Building a Culture of Excellence: How Principal Supervision Shapes Professional Teachers through Collaborative Leadership?

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the role of collaborative leadership in shaping professional teachers through supervision activities in madrasahs. The approach used is qualitative with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out through several systematic stages to ensure the validity of the findings, namely data condensation, data presentation, verification, and concluding. The study results indicate that collaborative leadership applied in madrasahs encourages the creation of positive, cooperative relationships between leaders and teachers, optimizes teacher involvement in decision-making, and encourages innovation in learning. In addition, this study found that ongoing teacher development programs are essential to maintaining the quality of teaching. These findings contribute to the development of collaborative leadership theory in Islamic education. They can be used as a basis for policy to improve the effectiveness of academic supervision in madrasah. The implications of this study indicate the importance of implementing collaborative leadership in madrasah management to improve the quality of education and teacher professionalism, as well as providing guidance for policymakers in designing more effective and inclusive supervision programs.

Keywords: *Collaborative Leadership, Professional Teacher, Supervision*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepemimpinan kolaboratif dalam membentuk guru profesional melalui kegiatan supervisi di madrasah. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui beberapa tahapan sistematis untuk memastikan validitas temuan, yaitu kondensasi data, penyajian data, verifikasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kolaboratif yang diterapkan di madrasah mendorong terciptanya hubungan kerjasama yang positif antara pimpinan dan guru, mengoptimalkan keterlibatan guru dalam pengambilan keputusan, serta mendorong inovasi dalam pembelajaran. Selain itu, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa program pengembangan guru yang berkelanjutan sangat penting untuk menjaga kualitas pengajaran. Temuan ini

memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan teori kepemimpinan kolaboratif dalam konteks pendidikan Islam dan dapat dijadikan dasar kebijakan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas supervisi akademik di madrasah. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan pentingnya penerapan kepemimpinan kolaboratif dalam pengelolaan madrasah untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan dan profesionalisme guru, serta memberikan panduan bagi pengambil kebijakan dalam merancang program supervisi yang lebih efektif dan inklusif.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Kolaboratif, Guru Profesional, Supervisi*

INTRODUCTION

A culture of excellence in education is the main foundation in creating a competent and quality generation (Manuylenko et al., 2022; Rony et al., 2023; Sudi & Jusman, 2023). Principal leadership has a strategic role in shaping this culture through effective supervision of teachers in schools (Corrigan & Merry, 2022; Kilag et al., 2023; Rogers, 2022). Collaborative leadership theory emphasizes the importance of collaboration between principals and teachers in creating an innovative and quality learning environment (Jong et al., 2022; Patrick, 2022; Sahlin, 2023). However, in practice, there is still a gap between the concept of principal supervision and its implementation in the field. Many schools, including madrasahs, still implement conventional supervision that is oriented towards administrative supervision rather than improving teacher professionalism. This raises questions about how principal supervision can be optimized to create professional teachers through collaborative leadership.

In the context of MTs Darul Faizin, Jombang, East Java, this phenomenon can be clearly observed. Although the principal has implemented a supervision system, there are still obstacles in implementing collaborative leadership strategies. Some teachers feel that supervision is limited to routine assessments without adequate assistance for professional development. In addition, collaboration between the principal and teachers has not been fully established optimally. In fact, collaborative leadership theory emphasizes that supervision must be dialogic, supportive, and provide space for teachers to develop professionally (Peercy et al., 2024; Veles & Danaher, 2024). This fact shows a gap between theory and reality in the field that needs further research.

Several previous studies have discussed the role of principal supervision in improving teacher quality. For example, research by Latianaa et al. (2023), Prasetia et al. (2022) and Wiyono et al. (2022) shows that collaboration-based academic supervision can improve teacher competence in planning and implementing learning. Meanwhile, research by Tran et al., (2022) and Wiyono et al., (2022) highlighted that participatory supervision can create a more conducive working environment for teachers to improve their professionalism.

