



# The Performance of the Headmaster in Improving the Quality of Education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Siak

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## Abstract

This study examines the performance of the headmaster in improving the quality of education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Siak (MTsN 1 Siak), with a focus on leadership strategies and their impact on educational outcomes. The research emphasizes the headmaster's role in enhancing both religious and general education, empowering teachers, and providing necessary resources to improve learning experiences. Data was collected through interviews with the headmaster, teachers, and administrative staff, along with direct observations of the school's activities. The findings highlight the headmaster's efforts to implement strategic programs, such as professional development for teachers, tutoring for students, and improving school infrastructure. Despite facing challenges like limited facilities and competition from other schools, the headmaster's leadership has positively impacted student learning outcomes, teacher motivation, and the school's reputation. The study concludes that the headmaster's transformational leadership and commitment to education quality have been pivotal in driving improvements at MTsN 1 Siak.

**Keywords:** *Headmaster Performance, Educational Quality, Leadership Strategies, Teacher Empowerment, School Improvement*

## Introduction

Education is a means of transferring knowledge, values, experiences, or skills to the next generation, serving as an effort by the preceding generation to prepare younger individuals for their roles in life, both spiritually and physically.[1] Education can also be defined as a transformative process that shapes individual behavior

toward maturity. In Islam, education is viewed as a fundamental pillar for elevating and dignifying humanity, as reflected in the Quran, Surah Al-Mujadalah (58:11): "O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Make room in assemblies,' then make room; Allah will make room for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were

*given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do.*"[2]

The development of education is an endeavor to realize a nation's vision for its future, aiming to create a just and prosperous society. Fundamentally, education is a process of empowerment, unlocking human potential to contribute to both local and global communities. Beyond exploring human potential, education enables individuals to control their developed abilities to enhance the quality of their lives.

The Quran highlights that humans are endowed with three fundamental potentials—hearing, sight, and intellect—besides the physical body and soul. This is emphasized in Surah An-Nahl (16:78): *"And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and He gave you hearing, sight, and intellect that you might be grateful."*[2]

These three potentials serve as tools to receive information through sensory perception (language and writing). Without education, these potentials remain undeveloped, leaving individuals unable to fulfill their roles as God's most perfect creations. Education facilitates continual human development, affirming humanity's superiority and enabling individuals to understand their purpose as *khalifah* (stewards) on Earth.[3]

While Islamic education has long emphasized its philosophical focus on human development—centered on fostering an individual's innate religiosity as a foundation for both worldly and spiritual happiness—the role of leadership in achieving educational excellence often remains underexplored. Specifically, the role of a headmaster in improving the quality of education in Islamic institutions has not been adequately examined, particularly in the context of their dual function as both educators and administrators.

Previous studies, the Head of Madrasah adopts transformational leadership to enhance teacher performance, encouraging innovation and creativity among staff.[4] They practice participative leadership, empowering staff and promoting continuous professional development, which boosts motivation and collaboration[5]. Building a positive organizational culture is also essential. The Head of Madrasah achieves this through effective communication and staff empowerment, fostering a harmonious work environment that supports educational improvement.[5] The unique challenges faced by headmasters in balancing teaching and leadership duties within madrasahs require further analysis to understand their contribution to achieving holistic educational goals.

This research aims to bridge the gap by examining the strategic role of headmasters in improving the quality of education in madrasahs, particularly their ability to synergize with teachers, staff, parents, and local authorities. The study offers a new perspective by integrating the Islamic philosophical framework with practical leadership strategies, demonstrating how headmasters can effectively enhance educational quality while fulfilling their dual roles.

By investigating the dynamic interplay between leadership and education in madrasahs, this study contributes to the understanding of effective leadership models that align with Islamic principles and modern educational demands.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the performance of the school principal at MTs Negeri 1 Siak.[6] Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders,

including the principal, teachers, and administrative staff, to gather information on the practices and strategies implemented in the school. Additionally, the researcher conducted direct observations of the principal's performance activities and educational quality improvement programs to strengthen the data collected.[7]

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis[8], where patterns and themes emerging from the interviews and observations were examined in depth. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the performance strategies implemented and their impact on improving the quality of education at the school.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

#### *The Role of the Principal in Improving Education Quality at MTs Negeri 1 Siak*

The principal plays a strategic role in improving the quality of education at MTs Negeri 1 Siak. Through various programs designed and implemented, these efforts aim to enhance the overall quality of education, particularly in learning outcomes and graduate quality. Achievements at this madrasah are the result of the collective hard work of teachers, staff, and students.

In general, the programs focus on five main areas: Islamic education, curriculum development, student affairs, public relations, and infrastructure. By managing these areas systematically, MTs Negeri 1 Siak strives to realize its vision of becoming an excellent school with a global outlook.

