

## **Leadership Management to Enhance Supervisor Performance in Educational Institutions**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the leadership and management practices of the Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices in improving the performance of supervisors at State Islamic Senior High Schools in Jambi Province. Utilizing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method, the research was conducted across several local Ministry offices. The findings reveal four key aspects. First, performance improvement planning is typically conducted through coordination meetings at the beginning of the academic year. Second, supervisor performance enhancement is carried out through official briefings, routine school visits, and both formal and informal coaching, though its implementation remains inconsistent due to limited time, the advanced age of many supervisors, and the broad scope of their responsibilities. Third, performance monitoring tends to emphasize administrative compliance rather than substantive areas such as managerial guidance or support for the Merdeka Curriculum. Fourth, key obstacles include a shortage of qualified supervisors, insufficient training provided by the Ministry, and weak structural alignment between Ministry leadership and supervisor working groups, which often operate independently. The study recommends the strengthening of technical regulations, recruitment of subject-specific supervisors, implementation of continuous curriculum-based training, and the empowerment of Ministry heads as strategic leaders in supervisory management. Strengthening these aspects is expected to significantly enhance the quality of madrasah education in the region.

**Keywords:** *Management, Supervisor Performance, Islamic Senior High School*

### **Introduction**

In an effort to improve the quality of national education, the presence of school/madrasah supervisors plays a strategic role. Madrasah supervisors function as facilitators, quality assurance agents, and controllers of the implementation of educational policies within educational institutions (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Ideally, madrasah supervisors

are tasked with conducting academic and managerial supervision, providing guidance to teachers and headmasters, as well as encouraging improvements in the quality of learning.

However, in reality, the role of madrasah supervisors, (Siahaan et al., 2021) particularly at the State Madrasah Aliyah level, has not been running optimally in various regions, including in Jambi Province. This phenomenon is evident from several initial findings in the field, such as low supervision frequency, weak reporting of supervisory activities, and a lack of innovation in coaching teachers and headmasters (Connolly et al., 2019). This indicates managerial problems that affect the effectiveness of the supervisors' performance.

As the party with full authority in managing madrasah education in the regions, the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office at the regency level plays a central role in ensuring the effective implementation of madrasah supervisors' duties. (El Widdah, 2022) The Head of Kankemenag not only acts as an administrative leader but also as a policymaker, motivator, and director for the madrasah supervisors. Therefore, the management carried out by the Head of Kankemenag becomes a crucial factor in improving the performance of madrasah supervisors.

Islamic education in the modern era requires leaders who not only understand religious principles but also possess strong management and leadership skills. (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025) Islamic education as a discipline must continually be able to scientific the insights or perspectives on education contained within religious sources so that it can distinguish itself from non-Islamic education. Madrasah supervisors, as leaders at the school level, play a central role in ensuring the effective and quality delivery of education. One factor that can significantly contribute to leadership quality is the implementation of good management (Rahmayanti & Hinggil Permana, 2022).

Good leadership requires leaders who have appropriate capabilities, such as communication skills, understanding of vision, mission, goals, and objectives, as well as the ability to organize and manage facilities and resources. The implementation of good performance management can create a conducive environment for leaders to develop and enhance their abilities, as well as produce better performance. (Sudiarti & Saepudin, 2024)

Madrasah supervisors, as leaders at the school level, play a crucial role in improving the quality of education. (Dariyanto & Wulandari, 2020) However, they still face various challenges and obstacles in their performance. Some of the issues they may encounter include a lack of understanding of performance concepts, insufficient institutional support for self-development, and uncertainty regarding their performance.

The primary duties of madrasah supervisors involve carrying out academic and managerial supervision within educational units (Kuswanto, Abidin, et al., 2024), which include preparing supervision programs, implementing guidance, monitoring the implementation of the eight National Education Standards, conducting assessments, and providing professional guidance and training for teachers (Sauphayana, 2021). Therefore, madrasah supervisors are required to have adequate qualifications and competencies to perform their supervisory tasks effectively.

