

THE TRANSFORMATION OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP AMONG MADRASAH PRINCIPALS IN BUILDING AN EXCELLE MADRASAH AT MI MOJOSARI

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Abstract

Collaborative leadership is a strategic approach for strengthening educational quality in Islamic educational institutions. This study aims to describe the transformation process of the madrasah principals collaborative leadership at MI Mojosaari and its impact on improving the quality of educational services. The study highlights how the principal establishes synergy with teachers and engages internal madrasah elements to reshape community perspectives toward the madrasah. The results show that collaborative leadership is implemented through building a teamwork culture, developing shared program agendas, and integrating both academic and non-academic activities aligned with student needs. The implementation increases teachers participation in madrasah activities and enriches students learning experiences comprehensively. As a result, a previously less favored madrasah has transformed into an institution that attracts greater attention and trust from the community. The study concludes that collaborative leadership effectively drives improvements in educational quality and supports character development for students.

Keywords: *Collaborative leadership, Madrasah Principals, Educational Quality*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a critical factor in improving the quality of human resources, particularly within Islamic educational institutions such as madrasah ibtidaiyah, which play a fundamental role in shaping students' character, morality, and academic competence in a balanced manner. Madrasah not only function as religious educational institutions, but also as formal educational establishments that must be able to compete with public schools in enhancing the quality of education (Sujarwo, 2023). The leadership of the madrasah principal constitutes a primary determinant of institutional success, as the principal holds a strategic role in directing, managing, and developing the full potential of the madrasah (Murni, 2020).

Empirical realities indicate that madrasah are still frequently underestimated by the community, particularly in areas where educational awareness remains low. The prevailing societal paradigm that prioritizes public elementary schools over madrasah presents a significant challenge in fostering public interest toward Islamic educational institutions. Madrasah are often perceived as exclusively focused on religious education and less competitive in academic achievement, leading communities to prefer public schools (Putri et al., 2023).

This phenomenon is also evident at MI Mojosari, where in its early years the institution attracted relatively few students due to the community's preference for public elementary schools over madrasah. Limited public understanding of the importance of madrasa education, combined with a low educational paradigm within the surrounding community, constituted the primary factors behind the lack of public interest. In response, the madrasa principal sought strategic approaches to develop the institution and make it more appealing to the local community.

Collaborative leadership transformation has emerged as one of the approaches adopted by the madrasa principal in building an excellent madrasa. Collaborative leadership emphasizes cooperation among the principal, teachers, and the community in improving educational quality (Ilham et al., 2026). Through collaborative leadership, the principal is able to establish a clear vision and mission, build a cohesive working team, and delegate tasks in accordance with the individual competencies of each teacher.

Furthermore, the strengthening of both academic and non-academic programs has become an essential strategy in enhancing the quality of the madrasa. Extracurricular activities, character development programs, religious activities, and scheduled learning evaluations are integral components of the principal's leadership transformation in building community trust (Habibulloh et al., 2025). Leadership that is capable of integrating Islamic values with educational innovation will yield a madrasa that is both excellent and sought after by the community.

Based on the aforementioned issues, MI Mojosari presents a compelling case for research, as it has undergone a remarkable transformation from an institution with limited public interest into a thriving and excellent madrasa through the collaborative leadership transformation of its principal. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the collaborative leadership transformation of the madrasa principal in building an excellent madrasa at MI Mojosari.

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B. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method. This approach was selected because the research aims to analyze in depth the phenomenon of collaborative leadership transformation by the madrasa principal in building an excellent madrasa at MI Mojosari. The qualitative method enables the researcher to understand the meaning, process, and context of a phenomenon holistically based on the perspective of the research subject (Creswell, 2014).

