



Analysis of Madrasah Head Strategies to Develop Teacher Professionalism in Islamic Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

The success of educators in enhancing their professionalism in their duties is significantly determined by the strategies of the Madrasah Head. The Madrasah Head, as a leader, must be able to direct and provide supervision to educators in improving their professionalism. Therefore, the Madrasah Head must have strategies to enhance educator professionalism. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the strategies of the Madrasah Head in improving teacher professionalism at MI Ma'arif Plus Jatinegara. The method used in this research is qualitative research. The data collection techniques used in this thesis include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman and Saldana model, which consists of four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and data verification. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the strategies of the Madrasah Head in enhancing teacher professionalism include: conducting training, workshops, seminars, supervision, meetings, and further studies, as well as providing motivation, enforcing discipline, and implementing reward and punishment systems.

INTRODUCTION

Education aims to humanize people, foster maturity, change behavior, and enhance human quality to better meet the ever-evolving and changing challenges of the times (Abdurrohman et al., 2021; Humaira Biruny & Salsabila, 2021; Soares et al., 2024; Syahlita & Ramadhani, 2023). Therefore, if the Indonesian nation wishes to bring about change, particularly through education, it is the Indonesian nation itself that must initiate this change. Specifically through education, those who can effect change are naturally individuals involved in the education sector who are competent and experts in their fields.

Enhancing the quality of excellent education is certainly inseparable from the roles of various parties, one of which is the role of the teacher. The teacher is an important component in the organization of education (Erlia, 2021; Zulkifli, 2018), tasked with conducting teaching activities, training, researching, developing, managing, and providing technical services in the field of education. Teachers are the main pillars in the development of educational quality (González García et al., 2020; Zickafoose et al., 2024). By carrying out their roles effectively, teachers can help create a future generation that is intelligent, has character, and is ready to face future challenges.

In efforts to improve the quality of education, the primary aspect determined is the quality of teachers. A quality teacher is a professional teacher (Budiana et al., 2024; Izgi-Onbasili et al., 2022; Tias & Tongjean, 2023; Utami & Hasanah, 2020). Professionalism is behavior, expertise, or quality as a term that refers to the mental attitude in the form of commitment from members of a profession to consistently realize and enhance their professionalism. Professionalism and professional attitudes are intrinsic motivations within teachers, as drivers to develop themselves into professional personnel who will ultimately impact superior work ethics (Korkmaz & Akçay, 2024; Okçu & Admiş, 2022).

The quality of teachers is inseparable from the role of the school principal. The main role of the school principal is to develop the school into a good institution capable of achieving educational goals (Jumari et al., 2023; Nurbiyati et al., 2024). The school principal is tasked and responsible for maintaining and motivating all existing stakeholders to be able to carry out the provisions and regulations that apply in the school. The role of the school principal is to provide learning facilities, conduct coaching for teachers, and provide other professional support. The success of the school principal in managing the institution in their school will greatly depend on the effectiveness of the school principal's leadership (Jannah & Wahyuningsih, 2024; Jumari et al., 2023). That is why the expression arises that a good school is the result of the hard work of an effective school principal. Effective, quality, and favorite schools are inseparable from the role of their school principal. In general, effective and quality schools are led by a school principal who has the ability to apply management functions, has insight, knowledge, and analytical skills, as well as has leadership, discipline, and high work spirit (Jhanatri et al., 2024).

. Field issues indicate that the shortage of sufficient teachers impacts current quality and competence (Castro, 2023; Sixbert & Onyango, 2022). This is

certainly regrettable considering the future of Indonesian children rests on the teachers who provide education (Myrie et al., 2024; Symeonidis et al., 2025). To address these issues, the lack of quality or commitment from teachers requires school principal strategies to resolve them. Quality heavily depends on the Madrasah Head who acts as the Madrasah manager, especially in the era of decentralization and educational autonomy. Madrasahs have significant authority to regulate and manage their own schools. This greater autonomy of Madrasah institutions demands the willingness and ability of all qualified Madrasah personnel. This is closely related to the implementation of various principles and new paradigms of educational management, such as transparency, accountability, flexibility, effectiveness and efficiency, participation of all citizens and stakeholders, simplification of bureaucracy and channeling aspirations through a bottom-up system, and the application of open management. For Madrasahs to compete with schools, the Madrasah Head must have adequate professionalism to manage the Madrasah.

