omar, 2024) have confirmed that the effectiveness of madrasah management largely depends on the professional execution of administrative functions. However, few have explored in depth the technological and managerial aspects of administrative staff competence, particularly in the context of Islamic education**.** Thus, this research is expected to enrich the body of Islamic education management

literature and offer practical implications for madrasahs in designing programs to enhance the competence of administrative staff.

In line with this, the purpose of this study is to explore and deepen the understanding of the process of developing administrative staff competence at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang, as well as its implications for improving the quality of educational services. Through an interpretive qualitative lens, this study aims to uncover the patterns, meanings, and contextual dynamics behind competency development practices, rather than measuring their numerical impact. This focus is expected not only to provide conceptual understanding but also to offer practical recommendations for managing administrative staff in a madrasah.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative case study design. (Yin, 2018) Because its focus is on providing an in-depth understanding of the competency development of administrative staff at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang, case studies were chosen to explore phenomena in a contextual and detailed manner in real-life situations, providing a comprehensive picture of the strategy for developing madrasah administrative competencies. (Biklen, 2007). The research location was purposively selected as MTs Negeri 1 Jombang, and the research subjects included the madrasah head, administrative staff, and educators who are directly involved in the administrative management process.

The research data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and a documentary study of various school administrative archives. (Sugiyono, 2021). Data analysis was conducted interactively with the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques, allowing the findings to be scientifically accounted for (Creswell, 2018)

Table 1. Data Collection Process is More Transparent

Data Collection Technique	Instrument	Focus	Source of Data
In-depth Interview	Interview Guide	Development of administrative competence, leadership support, and digital literacy	Head of Madrasah, Head of Administration, Staff (Code: AS001, AS002, AS003)
Participatory Observation	Observation Sheet	Daily administrative activities, service flow, use of digital systems (SIMPATIKA, EMIS, PTSP)	Administrative staff in the field
Documentation Study	Documentation Checklist	Training records, meeting minutes, supervision reports, and evaluation documents	Institutional archives and internal reports

Source: Data Collection, 2025

Additionally, a schematic visualisation of Table 1 illustrates the interactive process of data collection and analysis, showing how interviews, observations, and documents triangulate to ensure validity. This visual representation enhances reader comprehension and demonstrates methodological rigour. With this design, the research is expected to yield a sharper understanding of how the competence of administrative staff is developed to improve the quality of education services in madrasahs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Competency Development for Administrative Staff

The competency development of administrative staff at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang is implemented in a structured and systematic manner, guided by four key competency standards: personal, social, technical, and managerial. The findings reveal that task distribution is clearly defined across finance, student affairs, correspondence, infrastructure, and public relations, enabling staff to work according to their functional responsibilities. Competency development is conducted through regular participation in external programs such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs' MMOC Smart Training, PGRI workshops, and archiving seminars, as well as internal training organised by the madrasah. Documentation from the annual work plan shows that capacity-building initiatives consistently receive institutional priority.

Leadership support is evident through routine supervision and the principal's intense attention, with significant focus on administrative improvement. Performance evaluations are conducted every three months, with documented results serving as the basis for follow-up actions, including recommendations for further IT-related training for staff with limited digital proficiency. The competency development of administrative staff at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang is carried out in a structured manner, in accordance with national standards for school administration personnel. The head of the madrasah emphasised: "Steps to develop administrative staff can be taken by involving them in tailored training sessions for their respective fields of work. This is important because each administrative staff member has different duties, principles, and functions (AS001)."

The researcher's observations revealed that the division of tasks was clear: finance, student affairs, correspondence, infrastructure, and public relations staff worked within their respective areas of responsibility. Documentation in the form of an annual work program shows that the competency improvement agenda is consistently included in the institution's priorities.

> "This statement was reinforced by the Head of Administration, Khoiru Ummatin, who said: The administration at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang utilises four competency standards: personality, social, technical, and managerial. For example, personality standards include morals, discipline, innovation, work ethic, and self-confidence. Technical standards include financial administration, student affairs, correspondence, infrastructure, and public relations. Managerial standards include planning, organising, and supervising administrative activities (AS002)."

