

THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF MADRASAH HEADS IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE MADRASAS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the leadership role of madrasah heads in improving teacher performance through Islamic value-based human resource management (HRM) at MTs Al-Ikhlash Kebun Ajamu. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with validity tested through triangulation. The results show that the leadership of the madrasah head is participatory and transformational, fostering teacher motivation, involvement, and professionalism. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss leadership and human resource management separately, this study highlights an integrative model that systematically combines participatory-transformational leadership, human resource management practices, and Islamic values such as trustworthiness, responsibility, and discipline within the madrasah work culture. The implementation of HRM is carried out through structured planning, recruitment, coaching, and performance evaluation processes that are consistently aligned with Islamic principles. This integrative synergy has proven effective in improving teacher performance, as reflected in better learning planning, more innovative teaching practices, more systematic evaluation methods, and stronger professional development. This research contributes to the development of madrasah education management by offering a value-based integrative leadership and HRM model that strengthens both organizational effectiveness and teacher professionalism.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Education is a strategic instrument in the development of quality and competitive human resources in the global era. The transformation of education in the 21st century requires the education system to be oriented not only to cognitive aspects, but also to strengthening character, creativity, and adaptability to change (Bank, 2021; OECD, 2020) In the Indonesian context, madrasahs have an important role as educational institutions that integrate Islamic values with the development of students' academic competence. Therefore, the existence of madrasahs is an important part in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also moral (Fadhli, 2019).

However, private madrasas still face various challenges in improving the quality of education. These problems include limited resources, variations in the quality of educators, and the suboptimal management system of educational institutions (Hasibuan, 2019; Nurafni, 2022). This condition has a direct impact on the quality of the learning process that takes place in the classroom. In many cases, the imbalance between institutional vision and implementation in the field is the main factor in the achievement of optimal quality of education (Sukma, 2024). Therefore, a more effective managerial approach is needed in the management of madrasas.

One of the main indicators in assessing the success of education is teacher performance. Teachers have a central role as the main implementer of the learning process that determines the quality of students' learning outcomes (Mulyono, 2023). Teacher performance includes various aspects, ranging from learning planning, the implementation of teaching and learning activities, to the evaluation of learning outcomes (Wijayanto, 2023). Teachers who have high performance will be able to create learning that is effective, innovative, and oriented to the needs of students. On the contrary, low teacher performance will have a direct impact on the decline in the quality of education (Tarib, 2023).

Teacher performance does not stand alone, but is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. One of the factors that has a significant influence is the leadership of the head of the madrasah (Ghufron & Eliyanto, 2020). The head of the madrasah plays the role of a leader who determines the direction of policies, manages resources, and creates a conducive work environment (Amri, 2022). Effective leadership is able to increase teachers' motivation, commitment, and professionalism in carrying out their duties (Wahyudin, 2023). Thus, the role of madrasah heads is a key factor in improving teacher performance.

In addition to leadership, human resource management (HRM) also has an important role in improving teacher performance. MSDM includes the process of planning, recruiting, training, evaluating, and providing motivation to educators systematically (Karina & Rindaningsih, 2023). Through effective human resource management, educational institutions can ensure the suitability between teachers' competencies and organizational needs. Continuous professional development has also been proven to significantly improve the quality of learning and teacher performance (Taufiqurrahman, 2019). Therefore, the integration between leadership and HR is very important.

In the context of madrasas, human resource management is inseparable from Islamic values which are the main foundation in educational practice. Values such as trust, responsibility, discipline, and deliberation are principles in building a positive work culture (Mubarak, 2024). The integration of these values in the practice of MSDM is believed to be able to improve work ethic and shape the professional character of teachers. In addition, religious work culture also contributes to increasing the commitment and loyalty of educators (Nikma, 2023). Thus, an approach based on Islamic values is unique in the management of madrasas.