In addition, technological developments and the evolving demands of society add complexity to the responsibilities of madrasah supervisors.(Abidin et al., 2024) Hence, it is important to understand the role of the management by the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in enhancing the performance of madrasah supervisors so they can effectively respond to the dynamic changes in the education sector.(Arif Musthofa & Ali, 2021)

In efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education, serious attention to the self-development of madrasah supervisors becomes a necessity.(Musthofa, 2025) The challenges faced by madrasah supervisors include the complexity of leadership tasks, rapid changes in the educational world, and the continuous need to develop their skills and knowledge (Nurmayuli, 2022). In this context, the management by the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office can serve as a strategic tool to guide, develop, and enhance the performance of madrasah supervisors.

In the era of regional autonomy, madrasah supervisors are based at the regency level. (Muwafiqoh et al., 2023) Consequently, it is currently unclear who oversees the supervisors' work in each regency/city, and this issue receives little attention (Juhadi & Ritonga, 2023). Moreover, their presence is not synchronized with the programs and needs of the madrasah heads at each educational unit. The quality of supervisors has not met public expectations, and in fact, supervisors have been positioned as “fallback” positions due to political factors (Kubitskyi et al., 2022).

The scope of this research covers how the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Jambi Province carries out managerial functions, ranging from planning supervision programs, implementing guidance, providing resource support, to evaluating the performance of madrasah supervisors. By exploring the managerial approaches applied, this study aims to identify an effective management model or pattern to improve the performance of supervisors.

## **Literature Review**

McClelland identifies “several performance characteristics, namely: being responsible in problem-solving, setting goals, receiving feedback, and being reliable.(Hartono et al., 2021)” Euis Karwati explains, “performance in English is called performance. (Karwati & Priansa, 2017) It is also referred to as work output, work achievement, or the result of work implementation. Milcovich and Boudreau (Bloom et al., 1999) state that performance is the level at which employee's complete tasks according to predetermined requirements.”

Performance shows “how far an individual can realize their goals that are consistent with organizational goal (Rodriguez et al., 2023)s. Performance is also a comparison between work results and certain standards or measures, such as targets, objectives, or criteria that have been determined and mutually agreed upon. Performance is the work result of a person that meets the work standards and requirements that have been set.”(Kuswanto, Fajanela, et al., 2024)

“Performance is the work result from efforts to achieve programs, activities, or policies in realizing the goals, objectives, vision, and mission of an organization. Performance can be

studied and identified in a measurable way.” This theory describes the concept of performance in the context of an organization or company.

Performance refers to the work results of efforts made to achieve specific programs, activities, policies, or goals that have been set. This can include the achievement of targets, objectives, vision, and mission of the organization (Suray et al., 2019). This means that there are methods or parameters used to evaluate the extent to which an effort has succeeded in achieving the set goals. These can be numbers, percentages, or other indicators that provide an overview of the effectiveness and efficiency of those efforts.

Management also originates from Latin, derived from the words *manus*, meaning "hand," and *agere*, meaning "to do" or "to act." These words were combined into the verb *managere*, which means "to handle." *Managere* was then translated into English as the verb *to manage*, with the noun *management*, and *manager* referring to the person who performs management activities. Eventually, the term *management* was adopted into Indonesian as *manajemen* or *pengelolaan* (administration or handling).

According to Parker, Stoner & Freeman, management is “the art of getting things done through people.” Hornby’s view further illustrates that management is the art of executing and organizing. Another perspective is expressed by Mary Parker Follett, who stated that management is “the art of getting things done through others.” This view emphasizes the aspect of accomplishing tasks with the help of others.

Management theory has evolved from a focus on structure and efficiency to a more flexible and human-centered approach. A synthesis of these theories indicates that effective management requires a combination of organized systems, attention to human factors, adaptability to the environment, and the strategic use of data and resources.