Observation of the workspace showed that staff duties are organised according to these classifications. Internal documentation, in the form of administrative work guidelines, confirms that these four standards serve as the basis for evaluating staff performance.

> "We actively participate in training activities, including seminars and workshops. One we regularly participate in is the MMOC Smart Training, held monthly by the Ministry of Religious Affairs" (AS002).

Documentation in the form of training schedules shows staff participation in such training on an ongoing basis. This shows that competency development is not just a formality, but is also carried out on an ongoing basis. The researcher's observations confirmed the existence of regular supervision by the administration. Documentation of monthly coordination meetings also shows that the administration agenda gets the most discussion time compared to other fields.

From the researcher's perspective, the performance evaluation process within the administrative team is methodically structured and effectively implemented. The Head of Administration's statement that performance evaluations are conducted every three months

provides evidence of a systematic approach to maintaining consistent performance standards. The evaluation encompasses key areas such as correspondence management, financial oversight, and the management of facilities and infrastructure, which are integral to the organisation's smooth operation. The regularity of this assessment ensures that potential issues are addressed promptly and that administrative staff remain aligned with organisational goals. Additionally, providing direct feedback during evaluation meetings enhances communication and transparency within the team, facilitating continuous improvement and accountability.

Furthermore, the documentation of staff evaluations, which includes detailed reports and clear recommendations, reinforces the reliability and accuracy of the assessment process. It is particularly noteworthy that recommendations for further staff development are included for those who require improvement, especially in IT skills. This demonstrates a forward-thinking approach, where the organisation not only monitors performance but also invests in staff development. By identifying skill gaps and offering training opportunities, the organisation fosters an environment of continuous learning, which is essential in a rapidly evolving administrative landscape. The systematic nature of these evaluations, paired with a focus on professional development, ensures the long-term efficiency and adaptability of the administrative team.

Challenges in Competency Development and Strategic Responses

Despite the structured implementation of competency development, several challenges remain. Differences in staff character and personality, such as low discipline, difficulty following directions, and tendencies toward individualism, present obstacles in achieving optimal administrative performance. A significant challenge is technological proficiency, particularly among senior staff, who struggle to operate digital administrative systems such as SIMPATIKA, EMIS, and BOS financial reporting applications. Observations and supervisory documentation reveal that inconsistent IT mastery often leads to delays in data entry, archiving, and BOS reporting, which require accuracy, basic accounting skills, and advanced Excel competencies.

However, this research also uncovered several challenges. The madrasah head revealed: "Each individual certainly has a different character and personality, so it is not uncommon to find administrative staff who are difficult to direct, lazy, or selfish. However, it is still our responsibility to foster them." The Head of Administration adds,

> “The biggest challenge is the difference in ability, especially in technology. Senior staff usually find it difficult to keep up with the development of digital systems (AS002)."
>
> We created a flexible, gradual training schedule. We also often hold internal training, even inviting external presenters. We encourage staff who already understand technology to help their friends (AS002)."

Researcher observations revealed that some staff members are still slow to operate the SIMPATIKA and EMIS applications. Documentation of semesterly supervision includes notes on a gap in staff's technology mastery. Observations during internal training revealed that mentoring was occurring among staff. Documentation of internal training meeting minutes evidences the sharing of IT skills. This is also supported by documentation of digital proficiency training.



Figure 1. Digital Literacy Workshop

The head of the madrasah explained that they have implemented the One Stop Integrated Service (PTSP) system as a centralised administrative service area, where each guest or visitor is directed to the appropriate service based on their needs or field. This ensures that the service is more efficient and well-organised. Additionally, the Head of Administration emphasised that in providing services, they consistently prioritise three main principles: accuracy, speed, and friendliness. Thus, every interaction with visitors is expected to run smoothly and satisfactorily. Students also feel this quality of service. Meisya, a grade IX student, said:

> "When I came to the TU to obtain the PKH certificate, the staff served me in a friendly and efficient manner. The process did not take long because I was immediately directed to the appropriate section." (AS003)
>
> "IT mastery is crucial because almost all services are digital-based. If staff do not master IT, services can be hampered (AS001)." The Head of Administration adds: "We regularly include staff in IT training, both from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other institutions" (AS002).