One of the principal's key roles is to develop plans and strategies. These strategies include improving religious and general education, empowering educators and administrative staff through training, enhancing student graduation rates

through tutoring programs, and improving the school's facilities and infrastructure.

At the beginning of their tenure, the principal conducted a SWOT analysis to map the school's progress. This analysis highlights strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, enabling the school to develop more effective strategic planning.

*Strengths.* One of the primary strengths of MTs Negeri 1 Siak is the availability of highly qualified teachers. With educators who possess relevant academic qualifications and expertise, the school is well-equipped to deliver high-quality education. These teachers are dedicated to fostering a positive learning environment and enhancing student achievement.

Another significant strength is the school's strategic location and the ownership of waqf land. The central location provides easy access for students and staff, while the waqf land offers opportunities for future development and expansion. This advantage allows the school to plan for infrastructure improvements and program expansions to support student needs.

The school's permanent buildings and adequate facilities also form a solid foundation for its educational programs. Durable infrastructure ensures a conducive environment for learning and administrative activities, reflecting the school's commitment to providing a stable and supportive atmosphere for students and staff.

*Weaknesses.* Despite its strengths, MTs Negeri 1 Siak faces challenges, including insufficient teaching and learning facilities. Many classrooms lack the conducive atmosphere necessary for effective learning, and the sports field is inadequate for student physical activities. These shortcomings can hinder the school's

ability to provide a comprehensive educational experience.

Additionally, the lack of supporting facilities, such as clean water and well-maintained school gardens, remains a concern. The absence of these basic amenities not only affects the school's operational efficiency but also diminishes the overall appeal of the learning environment for students and visitors.

*Opportunities.* MTs Negeri 1 Siak benefits from its proximity to numerous elementary schools in the surrounding area, presenting a significant opportunity for student recruitment. These feeder schools can serve as a steady source of new students, strengthening the school's enrollment numbers and ensuring sustained growth.

The school's location in a safe and strategic area is another valuable opportunity. Being close to the offices of the Ministry of Religion and the local Education Office provides better access to resources, guidance, and support. This proximity facilitates collaboration and enhances the school's ability to implement programs that align with government education initiatives.

*Threats.* However, the school faces threats, such as increasing competition from general junior high schools. The establishment of more public schools in the area presents a challenge in attracting and retaining students, as families may opt for these alternatives.

Another notable threat is the community's preference for general schools, which often have more comprehensive facilities. This perception can lead to a decline in enrollment, as parents and students seek schools that offer a wider range of amenities and extracurricular opportunities.

By recognizing and leveraging its strengths, such as qualified teachers and strategic location, and by capitalizing on

opportunities like feeder schools and proximity to educational offices, MTs Negeri 1 Siak can continue to grow and improve. At the same time, addressing weaknesses in facilities and mitigating threats from competition and community perceptions are crucial steps. Through these efforts, the principal remains committed to enhancing the quality of education and securing the school's position as a leading institution in the region.

#### *Strategies of the Principal to Improve Education Quality at MTs Negeri 1 Siak*

To enhance the quality of education, the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak has implemented well-planned and comprehensive strategies. The primary focus of these strategies is on improving both religious and general education for students. As a madrasah that emphasizes Islamic values, strengthening religious education is a top priority. Students are equipped not only with general knowledge but also with a profound understanding of religious teachings that serve as their moral and spiritual foundation.

Additionally, significant attention is given to empowering teachers and administrative staff. Improving the quality of educators and support staff is achieved by encouraging their participation in various training sessions and workshops. These training programs are designed to enhance the pedagogical skills and professionalism of teachers, enabling them to deliver more effective and innovative teaching.

Another strategy involves boosting students' graduation outcomes through tutoring programs offered both within and outside the madrasah. These programs aim to better prepare students for exams while helping them achieve optimal academic results. By participating in tutoring sessions, students can deepen their

understanding of the subject matter and adopt more effective learning strategies.

In addition to human resource development, the principal focuses on providing adequate facilities and infrastructure. Efforts to improve teaching and learning facilities are a vital part of the strategy to enhance education quality. The availability of sufficient resources, such as comfortable classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other supporting facilities, ensures a more effective and enjoyable learning experience for students.

By integrating these various strategies, the principal is committed to creating a high-quality learning environment at MTs Negeri 1 Siak. The combination of teacher competence enhancement, student education strengthening, and adequate facilities is believed to transform the madrasah into a leading and competitive educational institution both locally and nationally.

#### *Obstacles Faced by the Principal in Efforts to Improve Education Quality at MTs Negeri 1 Siak*

In their efforts to enhance education quality, the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak faces several significant challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of adequate facilities and resources. Teachers often struggle to optimize their teaching process due to insufficient tools, such as modern educational technology, teaching materials, and interactive learning media. This limitation affects the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Additionally, the condition of the learning spaces is another challenge. Some classrooms require improvements to create a comfortable and conducive environment for students. An uninviting learning atmosphere can reduce students' focus and hinder the effectiveness of the teaching process.