Based on the explanation above, it can be synthesized that management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. Over time, various management theories have developed in response to the challenges faced by organizations in different contexts

First, Ichwan, M. N. (2006). Official Reform of Islam: State Islam and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia, 1966–2004. Self-published (In eigen beheer). Research on the Management of the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Improving the Performance of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Supervisors in Jambi Province and the work of Ichwan, M. N. (2006) titled Official Reform of Islam: State Islam and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia, 1966–2004.

Abu Bakar, in 2020, from the Postgraduate Program at UIN STS Jambi, wrote a dissertation titled: The Performance of Madrasah Supervisors in Improving the Work Motivation of State Islamic Junior High School Principals in Jambi Province. The research on the Management of the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Improving the Performance of State Islamic Senior High School (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri) Supervisors in Jambi Province and Abu Bakar’s (2020) dissertation from the Postgraduate Program at UIN STS Jambi, titled The Performance of Madrasah Supervisors in Improving the Work

Motivation of State Islamic Junior High School Principals in Jambi Province, share a similarity in terms of geographical scope, as both focus on Jambi Province.

Kisbiyanto. "Educational Management under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia." (Kisbiyanto, 2015) *ELEMENTARY: Islamic Teacher Journal* 3, no. 1 (2015). The research on the Management of the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Improving the Performance of State Islamic Senior High School (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri) Supervisors in Jambi Province and the article by Kisbiyanto (2015), titled "Educational Management under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia," share a common focus on the governance of Islamic education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Both examine how managerial structures and the Ministry's policies influence the quality of education delivery from planning and implementation to evaluation.

## **Research Method**

The qualitative research method used in this study adopts the philosophy of post-positivism, (Panhwar et al., 2017) as explained by Sugiyono. It is used to investigate a natural setting as opposed to an experimental one, where the researcher serves as the key instrument. Data sources are selected using purposive sampling, based on specific characteristics relevant to the needs of the study. Data collection techniques involve triangulation, it's combination of participant observation, open interviews, and documentation. The data analysis is inductive/qualitative in nature, and the research findings emphasize the meaning of the existing reality as derived from the designated research subjects.

The phenomenological approach (Iser, 2022) was chosen because it is considered capable of bridging the gap between empirical phenomena visible on the surface and the deeper meanings experienced by the research subjects. As stated by Patton, phenomenological qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning of lived experiences as experienced by individuals within their natural and social contexts. The researcher does not manipulate data but acts as the main instrument to observe, listen, and reflect on reality from the perspective of the research subjects. The exploration process is carried out in depth through interviews, observations, and critical reflection on the experiences of key informants.

The selection of research locations in this study was based on strategic and contextual considerations to capture the diversity of managerial practices in improving the performance of madrasah supervisors. Three regional offices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kantor Kementerian Agama/Kemenag) were purposively selected as research sites: Kemenag Kota Jambi, Kemenag Kabupaten Bungo, and Kemenag Kabupaten Batanghari, all located within the Province of Jambi.

The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kota Jambi was selected due to its urban context, relatively developed educational infrastructure, and its implementation of proactive supervision practices. Preliminary observations indicated that this office has implemented structured and consistent monitoring programs, including weekly supervisory

meetings and active professional development initiatives for madrasah personnel. This makes it a relevant site to explore best practices and innovations in supervisory management.

The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kabupaten Bungo represents a contrasting context. As a more rural and geographically expansive district, Bungo faces different challenges, particularly in terms of limited supervisory personnel and an aging workforce. The selection of this site provides valuable insight into the structural and logistical constraints faced by regional offices in remote areas, allowing for a comparative analysis of managerial effectiveness under resource limitations.

The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kabupaten Batanghari was chosen as a representative of a transitional region neither fully urban nor rural offering a unique blend of challenges and opportunities in supervisory management. Batanghari's educational landscape is marked by ongoing reforms and attempts to improve supervisory quality amid limited financial resources and human capital. Studying this region helps reveal how mid-level districts balance strategic management and ground-level implementation.

By selecting these three distinct yet interrelated locations, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local context shapes the implementation of leadership and management strategies within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly in relation to improving the performance of madrasah supervisors across varying administrative and geographical settings.