From the researcher's perspective, the implementation of computerisation within the madrasah has been highly successful, especially in improving the speed and organisation of administrative services. The documentation from supervision has clearly indicated that staff performance has improved following IT training. This is corroborated by student testimonials, with Meisya specifically highlighting faster, more organised services thanks to the use of computers. The increased student satisfaction observed is further reflected in internal user satisfaction reports, where the majority of respondents rated the administrative services as effective. These findings underscore the positive impact of digitisation on service delivery, enhancing both efficiency and user experience.

However, despite the progress, certain technical areas still require improvement. The madrasah leadership has identified gaps in skills such as digital data management, financial reporting, and advanced IT applications. The head of the madrasah emphasised that approximately 50% of IT competencies, particularly in advanced applications, need periodic refreshment to keep up with technological advancements. Furthermore, the head of administration emphasised the critical need for accurate management of personnel data in SIMPATIKA, student data in EMIS, and financial reporting for BOS, particularly in basic accounting and Excel skills. Observations noted delays in BOS reporting, highlighting the need for targeted training for finance staff. These gaps in

technical skills are being addressed through a structured training process that includes both formal and internal training sessions tailored to the specific needs of the staff.

The madrasah leadership has made it clear that staff development, particularly in mastering technology, is a strategic priority for the institution. The madrasah head expressed a desire for administrative staff to become more professional and adaptable to technological changes, ensuring smoother coordination and better services. Internal training sessions, primarily focused on Excel and digital archiving, have been well received by staff, as evidenced by their enthusiasm to participate. The long-term work program documentation further highlights the focus on competency improvement as a key strategic goal. With clear expectations from leadership and a solid plan in place, the madrasah is poised to continue enhancing its technological infrastructure and ensuring that its administrative staff are well-equipped to meet future challenges.

Table 2. Research Findings

Aspect	Research Findings
Administrative Staff Competency Standards	Staff development is directed toward four main standards (personality, social, technical, and managerial) with a clear division of tasks in finance, student affairs, correspondence, facilities and infrastructure, and public relations.
Training Programs	Staff regularly participate in external training (MMOC Training by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, PGRI workshops, and archiving seminars) as well as internal training organised by the madrasah; these activities are conducted at least once a year.
Leadership Support	The principal pays greater attention to the administrative sector compared to teaching, with regular supervision and full support for the development of administrative staff.
Performance Evaluation	Performance evaluations are conducted every three months, covering correspondence, finance, facilities and infrastructure, and discipline, with written results serving as the basis for follow-up actions.
Development Challenges	The main obstacles come from differences in staff character, lack of discipline among some individuals, and IT competency gaps, particularly among senior staff.
Problem-Solving Strategies	The madrasah applies peer mentoring, simple internal training, and flexible training schedules to address competency gaps.
Administrative Services (PTSP)	PTSP is implemented as the central service system, with an orderly, fast, accurate, and friendly service flow in accordance with the madrasah's official guidelines.
Service Quality	Administrative services are rated positively by students and the community; the process of issuing letters is fast, friendly, and straightforward.
Technology Proficiency	Administrative staff are required to master SIMPATIKA, EMIS, and digital-based BOS reporting applications; there remains a need for refresher training in advanced IT competencies.
Leadership Expectations	The principal and head of administration expect staff to become more professional, adaptable, independent, and prepared to face digital system changes in support of the quality of educational services.

Source: Data Collection, 2025

Based on the table above, it can be emphasised that the development of administrative staff competencies at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang is guided by a comprehensive strategy that includes routine training, periodic performance evaluations, leadership support, and the implementation of a modern, integrated service system. Although there are still challenges, especially in mastering technology, solution efforts through internal mentoring and adaptive training show the madrasah's commitment to ensuring that administrative staff can play a strategic role in supporting the quality of education services. These findings provide a strong foundation for further analysis in the discussion section, as they are grounded in education management theory and informed by prior research.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that routine and internal training programs have become the primary strategy in developing the competence of administrative staff. This practice aligns with the concept of a learning organisation, in which educational institutions strive to create an adaptive environment through continuous learning. (Sessa & London, 2015; Chughtai, Syed, Naseer, & Chinchilla, 2024; Shin, Picken, & Dess, 2017). Research by (2021) confirms that structured training significantly improves the effectiveness of administrative services in schools. Thus, the consistent training program at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang is an indicator of the institution's seriousness in building staff competencies on an ongoing basis.