The data source in this study is the principal of MI Mojosari, who serves as the primary and sole informant. The principal was selected because they are the key actor who directly designs, implements, and evaluates the entire process of collaborative leadership transformation at the madrasa, and is therefore considered the most knowledgeable source regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

Data was collected through in depth interviews conducted face to face with the principal using a semi structured interview guide. The guide covered aspects of collaborative leadership including building a shared vision and mission, forming a solid working team, distributing tasks based on teacher competencies, strengthening academic and nonacademic programs, and strategies for building community trust. The interviews were audio-recorded with the informant's permission and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data analysis was conducted by condensing and selecting relevant information from the transcripts, presenting it in systematic descriptive narratives, and drawing conclusions through verification. The validity of the data was ensured through member checking, whereby the transcripts and interpretations were reconfirmed with the informant to ensure accuracy and scientific accountability.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Implementation of Collaborative Leadership in Madrasah Management

Research findings indicate that madrasah principals consistently apply a collaborative leadership model, both through formal mechanisms and informal approaches that address the personal dimensions of each teacher. Formally, collaborative leadership is realized through regular consultations involving the entire faculty in institutional decision-making processes, including the formulation of the madrasah vision and mission. All school personnel from vice principals and homeroom teachers to subject teachers are

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actively engaged to ensure that every strategic decision has shared legitimacy and can be collectively implemented.

Informally, the madrasah principal builds interpersonal rapport by approaching each teacher personally, adapting communication styles to individual personalities, and positioning themselves as a working partner without compromising leadership authority. This approach fosters a deep atmosphere of trust, where teachers feel safe to openly share ideas, concerns, and even criticism with the principal.

Performance evaluations are conducted through two complementary mechanisms: scheduled evaluations during regular meetings, and unscheduled evaluations through on-site monitoring every morning and surveillance via CCTV cameras. The combination of these two mechanisms creates a comprehensive yet humane oversight system one that is not merely controlling but serves as the foundation for continuous, responsive development tailored to on-the-ground conditions. Effective leadership in Islamic educational institutions requires the simultaneous integration of structural and cultural approaches (Supriyanto & Troena, 2012)

Overall, the implementation of collaborative leadership in this madrasah has successfully created a participatory work environment, where every teacher feels like a part of the decision-making process, not merely an object of policy. This aligns with the findings of Wahyudi (2015) research, which concluded that teacher involvement in decision-making significantly enhances organizational commitment and job satisfaction among educators in Islamic educational institutions.

Formation of a Solid Work Team through Synergy between Young Teachers and Senior

Teachers research findings reveal that madrasah principals build solid work teams through a strategy based on individual competency mapping. Each teacher's specific strengths and abilities are identified and then assigned tasks aligned with their competencies. Madrasah principals do not standardize teacher roles in a rigid pattern, but rather carefully place each individual in the position that best suits their capacity and expertise, ensuring optimal contributions and unburdened by demands beyond their capabilities. This principle is a concrete manifestation of strengths based human resource management, where each individual's best potential is maximized to support collective institutional goals.

Fair and transparent task allocation is key to maintaining stable teacher motivation. Principals fully recognize that educator motivation is dynamic and can fluctuate depending on their personal and professional circumstances. Therefore, the principle of openness is consistently applied in every

assignment process to prevent perceptions of inequality that could trigger internal conflict and reduce team productivity. Beyond simply assigning tasks technically, principals are also emotionally present paying attention to each teacher's psychological wellbeing. Providing space for genuine dialogue, and ensuring that the workload does not exceed individual capacity. This warm yet professional personal approach strengthens team cohesion and builds trust, which is the foundation of healthy collaboration. These findings align with research by Mulyasa (2013), which confirms that principals who are able to manage human resources proportionally, taking into account teachers' competencies, workloads, and psychological wellbeing, will produce a more cohesive, adaptive, and highly competitive team.

One of the most innovative strategies for building a solid team at this madrasah is the policy of evenly distributing teachers by generational group in each parallel class. The principal deliberately pairs one junior teacher with one senior teacher in each class. For example, in a first grade class with two classes, A and B, each class is assigned a pair of teachers with different generational compositions. This scheme is not simply an equalization of the administrative load, but rather a cross generational collaboration designed to maximize the complementary potential of both groups of educators synergistically.