## **Result**

The current madrasah environment is facing continuously changing dynamics and uncertainty. These changes stem not only from internal factors, such as the ever-evolving national education policies, but also from external influences, including technological advancements, social changes, and global challenges such as the pandemic. This rapidly changing environment demands madrasahs to adapt quickly; however, they often face obstacles due to limited resources or lack of preparedness at the school level.

The development of politics, economics, and socio-cultural aspects is closely linked to the progress of education, which serves as the producer of the human resources driving these sectors. When individuals involved in the political, economic, social, and cultural arenas possess strong competencies, their activities are more likely to result in positive advancement and growth.

One of the main challenges in ensuring high-quality education in madrasahs is the limited number of qualified madrasah supervisors. Many regions face a shortage of competent supervisors, leading to situations where a single supervisor is responsible for overseeing multiple madrasahs at once. This excessive workload prevents supervisors from providing adequate attention to each madrasah, which negatively affects the effectiveness of the supervision and guidance they offer. Ideal supervision requires sufficient time and focus to understand the specific issues in each institution and to develop appropriate solutions.

In addition to personnel shortages, limited financial resources also pose a significant barrier to implementing effective supervision programs. Often, the available budget is insufficient to support comprehensive activities such as continuous training, travel for field observations, and the development of evaluation materials. Without adequate financial support, supervision programs cannot be carried out effectively, directly impacting supervisors' ability to assist in improving educational quality in madrasahs.

Financial constraints also affect the ability to implement modern teaching technologies and tools. Effective supervision today requires the use of information technology to monitor performance, collect data, and provide real-time feedback. However, many madrasahs and supervisory offices lack access to necessary technologies or the budget to adopt them. This hinders efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of supervision through technological innovation.

To address these resource limitations, strategic actions are required from various stakeholders. The government needs to increase funding for the education sector particularly for madrasah supervision programs so that supervisors can perform their duties more optimally. Additionally, efforts must be made to recruit and train more qualified madrasah supervisors and to establish partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to support supervision through financial and technical assistance. In doing so, the quality of madrasah supervision can be improved, which in turn will enhance the overall quality of education in madrasahs.

The absence of a clear strategy to face change and uncertainty has become one of the main issues for madrasahs. Many do not have contingency plans or long-term strategies in place to anticipate environmental changes. This is due to several factors, such as a shortage of human resources with strategic management skills, as well as limited funding that can be allocated for system and capacity development. As a result, when significant changes occur, madrasahs are often caught off guard and unprepared, which negatively impacts operations and the teaching-learning process.

Maintaining the quality of education amidst these changes presents a challenge for madrasahs. When adapting to changes such as the integration of technology in learning or curriculum shifts, confusion and resistance from both teachers and students are common. This adaptation process requires considerable time and resources, while expectations for maintaining educational standards remain high. Furthermore, rapid and unpredictable changes can lead to inconsistencies in policy and program implementation, ultimately affecting students' academic achievement.

To address this, madrasahs urgently need to develop strategies to navigate uncertainty and environmental changes. Strengthening management capacity, providing training for teachers and staff, and allocating adequate funds for system and technology development are essential steps. Additionally, madrasahs must establish collaboration with various stakeholders including the government, industry, and community to create an adaptive and responsive educational environment. By doing so, madrasahs can not only survive in uncertain times but also continue to improve the quality of education provided to students.

Findings from this study indicate that the management of the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) Office urgently needs to be improved to enhance the performance of State Islamic Senior High School (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri) supervisors in Jambi Province. One of the first necessary steps is to increase transparency and accountability in the placement and promotion processes of madrasah supervisors. Currently, these processes are often unclear and influenced by non-professional factors such as nepotism. By enhancing transparency, every placement and promotion decision can be justified, ensuring that only those with the best competencies and qualifications occupy these positions. This will create a fairer work environment and motivate supervisors to continuously improve their performance.