However, these studies have not specifically discussed the implementation of principal supervision in building a culture of excellence in madrasah, especially at MTs Darul Faizin. Thus, this study has a unique position in contributing to the existing literature. The main focus of this study is how principal supervision can

shape professional teachers through collaborative leadership in the context of madrasah. Different from previous studies that focus more on general academic supervision, this study will explore in depth how collaborative leadership strategies are applied in supervision and their impact on teacher quality and the culture of excellence in madrasah. This is the main difference that provides novelty in this study.

The novelty of this study lies in the approach used in viewing principal supervision as the main instrument in forming a culture of excellence in the madrasa environment. By highlighting the collaborative aspect between the principal and teachers, this study tries to offer a new perspective that emphasizes the importance of partnership in supervision. The supervision model developed in this study is expected to be a reference for other madrasah in implementing more effective supervision strategies that are oriented towards the continuous development of teacher professionalism.

This study seeks to answer the question how is collaborative leadership in forming professional teachers through supervision activities in madrasah at MTs Darul Faizin, Jombang? Collaborative leadership in madrasah is the key to forming professional teachers through effective supervision activities. This leadership model emphasizes collaboration between the madrasah principal, senior teachers, and other educators in creating an environment that supports the development of teacher competence (Alfaruqi & Fahmi, 2025; Khofi, 2024).

Collaborative supervision does not only focus on performance evaluation, but also provides coaching, reflection, and constructive feedback that encourages improved teaching quality. With this approach, teachers feel more appreciated and motivated to continue improving their competence, both in terms of pedagogy, professionalism, and Islamic character that are characteristic of madrasahs. Therefore, collaborative leadership applied in educational supervision can be an effective strategy in creating teachers who are not only academically competent, but also have high dedication to the development of education based on Islamic values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth how principal supervision through collaborative leadership can shape teacher professionalism in madrasahs. Case studies were chosen because they allow for more detailed exploration in a real context, so that they can provide a holistic understanding of the phenomena that occur. This method also allows researchers to understand the dynamics of supervision and its impact on the culture of excellence in madrasahs. In addition, this approach is relevant because it can describe how interactions between principals, teachers, and the madrasah environment contribute to improving the quality of teaching and the professionalism of educators.

The location of the study was chosen at MTs Darul Faizin, Jombang, East Java, with several main considerations. This madrasah has implemented a collaborative leadership-based supervision model that aims to improve teacher professionalism, making it a relevant case study. In addition, this madrasah has a

track record of achievement in managing quality education, which shows that the supervision strategy implemented has produced significant results. The openness factor from the madrasah to this research is also an important reason, because it allows for more accurate and in-depth data collection.

The sources of information in this study were obtained from various parties who have direct involvement in educational supervision. The main respondents were teachers at MTs Darul Faizin who experienced direct supervision from the head of the madrasah. Meanwhile, key informants consisted of the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of academic affairs, and the madrasah supervisor who had in-depth insight into the practice of supervision and collaborative leadership. In addition, data was also obtained from various text sources, such as manuscripts, books, educational regulations related to supervision in madrasahs, and online news discussing issues of leadership and teacher professionalism.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews used purposive sampling techniques, namely selecting informants based on their relevance and involvement in the supervision process in the madrasah. It is estimated that around 10-15 informants will be interviewed, consisting of the head of the madrasah, teachers, and other education personnel. Observations were carried out by directly observing how the supervision of the head of the madrasah took place, including interactions with teachers and strategies used in building the professionalism of educators. Meanwhile, documentation involved collecting written data in the form of supervision notes, teacher performance reports, and madrasah policies related to supervision and development of teacher professionalism.