The Madrasah Head, as an educational leader, has the primary responsibility of developing teacher professionalism within the institution they lead (Apriana et al., 2022). Various studies indicate that the leadership of the Madrasah Head has a positive correlation with the improvement of teacher performance and professionalism. Research conducted by Budiana et al. shows that school principals have a significant influence on the level of teacher professionalism. This means that the actions, policies, and leadership styles of school principals can directly affect how teachers carry out their duties. This research emphasizes the importance of the role of school principals in creating a work environment that supports the development of teacher professionalism (Budiana et al., 2024). This can include providing training, support in career development, creating a positive school culture, and providing constructive feedback. Appropriate strategies from the Madrasah Head can create a conducive organizational climate for the sustainable development of teacher capacity, which in turn impacts the improvement of educational quality in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The research results of Riyadi et al. also reinforce that the managerial competence of school principals has a significant direct effect on teacher professionalism (Riyadi et al., 2023).

The results of this research have theoretical significance in enriching the study of Islamic education management, particularly concerning Madrasah Head leadership and teacher professionalism development. Practically, this research can provide an empirical foundation for the formulation of policies and programs for Madrasah Head leadership development that are oriented towards enhancing teacher professionalism. Additionally, the research findings can serve as a reference for Madrasah Heads in designing and implementing teacher professionalism development strategies that are appropriate to the specific context and needs of the Madrasahs they lead.

Through an in-depth analysis of Madrasah Head strategies in developing teacher professionalism, this research is expected to contribute to efforts to improve the quality of education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah sustainably, which ultimately supports the achievement of national education goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher professionalism is an attitude, behavior, and competence that reflects the quality and integrity of a teacher in carrying out his/her duties as an educator. Teacher professionalism includes a commitment to ethical standards, mastery of pedagogical competence, continuous self-development, and the ability to create an effective and inspiring learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a field research study. It uses a qualitative research approach. This type of research is classified as historical research and applied research. Historical research aims to describe what has happened in the past. Its processes consist of investigating, recording, analyzing, and interpreting past events to find generalizations. This can be useful for understanding the past, as well as current conditions, and even, to a limited extent, can be used to anticipate future events (Creswell, 2014). Applied research aims to obtain findings related to the application of certain theories. It is practical, necessary for the improvement or refinement of a particular product or process, by testing a specific theoretical concept in addressing real problems in specific situations.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Ma'arif Plus, located in Jatinegara Village, Sempor Subdistrict, Kebumen Regency. In this research, the author contacted several key informants who provided authentic information related to the existence of MI Ma'arif Plus Jatinegara Sempor. They are the Madrasah Head, Teachers, Administrative Staff, Madrasah Committee, and Student Guardians. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Triangulation techniques were used to obtain valid data.

Data analysis techniques used the Miles and Huberman and Saldana model (Miles et al., 2014), which consists of four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and data verification. The first stage is data collection, where researchers collect data through observation, interviews, and documentation to analyze the role of the school principal in developing teacher professionalism. Data collection in qualitative research is iterative, meaning it can be repeated as needed until the data reaches a saturation point. Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming data that emerges from field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical data. Data that have been selected and are relevant to the research objectives are then interpreted in various forms such as descriptions, tables, diagrams, and so on. The final stage is drawing conclusions and verifying the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategy Formulation

The initial step taken by the Madrasah Head is to invite all teachers to collectively commit to the Madrasah's vision and mission through enhancing teacher competence. With increased competence, it is expected that teachers will become professional and able to contribute to the achievement of the Madrasah's vision, mission, and goals.

To enhance teacher professionalism at MI Ma'arif Plus, a commitment with teachers must be built from the beginning. In fostering high commitment, it involves instilling a sense of ownership and mutual trust that the Madrasah is a shared responsibility. This includes improving the Madrasah's quality together and providing clear tasks according to their respective duties. It also involves giving guidance on the one-year program ahead, setting good examples, and giving warnings to teachers who are less disciplined in carrying out their duties. Clear actions or sanctions are taken if these duties and responsibilities are consistently ignored.

Thus, they will realize the importance of this togetherness, that this Madrasah is a shared asset, and how we collectively are responsible for giving our best by maintaining and advancing the Madrasah. This is reinforced by the results of interviews with the Madrasah Head, whose strategies include: Formal Strategies include encompassing training, workshops, Teacher Working Groups, seminars, supervision, further studies, and meetings. While informal strategies include discipline, motivation, exemplary attitudes and behaviors, reward/punishment systems, and communication.

These results are relevant to previous research, which indicates that training and workshops for teachers have been proven to enhance teacher professionalism, both in teaching and in other duties (Bowman et al., 2022; Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2024; Muzaffar et al., 2023). Encouragement and motivation from the school principal also provide enthusiasm for teachers to remain productive. Reward and punishment are effective in developing teacher professionalism (Anggoro et al., 2023).