Various previous studies have examined the relationship between leadership and teacher performance, as well as the role of human resource management (HRM) in improving the quality of educators. However, most of these studies still tend to discuss these aspects separately and have not comprehensively integrated leadership, HRM practices, and Islamic values within a unified analytical framework (Nurhalisa, 2024). In fact, amidst the increasing demands for educational quality, professionalism, and character-based learning in the modern era, madrasas are required not only to improve managerial effectiveness but also to strengthen Islamic values as the foundation of organizational culture. This condition makes an integrative approach that combines participatory leadership, strategic HRM, and Islamic values increasingly urgent and relevant, especially in the context of private madrasas that often face limitations in resources and institutional management. Nevertheless, studies specifically examining the synergy between these three aspects in improving teacher performance are still limited. Therefore, this study offers a more contextual and integrative approach by connecting the leadership of madrasah heads, HRM implementation, and Islamic values within a comprehensive framework to strengthen teacher professionalism and the quality of madrasah education.

Empirically, the conditions at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu show that teacher performance still faces various challenges. This can be seen from the variety of teacher competencies, the application of learning methods that are not optimal, and the level of discipline that is not consistent. In addition, the teacher's professional development program has also not run optimally. This condition is in line with the findings of previous research which shows that

limited human resources and management that are not optimal are the main obstacles in improving the quality of education (Putri, 2023). Therefore, a more effective strategy is needed in human resource management.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the leadership role of madrasah heads in improving teacher performance through human resource management. In addition, this study also examines the implementation of MSDM based on Islamic values in the management of educators. With an integrative approach, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education management. Practically, the results of this research are also expected to be a reference for madrasah managers in improving teacher performance in a sustainable manner.

This research offers novelty in the form of an integrative model that connects the leadership of madrasah heads, human resource management, and Islamic values in one comprehensive conceptual framework. In contrast to previous research which tended to be partial, this study examined these three aspects simultaneously in the context of private madrasahs, thus making a more contextual theoretical and practical contribution.

Leadership, human resource management (HRM), teacher performance, and Islamic values are closely interconnected elements in improving the quality of madrasah education. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence, direct, and mobilize individuals or groups to achieve organizational goals effectively (Erani1, 2026; Nkurunziza, 2025). In the educational context, the leadership of madrasah heads plays a strategic role not only as administrators but also as drivers of institutional change and creators of a conducive learning environment. One leadership approach considered relevant in improving educational quality is transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, motivation, empowerment, and innovation among teachers (Nizar, 2022; Wahyudin, 2023). Through transformational leadership, madrasah heads are able to strengthen teacher commitment, job satisfaction, and professionalism, which ultimately contribute to better teacher performance.

In addition to leadership, human resource management (HRM) is also an important factor in supporting the effectiveness of educational institutions. HRM refers to a systematic process of workforce planning, recruitment, training, development, and performance evaluation aimed at achieving organizational goals efficiently (Aldabbas & Blaique, 2025; Peng & Wang, 2025). In the context of madrasahs, effective HRM enables educational institutions to place teachers according to their competencies, improve pedagogical and professional skills through continuous development programs, and create a productive work environment. Objective evaluation systems, motivation, and professional support are essential components that encourage teachers to improve their performance sustainably.

Teacher performance itself reflects the quality of teachers in carrying out their professional duties, including learning planning, implementation, evaluation, and professional development (Levi-Nielsen, 2026; Tarib, 2023). High teacher performance is characterized by the ability to create effective, interactive, and student-centered learning processes. Therefore, teacher performance is considered one of the primary indicators in assessing the quality and success of education in madrasahs. However, teacher performance does not develop independently; it is strongly influenced by leadership practices, institutional management, and organizational culture within the educational environment.