Data analysis in this study was carried out through several systematic stages to ensure the validity of the findings. The first stage is data condensation, which is the process of simplifying, focusing, and selecting the most relevant data from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The collected data then undergoes reduction, where less relevant or repetitive information is eliminated, so that only data that has high significance to the research is used. Furthermore, data display (data presentation) is carried out in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, or thematic categories to facilitate interpretation and further analysis of the supervision patterns of madrasah principals and their impact on teacher professionalism. The final stage is verification and drawing conclusions, where the data that has been presented is analyzed critically to find the relationship between collaborative leadership, the supervision process, and its influence in forming a culture of excellence in madrasahs. Verification is carried out repeatedly to ensure that the conclusions obtained are credible, accurate, and accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
Building Positive Collaborative Relationships

Building positive collaborative relationships in the context of educational supervision at MTs Darul Faizin refers to harmonious interactions between the principal, teachers, and education personnel in improving the quality of learning. This collaboration is demonstrated through open communication, mutual respect,

and collaboration in planning and implementing supervision programs. In practice, this collaborative relationship is implemented through various activities such as group discussions, joint reflections, and moral and professional support in the learning process.

Based on an interview with the Principal of MTs Darul Faizin, he stated: "We always try to create a comfortable and conducive working atmosphere for teachers. In supervision, I not only provide evaluations, but also accompany and discuss with teachers to find the best solution. The goal is for them to feel supported and not supervised in a negative sense."

From this statement, it can be interpreted that the principal has a role as a facilitator who is oriented towards coaching, not just supervision. This approach allows teachers to be more open in conveying the obstacles they face in learning, so that supervision becomes more effective and has an impact on improving teacher professionalism.

Meanwhile, one of the teachers said: "I feel more comfortable in supervision because we are given the opportunity to share experiences and discuss. Supervision no longer feels like a one-sided assessment event, but more like a constructive mentoring session." From the results of this interview, it can be seen that teachers have experienced a change in their perception of supervision. Collaborative-based supervision makes teachers more active in evaluating themselves and finding solutions to the problems they face. This also reflects a sense of mutual trust between the principal and teachers, which is the key to building a positive working relationship.

The observation results show that in each supervision session, the principal more often acts as an active listener and provides input with a two-way discussion approach. Teachers are given the freedom to express their views and share good practices that they have implemented. In addition, in several meetings, the principal also invited senior teachers to share their experiences in implementing more effective learning methods.

From the findings of this observation, it can be interpreted that the interactions that are established are not hierarchical, but rather more of an equal partnership relationship. This open and supportive communication pattern creates a more comfortable working environment for teachers, so that they feel more confident in carrying out their duties.

Overall, the positive cooperative relationship at MTs Darul Faizin is realized through an open communication pattern, discussions involving all parties, and a supervision approach that is more guiding than just assessing. The principal acts as a facilitator who provides space for teachers to develop and improve the quality of learning. Teachers also feel more comfortable in undergoing supervision because they receive support and constructive input.

The pattern seen from the data above shows that collaboration-based supervision has a significant impact on creating a harmonious working relationship between the principal and teachers. With two-way communication, teachers feel more appreciated and more open in conveying the obstacles they face. Supervision is no longer considered a pressing process, but rather as part of a joint effort to improve the quality of education in madrasahs.

Optimizing Teacher Involvement

Optimizing teacher involvement in the context of this study refers to efforts made by madrasah leaders to increase active teacher participation in various professional development activities, including in supervision activities. This involvement includes aspects of communication, collaboration, and decision-making that encourage improved teaching quality and achievement of educational goals. In this case, supervision is not only an evaluation mechanism, but also a means to improve teacher understanding and skills through a collaborative approach that provides space for teachers to contribute more actively to the educational process.

In an interview with Informant 1, who is the head of the madrasah, it was explained that optimizing teacher involvement was carried out through a two-way supervision approach, where teachers were given the opportunity to communicate openly about the needs and challenges they face in the teaching process. According to him, this supervision is not only aimed at assessing performance, but also to explore teachers' creative ideas in improving the quality of learning. This is reflected in the practice of supervision which often involves group discussions and workshops with teachers. Informant 1 emphasized the importance of providing space for teachers to speak and share experiences so that they feel valued and involved in the decision-making process related to teaching.