Another issue is the inadequate sports facilities. The current sports field is either too small or below standard, limiting students' opportunities to develop their potential in physical education. Sports activities are essential for supporting students' physical and mental development.

The availability of clean water remains another pressing concern. Clean water is a fundamental necessity that should be accessible in the school environment, both for sanitation and daily activities. Limited access to clean water can disrupt the comfort of both students and teachers during school hours.

Finally, the school garden is yet to be well-organized. A poorly maintained school environment may leave an unimpressive image on students and the community. A well-designed garden not only enhances the school's aesthetics but also creates a pleasant atmosphere that supports outdoor learning activities.

#### **Discussion**

Based on the overall data collected, the performance of the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak is deemed excellent, particularly in efforts to improve education quality. This is evident from the high number of applicants seeking admission to the school, despite the limited capacity of its classrooms. This trend indicates strong public trust in the educational quality offered by MTs Negeri 1 Siak.

The principal's success is also reflected in the numerous achievements of both the students and the institution. These accomplishments highlight the tangible outcomes of well-structured education management, including flagship programs that support students' academic and non-academic development.

One of the principal's notable strategies is the enhancement of human resource quality among teachers. The

principal actively organizes training sessions and workshops for teachers. These programs are designed to improve teachers' competencies, including teaching methods and mastery of educational technology. As a result, teachers can make more significant contributions to improving the quality of education in the madrasah.

The importance of these training sessions and workshops is not only felt by the teachers but also has a direct impact on students' quality of learning.[9] With more innovative and effective teaching, students can achieve better academic outcomes. Therefore, these programs represent an excellent initiative to continue developing in the future.

With the principal's exceptional performance, MTs Negeri 1 Siak is not only able to maintain its reputation as a high-quality educational institution but also serves as a model for other institutions seeking to enhance education quality through effective and innovative management.

The principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak demonstrates exemplary leadership in improving the quality of education, as evidenced by the high demand for student admissions and numerous institutional achievements. This success is largely attributed to strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher competencies[9] and fostering a supportive learning environment. The principal's approach aligns with effective leadership practices observed in other educational settings, emphasizing the importance of teacher development and strategic management. Below are the key aspects of the principal's successful strategy:

*Teacher Competency Development.* The principal regularly organizes training sessions and workshops to improve teachers' pedagogical skills and technological proficiency, which are essential for enhancing educational quality (Hasanuddin & Samiyah, 2024).[10] A similar approach has proven effective in other institutions, where principals conduct periodic workshops and provide motivation through rewards to foster a culture of pedagogical innovation.[10]

*Strategic Management and Leadership.* The principal's role in strategic management involves formulating policies that uphold educational standards and inspire collaboration between educators and stakeholders.[11] Effective communication of a compelling vision for learning innovation is a hallmark of transformative leadership, which is critical for advancing educational quality.[11]

*Marketing and Public Trust.* The high number of applicants to MTs Negeri 1 Siak reflects the success of marketing strategies and strong public trust in the institution's educational quality (Aulia et al., 2023). The principal plays a key role in developing marketing strategies to attract prospective students, a practice commonly observed in other educational contexts.[12]

*Managerial Competence.* The principal's managerial capabilities in planning, organizing, and controlling are crucial for maintaining and improving school quality (Hendrawan, 2022). Effective management practices include monitoring and evaluating educational processes to ensure continuous improvement (Hendrawan, 2022).[13]

While the principal's strategies at MTs Negeri 1 Siak are commendable, challenges such as resource limitations and competition from other institutions pose barriers to sustaining educational quality. Addressing these challenges requires a sustained commitment to strategic

planning, resource management, and fostering a collaborative school culture.[14]

Through these initiatives and adaptive strategies, the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak not only enhances the institution's reputation but also sets a benchmark for educational leadership excellence.

### Conclusion

The leadership performance of the principal of MTs Negeri 1 Siak in enhancing the quality of education has proven to be exemplary. This is reflected in the significant achievements across multiple dimensions, including an increased number of student enrollments, remarkable successes in academic and non-academic competitions, and improved services for both teachers and students. These advancements highlight the principal's commitment to creating a positive and conducive educational environment, which has had a tangible impact on the overall quality of education at the institution.

To sustain and further this progress, it is recommended that the principal continue to strengthen their role as an inspirational and visionary leader. Strategic planning, involving active collaboration with all stakeholders, is crucial to addressing current challenges and driving future growth. Additionally, prioritizing the provision of adequate facilities and resources is essential to support an effective teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, offering appropriate incentives and motivational support to teachers and staff will help cultivate a positive and collaborative atmosphere within the institution. By implementing these recommendations, MTs Negeri 1 Siak can build a more robust and sustainable educational ecosystem, ultimately ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of education provided.

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