In madrasahs, the implementation of leadership and HRM is inseparable from Islamic values, which serve as the moral and managerial foundation of educational practices. Values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, discipline, and deliberation (*musyawarah*) guide managerial activities and shape a fair and transparent organizational culture (Mubarok, 2024). The integration of Islamic values into HRM practices contributes to the development of a religious, professional, and committed work culture among educators (Nikma, 2023). Moreover, Islamic values create a balance between professional responsibilities and spiritual dimensions, which distinguishes madrasah management from other educational institutions. Therefore, the integration of leadership, HRM, teacher performance, and Islamic values becomes an important and relevant approach in strengthening teacher professionalism and improving the quality of madrasah education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design aimed at deeply understanding the phenomenon of madrasah head leadership in improving teacher performance through human resource management. A qualitative

approach was chosen because it enables researchers to explore meanings, processes, and social dynamics that naturally occur within the madrasah environment. Through this approach, the researcher can obtain contextual and comprehensive data regarding leadership practices, HRM implementation, and teacher performance development. The descriptive design is used to systematically and factually describe the conditions and phenomena found in the field. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the phenomenon holistically within its natural setting.

This research was conducted at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu, which was selected as the research site because it is relevant to the focus of the study. The research subjects were determined purposively based on specific considerations aligned with the research objectives. The informants consisted of the madrasah head, teachers, and educational staff directly involved in the educational management process. The selection of these informants aimed to obtain in-depth and diverse perspectives regarding leadership practices, HRM implementation, and teacher performance improvement. Thus, the data collected were expected to represent the actual conditions occurring within the madrasah.

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences, perceptions, and views regarding leadership and HRM practices in the madrasah. Observations were carried out to directly examine activities, interactions, and working conditions within the madrasah environment. Meanwhile, documentation techniques involved collecting supporting data such as school archives, meeting notes, teacher performance reports, and other relevant documents. These three techniques were used simultaneously to strengthen data validity and to obtain more comprehensive findings.

The data analysis process in this study employed the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014) consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out continuously throughout the research. In the data reduction stage, the researcher transcribed interview results, organized field notes, and selected relevant information related to leadership, HRM practices, Islamic values, and teacher performance. The researcher then coded the data by grouping similar statements and identifying recurring patterns from different informants. For example, statements related to teacher motivation, participatory decision-making, and professional development were categorized into broader themes such as transformational leadership and Islamic value-based HRM.

After the reduction process, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic categorizations to facilitate understanding of the relationships among findings. Through this stage, the researcher was able to compare information from interviews, observations, and documentation in order to identify consistencies and differences in the data. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings by continuously interpreting the patterns and themes that emerged during the research process. Conclusions were not determined at the beginning but developed gradually based on the ongoing analysis until data saturation was achieved.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including the madrasah head, teachers, and educational staff. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by reconfirming several findings with informants to ensure the accuracy and suitability of the interpreted data. These procedures were implemented to strengthen the credibility, dependability, and scientific accountability of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Leadership Role of Madrasah Heads

The results of the study show that the head of the madrasah at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu has a very strategic role in human resource management. The head of the madrasah not only carries out administrative functions such as planning and organizing, but also acts as a leader who is able to direct, mobilize, and motivate all components of the educational organization. This role can be seen from the ability of the madrasah head to build a shared vision and ensure that all teachers understand institutional goals clearly and systematically. In addition, the madrasah head continuously supervises the implementation of teachers' duties to maintain the quality of learning. These findings

support previous studies which state that effective educational leadership significantly influences teacher professionalism and institutional quality (Amri, 2022; Wahyudin, 2023) However, this study also found that leadership at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu is not solely focused on managerial achievement, but is strongly characterized by a familial and religious approach that strengthens emotional closeness between leaders and teachers. This finding enriches transformational leadership theory by showing that emotional and spiritual relationships can become an important element in sustaining teacher commitment within Islamic educational institutions.

The applied leadership style tends to be participatory, as reflected in the involvement of teachers in decision-making processes, both in program planning and evaluation of learning activities. The madrasah head provides open communication spaces that allow teachers to express ideas and opinions constructively. In addition, guidance and motivation are consistently provided through both formal and informal approaches. Interpersonal relationships between the leader and teachers are harmonious, creating a conducive, collaborative, and productive working atmosphere. This finding is consistent with (Ghufron & Eliyanto, 2020), who argued that participatory leadership increases teacher involvement and organizational commitment. Nevertheless, the findings of this study indicate a unique characteristic in which participation is not only administrative in nature, but is also built through the values of *musyawarah* (deliberation) and mutual respect rooted in Islamic culture. Such conditions show that participatory leadership in madrasahs possesses distinctive cultural and spiritual dimensions that may differ from leadership practices in general educational institutions.