Implementation Strategy

By instilling commitment in teachers from the head of the madrasah, namely by fostering a sense of ownership, mutual trust, assigning tasks according to their core duties and functions, providing exemplary behavior, and giving admonitions for consistent discipline, teachers will develop the awareness to improve their work quality. Based on the results of the interview with the principal, it was stated that:

"In maintaining good working relationships with the madrasah community, I always begin by setting a good example. The key to achieving maximum work targets is a solid team of teachers. A team will be solid when there is a structure and division of labor that matches the functions and characteristics of each teacher. I consistently emphasize to every teacher that each person has equally significant responsibilities and influences one another."

The head of the madrasah, as a leader in this madrasah, is able to build openness and positive example. Being a positive role model is a leader's duty. The head of the madrasah, as a leader in this madrasah, is able to build openness and positive example. Being a positive role model is a leader's duty. This is evident from the head of the madrasah's attitude and behavior in daily life, which reflects the values that are to be instilled within the madrasah environment. He not only

gives direction and instructions, but also demonstrates directly how to act with integrity, discipline, and high dedication.

These results are reinforced in interviews with teachers who stated that:

“The headmaster at this madrasah is a figure who sets an example for everyone. The headmaster has a great sense of discipline and responsibility. Always arrives earlier than the teachers and students. And always reflects good character in daily activities.”

This result is relevant to previous research that the openness built by the head of the madrasah is evident from the effective two-way communication with teachers, staff, students, and parents. The head of the school is always willing to listen to opinions, criticisms, and suggestions from various parties, and is transparent in decision-making. Through this exemplary conduct, the head of the madrasah has successfully created a positive school culture where all members of the madrasah feel valued and involved in the institution's development efforts. By setting a good example, the head of the madrasah is not only respected for their position but also for their personal qualities and professionalism. Teachers and students are motivated to follow the positive path shown by them, thus creating a conducive and education-quality-oriented learning environment (Mthanti & Msiza, 2023; Sumarni et al., 2023).

And the final step as an effort to improve teacher professionalism at MI Ma'arif Plus is monitoring and supervision. This monitoring and supervision is conducted every 3 months. This supervision aims to determine the achieved results of teacher performance. The results of the supervision and monitoring will be evaluated and improvements will be made for better results. Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it was stated that:

“The head of the madrasah always strives to strengthen coordination among teachers in all matters at the madrasah. Those of us who meet the qualifications are also encouraged to participate in professional development, which makes us feel valued and motivated to advance. It is very important that all teachers must improve their professionalism, everyone must keep up with the times, so as not to be left behind. The learning process is also not monotonous and boring. The teachers' enthusiasm to improve their professionalism is very responsive, with nearly 90% updating and upgrading the knowledge that has been given and possessed.”

The improvement of educators' professionalism has a positive impact on students, including teachers who possess constantly developing skills. Teachers are required to professionally create active, creative, innovative, and enjoyable learning environments. To enhance professionalism, teachers frequently participate in or organize internal school training (diklat) by inviting external

speakers, in addition to attending external training organized by parties outside the school to improve teacher professionalism.

The results of the interview with the headmaster stated that:
“Through teacher training (diklat), teachers can understand and comprehend the assessment of the Merdeka Curriculum learning. The process of Merdeka Curriculum learning assessment training is now all online-based. The impact of the training is that the acquired competencies increase regarding the assessment of Merdeka Curriculum learning. This certainly has a positive impact on students during learning. Additionally, the training is organized by external parties, such as those conducted by the Ministry, which lasts for nine months. Teachers attend external training using Zoom meetings. The training conducted is tailored to the teachers' needs, such as the availability of learning videos. MI Ma'arif Plus has driving teachers (guru penggerak) who frequently and are able to attend training events outside to improve their professionalism.”

These results are reinforced in an interview with a teacher who stated:
“The workshops greatly enhance my knowledge and skills. These workshops aim to improve our capacity and quality as teachers so that we always keep up with the increasingly advanced times. I feel I have gained more knowledge after learning about the development of interactive learning media, which prevents learning from being monotonous.”

The results of this study are relevant to previous research that providing training for teachers can have a positive impact on the development of teacher competence and professionalism (Faudiah et al., 2023; Jamal et al., 2023; Redjeki et al., 2021). Structured and continuous professional training and development programs play a crucial role in improving the quality of teaching. Effective training not only updates teachers' knowledge and skills related to teaching materials but also enhances their ability to implement innovative teaching methods, utilize educational technology, and manage classrooms effectively.