Young teachers bring technological expertise, creative methods, and a passion for learning innovation. Senior teachers contribute pedagogical maturity, classroom management skills, and wisdom in handling diverse student dynamics. Both complement each other in a productive and mutually reinforcing classroom ecosystem.

In practice, junior teachers act as innovation accelerators, assisting senior teachers in utilizing learning technologies such as digital media, online platforms, and various interactive learning applications that are increasingly relevant in 21st century education. Conversely, senior teachers serve as pedagogical mentors for junior teachers, sharing experiences on effective classroom management, strategies for dealing with students with diverse needs, and ways to build productive communication with parents. This pattern creates a two way cycle of knowledge transfer that benefits both parties while accelerating institutional improvements in the quality of learning. This synergy is reinforced by the findings of Ariesta and Suratman (2014), who concluded that structured professional collaboration between teachers significantly improves teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, especially when such collaboration is actively and systematically facilitated by school leadership. Strengthening the Development of Students' Academic and Non-Academic Potential the dimensions of student development in this madrasah are designed holistically, encompassing academic and non-

academic aspects in an integrated and programmed manner from the beginning of the school year. In the first stage, each student's interests and talents are identified through a structured questionnaire administered at the beginning of each new school year. This instrument serves as a strategic starting point, enabling the madrasah principal and all teachers to understand each student's overall potential profile from an early age, ensuring that the development program is truly personalized, targeted, and grounded in the uniqueness of each individual. Academic development is directly monitored through the classroom learning process. The class teacher acts as the primary observer, continuously recording and observing each student's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development throughout the teaching and learning process. Intensive support during daily classroom sessions allows teachers to detect early on the extent to which each student's academic abilities are developing both those progressing rapidly and those requiring additional attention and intervention. This development data is collected periodically and reported to the principal as a basis for evaluation and more targeted decision making for further development.

Meanwhile, non-academic development is managed through extracurricular programs divided into two main tracks: the academic track, which includes activities such as subject olympiads and literacy programs, and the non-academic track, which includes sports, arts and culture, and various religious activities that strengthen students' Islamic character. Each student is directed to extracurricular activities that align with the interests and talents identified through a questionnaire at the beginning of the year, so that the development process runs naturally and fully respects each student's choices and innate potential. Development is carried out intensively by supervising teachers selected based on relevant expertise, with concrete targets in the form of achievements that can elevate the name and reputation of the madrasah at the local and regional levels.

The integration between academic development monitored through classroom learning processes and non-academic development managed through interest based extracurricular activities reflects the principal's profound view that every student possesses multiple intelligences that cannot be reduced solely to grade achievement. This view is contextualized locally by research by Fathurrohman and Suryana (2015), which concluded that madrasahs that integrate academic and non-academic development in a balanced manner produce graduates who are more competent, possess strong character, and are adaptive to the challenges of the times. Furthermore, this holistic development pattern also reinforces Wahyudi (2015) finding that madrasahs managed with participatory leadership tend to produce a more conducive and productive learning ecosystem, not only for teacher

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professional growth but also for the holistic and sustainable development of students.

Overall, the three themes in this research implementing collaborative leadership, building a strong work team through cross generational synergy, and strengthening the development of students' academic and non-academic potential constitute a unified, mutually supportive and inseparable managerial system. Collaborative leadership builds an institutional climate that enables the team to grow optimally a strong team with cross generational synergy creates a quality teaching infrastructure and this quality of teaching ultimately leads to the holistic development of students with character and achievement. This is the face of a madrasah that is not only well managed but also inspired by the values of collaboration, justice, and caring that are the true spirit of islamic education.

D. CONCLUSION

Madrasah principals collaborative leadership plays a crucial role in improving educational quality at MI Mojosari. Change occurs through the application of collaborative strategies that build communication, coordination, and teamwork among teachers while integrating academic and non-academic programs. These efforts not only improve the learning environment but also enhance public trust in the madrasah. Collaborative leadership has been shown to foster a participatory culture, which ultimately affects the improvement of students learning experiences and the quality of graduates. The graduates produced are expected to demonstrate good academic abilities and strong character as an outcome of collaboratively managed programs.

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