Implementation of Human Resources Based on Islamic Values

The results of the study show that the implementation of human resource management at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu is carried out systematically through the stages of planning, recruitment, coaching, and teacher performance evaluation. Each stage is designed to support the continuous improvement of educator quality in accordance with institutional needs. The coaching process is conducted through structured supervision, training, and professional mentoring activities. Performance evaluations are also conducted periodically as a basis for decision-making related to teacher development. These findings support the view that HRM is an essential instrument in improving the quality and effectiveness of educational organizations (Karina & Rindaningsih, 2023). However, unlike many previous studies that emphasize HRM from a technical and administrative perspective, this study found that HRM implementation in madrasahs is closely connected with moral and spiritual guidance. Teacher development is not only oriented toward competence enhancement, but also toward strengthening character and religious responsibility in carrying out educational duties.

In practice, Islamic values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, and discipline are integrated into every managerial activity within the madrasah environment. The value of *amanah* is reflected in teachers' commitment to carrying out their duties honestly and professionally, while responsibility can be seen from the seriousness with which teachers complete their work. Discipline also becomes an important element in building an orderly and consistent work culture. These values are not only delivered theoretically, but are also internalized through the exemplary behavior of leaders and daily work practices. These findings reinforce previous research showing that the integration of spiritual values in organizations can improve work ethic and educator loyalty (Nikma, 2023). At the same time, this study contributes a new perspective by showing that Islamic values function not merely as ethical principles, but also as practical management instruments that shape organizational behavior and strengthen institutional culture. This finding broadens the understanding of value-based HRM in Islamic educational institutions.

Impact on Teacher Performance

The implementation of madrasah head leadership and Islamic value-based human resource management has had a positive impact on teacher performance. Improvements can be observed in several major aspects, including learning planning, learning implementation, learning evaluation, and teachers' professional development. Teachers demonstrate better abilities in preparing systematic learning tools that align with curriculum standards. In addition, teachers are more directed in determining effective learning strategies according to students' needs. These findings are consistent with previous studies stating that effective leadership and HRM practices contribute significantly to

improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism (Wijayanto, 2023). However, this study also found that teacher performance improvement was not solely influenced by technical supervision or training programs, but also by the emergence of intrinsic motivation fostered through Islamic values and supportive interpersonal relationships within the madrasah environment.

In the implementation of learning, teachers become more innovative and creative, making the learning process more interactive and engaging. Learning evaluations are also conducted in a more structured and sustainable manner, enabling student learning outcomes to be measured more effectively. In addition, teachers demonstrate increased awareness in developing their competencies through participation in training and other professional development activities. This condition confirms that leadership support and effective HRM systems play an important role in improving teacher performance sustainably (Tarib, 2023). Nevertheless, the findings at MTs Al-Ikhlas Kebun Ajamu indicate that sustainable teacher performance is strongly influenced by the integration of professional development with religious and moral reinforcement. Teachers perceive their professional duties not only as institutional responsibilities but also as forms of worship and moral accountability. This finding enriches previous theories of teacher performance by demonstrating that spiritual motivation can become a significant driving factor in improving teacher professionalism within madrasah contexts.

Discussion

Transformational Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance

The findings of the study show that participatory and transformational leadership of madrasah heads has a significant role in improving teacher performance. Participatory leadership allows for the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process, thereby increasing the sense of belonging to the organization and encouraging higher professional responsibility. This involvement also creates effective two-way communication between leaders and teachers, so that the policies taken are more contextual and implementive. This condition is in line with the findings that participatory leadership is able to increase organizational commitment and individual performance (Ghufron & Eliyanto, 2020)(Wahyudin, 2023).