Furthermore, training also contributes to increasing teachers' motivation and self-confidence, which ultimately has a positive impact on their performance in the classroom. Teachers who feel competent and supported tend to be more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, which in turn creates a more conducive and effective learning environment for students (Anwar et al., 2021).

The strategy used by the madrasah principal to further improve teacher professionalism is encouraging all teachers to become members of the Teacher Working Group. The strategy used by the madrasah principal to further improve teacher professionalism is encouraging all teachers to become members of the Teacher Working Group. By joining the Teacher Working Group, teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from various madrasahs, share experiences, and broaden their academic insights.

The head of the madrasah understands that the Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru) is a strategic platform for developing teachers' professional competence. Through this forum, teachers can discuss various learning problems faced in the classroom, find innovative solutions together, and develop more effective teaching methods and media. Involvement in the Teacher Working Group also allows teachers to continuously update their knowledge about curriculum developments and current learning practices.

These results are consistent with the results of an interview with a teacher who stated:

"I feel very helped by joining the Teacher Working Group. With the Teacher Working Group, whenever there are problems in learning, solutions are usually provided based on the experiences of other teachers. Additionally, we usually discuss the creation of learning tools for the next semester, share ideas among teachers, and create learning innovations. The results of the Teacher Working Group make it easier for teachers to improve the learning they conduct."

The results of this study are relevant to previous research that the existence of teacher work groups has a positive impact on the development of teacher competence and makes teachers more professional (Feriansyah et al., 2024; Husnol Khotimah et al., 2024). The existence of collaborative forums like the Teacher Working Group provides space for educators to exchange knowledge, skills, and best practices in teaching. Through the Teacher Working Group, teachers not only gain new knowledge but also receive emotional and professional support from their peers.

The next strategy used by the head of the madrasah to improve educator professionalism is to build good communication with all school members. Effective communication becomes an important foundation in creating a conducive work environment for the development of teacher professionalism. The head of the madrasah realizes that without open and clear communication, various educator quality improvement programs will be difficult to implement optimally. Through good communication, the head of the madrasah can convey the school's vision, mission, and expectations to teachers more clearly. This allows educators to understand the direction and goals of the expected professional development. The two-way communication built also provides space for teachers to convey ideas, suggestions, and obstacles encountered in the learning process.



Figure 1. Documentation of meeting activities to get creative ideas from teachers

Based on the results of an interview with the headmaster, it was stated that: *“I always maintain good communication with teachers. This aims to provide comfort for teachers in giving creative ideas. Additionally, I always provide ample opportunities for teachers to propose ideas or suggestions in order to improve the quality of education, especially in the context of developing teacher competence.”*

The head of the madrasah not only builds formal communication through meetings and official gatherings, but also develops informal communication that is more personal. This approach creates a more harmonious working relationship and mutual trust between the head of the madrasah and the teachers. With this trust, teachers feel more comfortable sharing learning problems and seeking solutions together. Furthermore, good communication also facilitates a more constructive process of supervision and evaluation of teacher performance. The head of the madrasah can provide clear and specific feedback on the strengths and areas of development of each teacher, so that efforts to improve professionalism become more focused and tailored to individual needs.

These research results are relevant to previous research, which indicates that good communication between the headmaster and teachers has an impact on positive relationships with teachers (Atmajian, 2023; Berkovich & Eyal, 2018; Pramahsari & Triatna, 2021). The quality of communication between the headmaster and teachers is strongly correlated with the level of job satisfaction and motivation of teachers in carrying out their professional duties. An open and two-way communication pattern between the headmaster and teachers indicates a more positive work climate, lower levels of conflict, and more productive collaboration among educators. This ultimately reflects in improved teaching quality in the classroom and better student achievement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results indicate that the Madrasah Head's strategies to develop educator professionalism at MI Ma'arif Plus Jatinegara Sempor Kebumen, including implementation and evaluation, involve: providing awards,

participating in seminars and training, further education, supervision and routine evaluations, active participation in Teacher Working Groups or teacher meetings, and a solid teacher team. Involving teachers in seminars, workshops, becoming driving teachers, and training organized by the Government. Recommendations from this research suggest that a more in-depth study of the school principal's leadership style in improving the quality of education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah could be beneficial.

FURTHER STUDY

Further research can explore in more depth the leadership style of the madrasah principal in improving the quality of education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. In addition, comparative studies between madrasahs with various leadership approaches can provide a broader understanding of the most effective strategies in developing educator professionalism. Research can also focus on the impact of teacher participation in training and professional communities on improving student learning outcomes. Furthermore, it is important to examine the role of teacher team collaboration and school work culture in supporting the success of the madrasah principal's strategy.

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