The next step is to provide sufficient training and professional development for madrasah supervisors. Well-trained supervisors can perform their duties more effectively, offer better guidance to teachers, and contribute to improving the quality of education in madrasahs. Structured and ongoing training is essential to ensure supervisors stay updated with best practices and the latest developments in the field of education. Supporting supervisors in their professional development also fosters a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment to their roles.

Fostering an organizational culture that supports professionalism among madrasah supervisors must also be prioritized. A positive and supportive organizational culture encourages supervisors to work more professionally, creatively, and innovatively. This includes creating an environment where constructive feedback is valued, achievements are recognized, and development opportunities are available. Moreover, enhancing communication and coordination among madrasah supervisors will allow them to share experiences and knowledge, and to collaborate in addressing the challenges they face. This will lead to more efficient and consistent supervision across madrasahs.

In addition, addressing resource limitations must be a central focus. This can be achieved by recruiting new supervisors to reduce excessive workloads, as well as mobilizing funds to support ideal supervision programs. The organizational structure of madrasahs should also be adjusted to better align with educational needs and goals, making it more flexible and responsive to change. Developing strategies to manage uncertainty and environmental changes is also essential to ensure that the quality of education is maintained.

Through these steps, the performance of madrasah supervisors in Jambi Province is expected to improve, which in turn will enhance the overall quality of education in madrasahs. By overcoming these barriers, the management of the Kemenag Office can become more effective in supporting the performance of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri supervisors in Jambi Province, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes.

It is important to note that this study provides only a snapshot of the factors that contribute to the current limitations in the management of Kemenag Offices in enhancing supervisor performance. Further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of these issues and to develop more effective and sustainable solutions.

## **Discussion**

Diverse Managerial Approaches of Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices Across Regencies/Cities. This study highlights significant variations in the managerial practices of Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices across different regions in Jambi Province. For example, Bungo Regency continues to face challenges related to the limited number and aging of supervisors, whereas in Jambi City, weekly monitoring and active coaching practices are evident. The novelty lies in the direct identification of how local contexts influence the effectiveness of Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices management implementation on the performance of State Islamic Senior High School supervisors.

Structural and Functional Disparities Between Supervisors and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The study reveals that structurally, madrasah supervisors are more accountable to the Provincial Supervisory Working Group rather than directly to the local Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices. This is a novel finding, as it exposes a hierarchical and functional gap that weakens vertical coordination and the professional responsibilities between supervisors and management at the regional level.

Critique of Supervisors' Lack of Managerial Qualifications. One key finding is that many supervisors come from general teaching backgrounds and lack managerial competencies, particularly in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and using the e-Kinerja performance system. This study raises the urgent need for redefining and enhancing the professionalism of madrasah supervisors through recruitment that prioritizes educational leadership experience.

Lack of Strategic Collaboration and Supervisory Roles in Curriculum Reform. The research emphasizes that Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices has not yet optimized its role in facilitating collaboration between supervisors and school principals in implementing strategic policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum. A prominent novelty is the finding that training and workshops are often independently initiated by madrasahs, with minimal or non-substantive involvement from supervisors reflecting the weak educational role of supervisors as strategic partners in learning reform.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the management of the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Jambi Province plays a crucial role in improving the performance of madrasah supervisors, particularly in terms of coordination, guidance, and the implementation of educational policies. The head of the office holds strategic authority in directing work programs, organizing meetings to strengthen supervisors' professionalism, and maintaining communication with all working units in the region. However, field implementation still faces structural and operational challenges, such as limited human resources, unproductive supervisor age demographics, and an imbalance in workload distribution.

The performance of State Islamic Senior High School supervisors in Jambi Province generally demonstrates a strong commitment to their main duties and functions, particularly in the implementation of academic supervision, assistance with the Principal Performance

Assessment, and the evaluation of madrasah principals. This study reveals significant variations in the managerial practices of the Heads of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Offices across different regions of Jambi Province. For example, Bungo Regency still faces challenges related to the limited number and age of supervisors, whereas in Jambi City, weekly monitoring and active coaching practices are implemented. The novelty of this research lies in the direct identification of how local context influences the effectiveness of management implementation on supervisor performance.

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