On the other hand, transformational leadership is reflected in the ability of madrasah heads to provide motivation, inspiration, and continuous guidance to teachers. This practice reflects the main dimensions of transformational leadership, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The head of the madrasah not only plays the role of a decision maker, but also a facilitator in teacher capacity development. These findings reinforce the theory that transformational leadership has a positive effect on improving the performance and professionalism of educators (Amri, 2022). Thus, effective leadership is not only oriented towards achieving organizational targets, but also on sustainable human resource development.

Effectiveness of Human Resource Management in the Context of Education

The results of the study show that the implementation of systematic human resource management makes a significant contribution to improving teacher performance. A structured planning, recruitment, coaching, and evaluation process allows educational institutions to manage educators more effectively and efficiently. Each stage is designed to ensure the compatibility between teachers' competencies and organizational needs, resulting in optimal performance. This is in line with the view that MSDM is a strategic element in improving the quality of educational organizations (Karina & Rindaningsih, 2023).

In addition, continuous professional coaching and development programs have proven to be able to improve teachers' pedagogic and professional competence. The performance evaluation system that is carried out regularly also plays a role in increasing accountability and encouraging continuous performance improvement. With a structured management system, teachers have a clear direction in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. These findings reinforce the results of previous research that showed that effective human resource management has a direct effect on improving the quality of learning (Taufiqurrahman, 2019). Therefore, MSDM not only functions as an administrative mechanism, but also as a strategic instrument in the development of educational organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the leadership of madrasah heads plays a highly strategic role in improving teacher performance through an Islamic value-based human resource management approach. Participatory and transformational leadership has been proven to increase teacher involvement, motivation, and commitment in carrying out their professional responsibilities. The madrasah head functions not only as an administrative manager, but also as a central driving force capable of creating a conducive, collaborative, and productive work environment. The findings further indicate that leadership in the madrasah context is strengthened by interpersonal, cultural, and spiritual dimensions that encourage stronger emotional attachment and professional responsibility among teachers. Therefore, effective leadership becomes a key factor in strengthening teacher performance and improving the quality of madrasah education sustainably.

In addition, the implementation of systematic human resource management through planning, recruitment, coaching, and performance evaluation contributes significantly to improving the quality of educators. Structured HRM practices enable the optimization of teacher potential in accordance with institutional needs and educational goals. The integration of Islamic values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, discipline, and deliberation into managerial practices has also proven effective in forming a professional and ethical work culture. This study highlights that Islamic values function not only as moral principles, but also as practical managerial instruments that strengthen organizational commitment and teacher professionalism. Thus, the synergy between leadership, HRM, and Islamic values produces a holistic educational management model that enriches the discourse of Islamic education management, particularly within the context of private madrasahs.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that madrasah heads continue to develop transformational and participatory leadership styles while strengthening the implementation of systematic and sustainable human resource management practices. One practical step that can be initiated is the development of teacher performance evaluation indicators that not only assess pedagogical and professional competencies, but also include aspects of responsibility, discipline, honesty, collaboration, and commitment to Islamic values in daily teaching practices. Madrasah leaders can also organize regular reflective discussions, mentoring programs, and value-based professional development activities to strengthen the internalization of Islamic values among teachers. Through these efforts, teacher performance improvement can be achieved not only in technical and professional dimensions, but also in ethical and spiritual dimensions aligned with the vision of Islamic education. Educational institutions are also encouraged to improve teacher coaching and professional development programs continuously in order to optimize educators' competencies and institutional quality.

This study also has several limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a qualitative approach with a research scope limited to one madrasah, so the findings cannot be generalized broadly to all Islamic educational institutions. Second, the data obtained were contextual and closely related to the characteristics and conditions of the informants involved in the study. Third, this research did not quantitatively examine the relationships among the studied variables; therefore, the degree of influence of each factor could not be statistically measured. Nevertheless, this study provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of leadership, HRM, and Islamic values in improving teacher performance within the madrasah context.

For future research, it is recommended to apply quantitative approaches or mixed methods involving broader research settings and larger participant groups to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable findings. Future studies may also examine additional variables such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, teacher motivation, and institutional performance to enrich and further develop the integrative model proposed in this study. Thus, research in the field of Islamic education management can continue to develop more broadly, critically, and in greater depth.

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