Meanwhile, Informant 2, a teacher at MTs Darul Faizin, stated that they felt very helped by this approach. "The supervision carried out was not only in the form of assessment, but more of coaching that gave me the opportunity to learn with my colleagues," he said. This indicates that the involvement of teachers in the supervision process has changed their view of the activity, which was previously seen as a form of evaluation alone, to more of increasing professional capacity. From the results of observations conducted at MTs Darul Faizin, it was seen that the teachers showed active participation in the supervision activities held. In addition, there was intense interaction between the principal and teachers, where the principal tried to create a supportive atmosphere for teachers to express ideas and problems faced in the learning process. It was also seen that the space for mutual discussion and exchange of information between teachers was also wide open. This observation shows that supervision activities at MTs Darul Faizin not only function as an evaluation tool but also as a means to optimize teacher involvement in the decision-making process related to teaching.

From the results of interviews and observations conducted, it can be concluded that teacher involvement in supervision activities at MTs Darul Faizin has undergone significant optimization. Teachers are not only involved in the teaching aspect, but are also given space to contribute to the development of educational policies and procedures at the madrasah. This shows the efforts of the madrasah leadership to build collaborative leadership that not only involves the leadership, but also all educators in the decision-making process that affects the quality of education.

Based on the data obtained, there is a consistent pattern in supervision practices at MTs Darul Faizin that involves active interaction between the madrasah principal and teachers. Supervision is carried out with a more

collaborative approach, where teachers are given the opportunity to speak, share experiences, and be involved in decision-making related to learning. This creates an environment that supports teacher professional development, strengthens the relationship between leaders and staff, and encourages the achievement of better educational goals.

Encouraging Innovation in Learning

Encouraging innovation in learning at MTs Darul Faizin refers to the school's efforts to create a conducive environment for teachers to develop and implement more creative, effective, and technology-based learning strategies. This innovation includes the use of new learning methods, the use of digital technology, and the organization of forums or training that support the development of teacher competencies. In addition, the principal and management also play a role in providing facilities, policies, and moral encouragement to ensure that innovation can be applied consistently in teaching and learning activities.

<div align="center">Table 1. Results of Interviews with Informants</div>

Interview Excerpts	Informant	Indicators
"The principal always encourages us to try new methods in learning, such as the use of multimedia and interactive technology in the classroom."	Teacher	Use of new learning methods such as multimedia and interactive technology.
"Every semester, we are given the opportunity to attend workshops that focus on learning innovations and the latest technology."	Principal	Providing opportunities to attend workshops that explore learning innovations.
"We are given space to develop our own learning modules and try more creative approaches."	Senior Teacher	Development of independent learning modules and creative approaches by teachers.
"The principal often holds meetings that focus on innovative ideas in improving the quality of learning."	Deputy Principal for Curriculum	Having meetings or idea forums to encourage innovation in learning.
"We are often asked to share experiences about teaching methods that have been successfully implemented in the classroom to inspire other teachers."	Teaching Coordinator	Utilization of teacher experience as a reference for teaching innovation in schools.

Based on the results of interviews with informants, it can be seen that schools encourage innovation in learning through various strategies. Schools encourage innovation in learning by adopting new methods such as multimedia and interactive technology. Teachers are given the freedom to utilize technology to increase student engagement, which reflects a more adaptive transformation of teaching to the times. This not only improves student understanding but also makes learning more interesting and effective.

In addition, teachers are given the opportunity to participate in learning innovation workshops. These workshops help them gain new insights into more modern and relevant teaching methods. Several teachers actively participate in training and apply it in class, which is expected to improve the quality of learning and adapt to the demands of 21st century education.

Teachers are also given the freedom to develop learning modules according to student needs. Several teachers have created more interactive and contextual modules, increasing student interest in learning. By supporting teachers in innovating, schools have created a conducive environment for the development of professionalism of educators.

From the results of observations, the application of multimedia and interactive technology has been carried out although not evenly distributed in all classes. Several classes have been equipped with technological devices such as projectors and internet access. However, the main challenge is the readiness of teachers to operate the technology optimally, which requires further training.