Periodic performance evaluations of administrative staff indicate the presence of an integrated quality control system in madrasah management. This approach reflects the competency-based performance management model widely used in modern educational institutions. The study by (Christopher & Jones, 2025), Evaluation and Program Planning, Scopus) found that competency-based evaluation can increase accountability and foster a more professional work culture (Atstsaury, Hadiyanto, & Supian, 2024; Isa, Neliwati, & Hadijaya, 2024; Sabariah et al., 2025). With regular evaluations, madrasahs not only ensure administrative compliance but also provide an objective basis for designing further development programs. (Haddade, Nur, Achruh, Rasyid, & Ibrahim, 2024; Sali & Marasigan, 2020).

The obstacles faced, especially the gap in information technology capabilities between staff, indicate the challenges of digital transformation in educational administration. This phenomenon is also noted in (Sinclair & Aho, 2018), which highlights that education personnel who are less adaptable to technology may hinder school management innovation. In the context of MT Negeri 1 Jombang, the different generations of staff are one of the factors that affect digital readiness, so a flexible coaching approach is needed. The collaborative internal mentoring strategy implemented by madrasahs has proven effective in closing the competency gap. This reflects the application of peer learning principles in educational organisations. Research by (Kozlowski & Bell, 2007) Emphasises that peer learning significantly accelerates staff adaptation to new technologies. Thus, the mentoring model that operates at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang can serve as a sustainable alternative for other educational institutions facing similar obstacles.

The implementation of One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) emphasises institutional innovation that prioritises service users' effectiveness and satisfaction. This concept aligns with ISO 21001, which emphasises the importance of a stakeholder-satisfaction-based education management system. (Fitri & Muhajir, 2025). A study by (Gallifa & Batallé, 2010) Shows that the implementation of an integrated service system improves public perception of the quality of educational institutions. This is also evident at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang, where students and the community feel that services are faster and friendlier.

The leadership of madrasah principals, who give high priority to the administrative field, demonstrates the importance of the leader's role in promoting the quality of educational management. (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025; Musrifah, Shah, Rokhman, & Aprilianto, 2024). This finding supports the instructional and administrative leadership theory, which posits that school success is significantly influenced by the balance of leadership between the instructional and administrative fields (Cahyono, Sedana, & Suwindia, 2025; Haq & Roesminingsih, 2024; Kadir, 2023; Radhi et al., 2025). Confirm that leadership that focuses on coaching administrative staff has a positive impact on the institution's operational efficiency. The full support of the madrasah head at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang demonstrates the practical application of this theory.

The sound quality of administrative services, as recognised by students, confirms that the competence of administrative personnel is not only a technical issue, but also related to service professionalism. (Saif, 2014; Al-Kilani & Twaissi, 2017). This finding is in line with research conducted

by Watungwa & Pather, (2018), which states that user satisfaction with administrative services is an important indicator of the success of educational management. Thus, the quality of service perceived positively by students strengthens the legitimacy of administrative personnel's role in improving the quality of education. (Sadeh & Garkaz, 2015; Latif, Tariq, Muneeb, Sahibzada, & Ahmad, 2024). The strengthening of information technology in madrasah administrative services underscores the importance of digital transformation in school management. (Mahsusi et al., 2024; (asibuan, Suwandi, Fahma, & Siregar, 2024). The study by Kuriyan, Bailur, Gigler, & Park, (2011) Shows that adopting technology in school administration improves efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The implementation of the SIMPATIKA and EMIS applications at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang reflects an honest effort to digitalise Islamic education management.

The findings on staff limitations in using finance and accounting applications point to the need for further technical training. Research by (Nicholaus, Siamoo, & Lyamtane, 2023) States that mastery of digital accounting technology is essential for school administration to ensure transparency in fund management. The condition at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang indicates that, although the basic use of the application is already underway, intensive training is still necessary to achieve higher standards. The supervision practices that precede the training program reflect the implementation of data-driven decision-making. (Hora, Bouwma-Gearhart, & Park, 2017; ten Cate & Favier, 2022). The study by (Marsh & Farrell, 2015)Emphasises that data-driven decisions can increase the relevance of staff development programs. The mapping of training needs at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang demonstrates systematic steps to ensure training is aligned with the real needs of administrative staff.

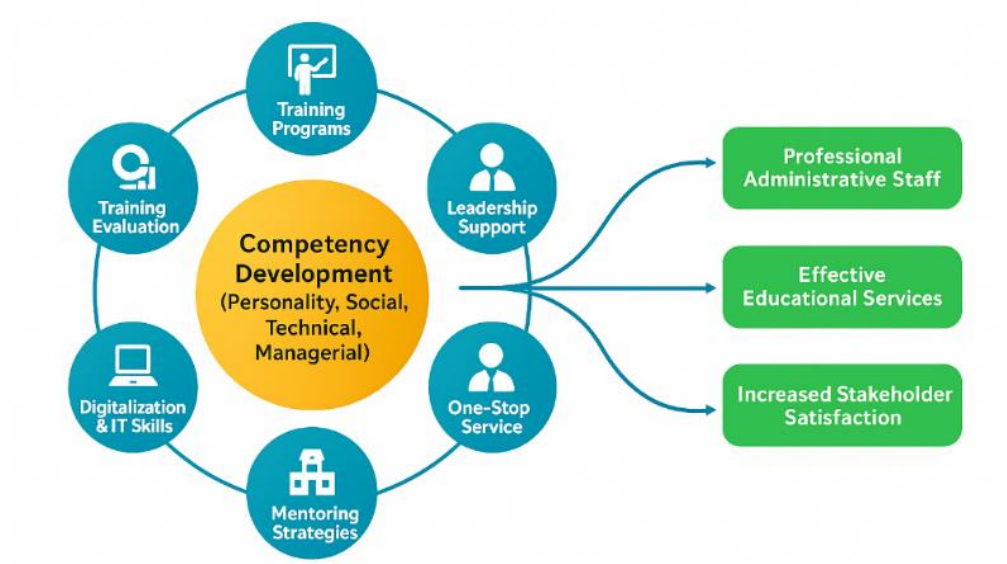


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Research Findings and Analysis.

The madrasah leaders' expectation that staff be more professional, adaptive, and independent reflects the direction of human resource development toward 21st-century competencies. Research by (Binkley et al., 2012) Confirms that 21st-century competencies include technological skills, collaboration, and adaptability. With this vision, MTs Negeri 1 Jombang shows a long-term orientation in preparing administrative staff that meets the demands of the times.

This figure illustrates the relationship between the main inputs identified in the study (training programs, performance evaluation, leadership support, one-stop service, mentoring strategies, and digitalisation) and the competency development process, encompassing personality, social, technical, and managerial dimensions. The interaction of these factors leads to outcomes that include professional administrative staff, more effective educational services, and increased stakeholder satisfaction.

Overall, the results of this study show that developing the competence of administrative staff is not only a supporting factor but also a strategic one in improving the quality of education services in madrasahs. These findings enrich the Islamic education management literature and provide empirical evidence that a combination of systematic training, competency-based evaluation, visionary leadership, and digital transformation can serve as an effective model for improving the professionalism of administrative staff in schools and madrasahs. Unlike prior studies that have focused primarily on teachers and principals (Bouchamma, Basque, & Marcotte, 2014; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Mestry & Grobler, 2004) This study emphasises that administrative personnel are equally crucial in sustaining the institutional ecosystem of madrasah management.