Learning innovation workshops have become a regular part of the school program, with speakers from various backgrounds. Although some teachers are very enthusiastic, there are still some who are less active in implementing the training results. To increase effectiveness, follow-up in the form of mentoring is needed so that learning innovations can be implemented optimally in the classroom.

Overall, the school has demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of learning through innovation, especially in the use of technology and the development of learning modules. Although there are challenges in implementation, the steps taken show positive results. To strengthen these results, further mentoring and provision of adequate infrastructure are needed. With collaboration between teachers and a sustainable approach, it is hoped that this educational innovation can improve the overall quality of learning.

Ensuring the Sustainability of the Teacher Development Program

Ensuring the sustainability of the teacher development program at MTs Darul Faizin refers to the strategies and policies implemented to ensure that teacher competency improvement is carried out continuously. This program includes various activities such as routine training, ongoing supervision, mentoring by mentors, and strengthening the teacher learning community. The sustainability of this program aims to ensure that improving the quality of teaching is not temporary, but becomes part of the madrasah culture that continues to develop.

In an interview with the Principal of MTs Darul Faizin Madrasah, he said: "We realize that teacher development cannot stop at just one or two trainings. Therefore, we hold routine training every semester, both internally and by involving external speakers. In addition, we also form teacher study groups so that they can share experiences and discuss the challenges they face in teaching." From this statement, it can be interpreted that the madrasah has a systematic strategy to maintain the sustainability of teacher professional development. Routine training conducted periodically shows the institution's commitment to improving the quality of educators. In addition, the formation of teacher study groups is a collaborative effort to create an environment that supports continuous learning.

A teacher who has participated in various development programs stated: "I feel more developed because we are not only given training materials, but also get mentoring afterwards. The principal and senior teachers always give us the opportunity to discuss and practice the results of the training in class. This is very

helpful because we not only get theory, but also guidance in real implementation."

From the results of this interview, it can be seen that teachers feel the positive impact of the ongoing development program. Mentoring after training ensures that the knowledge gained is not only theoretical, but can also be applied in daily learning practices. This shows that the sustainability of the program does not only depend on the implementation of training, but also on support and evaluation afterward.

Based on the results of observations at MTs Darul Faizin, it can be seen that the implementation of the teacher development program does not only focus on formal training, but also includes various forms of informal mentoring. On several occasions, teachers were seen holding group discussions after teaching to evaluate the learning methods they had applied. The principal also actively visited classes to provide direct feedback to teachers.

The results of this observation show that the sustainability of the teacher development program at this madrasah runs naturally and becomes part of the school culture. Teachers not only follow training in a structured scheme, but also receive direct support in their work environment. This approach creates a dynamic learning atmosphere and allows teachers to continue to develop in their teaching practice. Overall, the sustainability of the teacher development program at MTs Darul Faizin is maintained through a combination of regular training, mentoring by the head of the madrasah and senior teachers, and the formation of an active learning community. The madrasah ensures that each training is followed by implementation in teaching practice, so that teachers can feel the direct benefits of the program. With ongoing mentoring, teachers have the opportunity to continue learning and improve the quality of their teaching.

The pattern formed from the data above shows that the sustainability of the teacher development program at MTs Darul Faizin does not only depend on the training that is held periodically, but also on the support in the implementation and reflection after the training. The madrasah has created an environment that supports continuous learning by implementing supervision that is guiding and building a teacher learning community. With this approach, teachers not only develop individually, but also together in a mutually supportive system.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that collaborative leadership at MTs Darul Faizin is very focused on establishing a positive cooperative relationship between leaders and teachers. In this context, the theory of transformational leadership can explain how leaders in madrasahs play a role in raising the spirit and motivation of teachers (Morales, 2022; Nurtjahjani, Puspita, & Novitasari, 2022; Siraj, Rami, Aziz, & Anuar, 2022). Leaders who listen to teachers' input, provide support, and value their contributions are able to create a work environment that is conducive to collaboration. Research Çoban et al. (2023), Kilag et al. (2023) and Meyer et al. (2022) affirms that positive relationships between leaders and staff can increase the effectiveness of collaboration in schools, which in turn improves the quality of teaching. This study also found that teacher involvement in supervision and professional development activities was very optimal. Madrasah leaders gave teachers the freedom to be actively involved in decision-making and curriculum