Although several previous studies have emphasised the importance of education personnel competencies in supporting school effectiveness, most have not explicitly addressed administrative staff as a determinant of service quality. By contrasting the Indonesian case with international studies (Martínez, Murgui, Garcia, & Garcia, 2019; Kuldosheva, 2021; Elsafty, 2023) This research highlights that digital transformation challenges in administrative management are global and systemic, not merely contextual to developing nations (Azizah & Mardiana, 2024; Munawir, Alfiana, & Pambayun, 2024; Tsani & Ali, 2024). This cross-comparison strengthens the argument that adaptive digital competence and managerial capacity are universal needs within 21st-century educational governance.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the application of competency-based management and learning organisation theory to include administrative staff within Islamic education institutions (Balqis, Usman, & Ismail, 2025; Mayasafira, 2025; Mustikamah, Na'imah, & Qutsiyah, 2025). The incorporation of continuous training, data-based evaluation, and digital service systems at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang illustrates a localised adaptation of global management principles. However, since the study relies on a single case, its generalizability remains limited. Future multisite or comparative research is necessary to identify diverse patterns of administrative competence development across regions and institutional types.

Practically, this study offers policy implications for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and educational policymakers to formalise administrative professional development standards equivalent to those for teachers. Developing national competency frameworks, supporting digital capacity-building programs, and ensuring equitable career pathways for administrative personnel are crucial steps to elevate their strategic role in school effectiveness (Apologia, Mas'od, Masykuri, Hidayati, & Putra, 2024; Bolotio & Yusuf, 2025; Haqqi, Darim, & Yaqin, 2025; Mayasafira, 2025). Ultimately, by connecting local findings to broader global contexts, this study offers not only a descriptive model but also a reflective critique of how digital literacy and managerial innovation among administrative staff can catalyse reforming the education system.

To provide a more straightforward overview of how the empirical findings relate to existing theories and the unique contributions of this study, a summary of the theoretical analysis and research novelty is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 3. Summary of Theoretical Analysis and Research Novelty

Key Finding	Theoretical Support	Novelty
Continuous training enhances administrative competence.	Supported by learning organisation theory and studies showing that training improves administrative effectiveness	Provides empirical evidence on administrative staff, a group rarely examined in Islamic education research
Competency-based evaluation strengthens professionalism and accountability.	Aligned with competency-based performance management models.	Demonstrates the use of evaluation results for data-driven staff development planning

Digital literacy gaps hinder administrative performance.	Research shows that low IT readiness limits innovation in educational management.	Identifies generation-based digital disparities within the madrasah administrative staff
Peer mentoring reduces competency gaps effectively.	Supported by peer learning and workplace learning theories	Presents an organic, internally driven mentoring model, not a formal institutional program
One-Stop Integrated Service (PTSP) improves service efficiency and user satisfaction.	Consistent with integrated service system theory and stakeholder-centred quality models	Provides empirical evidence of PTSP effectiveness in Islamic educational administration
Leadership prioritisation of administration drives institutional improvement.	Supports administrative leadership theory, emphasising leader influence on organisational quality	Shows that administrative leadership directly accelerates digitalisation and service quality improvement

Source: Data Collection, 2025

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the development of administrative staff competencies at MTs Negeri 1 Jombang is a strategic pillar in improving the quality of educational services. The results reveal that competency development strategies are implemented through regular training, competency-based performance evaluation, continuous supervision, and the digitalisation of administrative services through the One-Stop Service (PTSP) system. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating how digital transformation can be systematically integrated into competency-based management within a madrasah context, highlighting administrative staff as the primary driver of educational innovation**.** Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse of Islamic education management by providing a local model that integrates *learning organisation principles* with *digital governance*. It extends competency-based management theory by positioning administrative personnel as active learning agents who continuously adapt to technological and managerial changes. This perspective reframes administrative roles from passive support into dynamic contributors to institutional excellence**.**

In practice, the findings provide a prototype for developing adaptive, technology-oriented training models, supported by data-driven evaluation mechanisms and user-friendly service platforms. From a policy standpoint, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and local education authorities may adopt this digital-competency framework as a reference in formulating national standards for the professional development of administrative staff. The quantitative implications of this study could be further explored by measuring indicators such as service response time, administrative reporting accuracy rate, and user satisfaction levels following the digital implementation. This research is limited to a single case study, which constrains the generalisation of its findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ a multisite, mixed-methods approach to compare madrasahs across regions and quantify the impact of administrative digital transformation on service performance metrics. Such studies will help establish broader empirical validation of this qualitative model and identify key predictors of service excellence within Islamic education institutions.

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