development. Collaborative leadership theory states that empowering teachers in the learning process and educational policies can improve the quality of teaching (Meyer et al., 2022; Patrick, 2022). Previously, research by Li & Liu (2022) and Pardosi & Utari (2022) also confirmed that collaboration between leaders and teachers can improve teaching and learning performance in schools.

The madrasah leaders at MTs Darul Faizin also encourage teachers to innovate in their learning methods. This approach is in line with the theory of educational innovation by McNaughtan et al. (2022) and Supriyanto et al. (2023) which states that innovation in education can be achieved through teacher empowerment and the freedom to try new methods. Previous research by Fuad et al (2022) showed that leadership that supports innovation plays an important role in improving student learning outcomes. Therefore, this madrasah provides space for teachers to explore the use of technology and interactive learning methods to increase student engagement.

The sustainability of teacher development programs is also a major concern in collaborative leadership at MTs Darul Faizin. The madrasah ensures that teacher professional development training and workshop programs are carried out sustainably and integrated into the school's education system. Teacher professional development theory emphasizes that continuous development and the relevance of training materials are essential to improving the quality of teaching (Kasneci et al., 2023; Yu, 2023). The results of this study support the findings of previous studies which show that continuous training programs contribute to significant improvements in teacher professional competence.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the implementation of collaborative leadership at MTs Darul Faizin focuses on teacher empowerment through the formation of positive collaborative relationships, optimization of teacher involvement, encouragement to innovate in learning, and ensuring the sustainability of teacher development programs. The collaborative leadership theory by Spillane (2006) which emphasizes the importance of the involvement of all parties in decision-making and the development of shared competence is very relevant to these findings. This study also strengthens previous evidence that inclusive and collaborative leadership can improve the quality of education and teacher professional well-being.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of collaborative leadership theory in the context of Islamic education, especially in the management of Islamic education in madrasahs. This study shows that collaboration-based leadership can strengthen the relationship between leaders and teachers, which in turn can improve the quality of learning and teaching. In practice, these findings provide guidance for madrasah managers in designing sustainable and innovative professional development programs. By strengthening cooperation, teacher empowerment, and support for innovation, madrasahs can improve the quality of education that is more relevant to the demands of the times, as well as strengthen the role of teachers as agents of change in the Islamic education system.

CONCLUSION

This study produced several important findings, the first of which is the importance of collaborative leadership in forming professional teachers through supervision activities at MTs Darul Faizin. The main wisdom of this study is that leadership that builds positive cooperative relationships, optimizes teacher involvement, and encourages innovation in learning, can improve the quality of teaching and form more professional teachers. In addition, the importance of the sustainability of teacher development programs is also a finding that can be used as a basis for strengthening policies in order to continuously improve the competence of educators. Overall, this study provides a lesson that the success of teacher professional development is not only determined by occasional training, but by continuous collaboration and support from madrasah leaders. This paper makes a significant contribution to the development of science, especially in the context of Islamic educational leadership.

This study renews the perspective on the role of collaborative leadership in improving the quality of teaching in madrasahs and raises the importance of teacher involvement in decision-making. Another contribution is the use of qualitative methods with in-depth interviews and observations, which provide a more complete picture of the dynamics in the field. However, this study has limitations, especially in terms of the scope of the place/location which is limited to only one madrasah and the lack of variation in terms of gender and age of teachers. Therefore, further, broader research is needed, for example by involving more madrasah and paying attention to gender and age aspects, as well as using survey methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture that can be used as a basis for more targeted policies.

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