

# Madrasah-Based Management: Quality Improvement Strategies in Madrasah

Susanto

Islamic Educational Management Department, Institut Perguruan Tinggi Ilmu Al Qur'an,  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
Email : susanto@ptiq.ac.id

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## Abstract:

This study explores quality improvement strategies in Madrasahs in the Ponorogo district during the Covid-19 situation. This research is quantitative research with a descriptive method. The population in this study were educators and education staff in Madrasah, Ponorogo Regency, amounting to 15 madrasah. The research analysis was done descriptively. This study found that the madrasa-based quality improvement strategy developed in Ponorogo Regency during the Covid-19 pandemic; First, the planning aspect, namely curriculum adjustments, online-based learning services, administrative services, and adjustments to the rules according to the Covid-19 situation policy. Second is the development of intelligent system innovation. Third, ensure that educators and education personnel carry out their duties according to health protocols and increase capacity according to learning needs in the Covid-19 situation; Fourth, aspects of parental support, provision of parental consultation rooms, and essential skills. The implications of the research findings can be a positive inspiration for improving the quality of madrasah in the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Madrasah-based Management, Quality Improvement, Covid-19*

## Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi peningkatan mutu di Madrasah di kabupaten Ponorogo dalam dalam situasi Covid-19. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini merupakan tenaga pendidik dan kependidikan di Madrasah Kabupaten Ponorogo yang berjumlah 15 madrasah. Analisis penelitian dilakukan secara deskriptif. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa strategi peningkatan mutu berbasis madrasah yang dikembangkan di Kabupaten Ponorogo pada masa pandemic Covid-19; pertama, aspek perencanaan yaitu penyesuaian kurikulum, layanan pembelajaran berbasis online, layanan administrasi dan penyesuaian dengan aturan sesuai kebijakan situasi Covid-19. Kedua, pengembangan inovasi smart system. Ketiga, memastikan pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan melaksanakan tugas sesuai protokol kesehatan, peningkatan kapasitas sesuai kebutuhan pembelajaran dalam situasi Covid-19; Keempat, aspek dukungan orangtua, penyediaan ruang konsultasi orangtua, parenting skill. Implikasi temuan penelitian dimaksud dapat menjadi inspirasi positif bagi peningkatan mutu madrasah dalam situasi pandemi Covid-19.

**Kata Kunci:** *Manajemen Berbasis Madrasah, Peningkatan Mutu, Covid-19*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the education service sector (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). In 2.5 years of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, it has disrupted learning services in academic units. It can potentially reduce the quality of human resources in the future in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Alsoufi et al., 2020). This condition requires the efforts of various parties, especially the education unit, to ensure that the learning process runs effectively. The process of teaching and learning activities must continue, and students do not lose their rights to learning (Suryaman et al., 2020). Education units, schools, and madrasah must quickly respond to the phenomenon of the Covid-19 outbreak by always striving so that the learning process can be carried out effectively (König et al., 2020).

For madrasa education units, the Covid-19 situation is a severe challenge. On the other hand, madrasah are required to maintain the quality of service. They should adapt quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic era. Moreover, madrasa-based Islamic education in Indonesia is growing in line with global developments (Royhatudin et al., 2020). The growth of these madrasah increased continuously. However, it had to adjust to the global pandemic because of Covid-19. In facing the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, madrasah should implement significant reforms to adjust to the demands and create qualified madrasah effectively. Thus, madrasah should be designed through good planning that allows stakeholders such as madrasa management, educators, education staff, and students to freely develop their potential according to their creativity and respective fields (Raimers, 2020).

Attempts to enhance the quality of madrasah through education quality management are to provide education to the desired goals (Khairiah & Sirajuddin, 2019). In creating qualified education, the role of education management is enormous because the practice of educational management is to optimize a series of activities to plan, organize, motivate, supervise, and develop all skills and creativity embedded in all human resources to achieve the goals of a particular educational institution (Royyan et al., 2022). Likewise, the quality of madrasa is primarily determined by the management process. Conceptually, the management of madrasa applies various management functions in managing educational institutions based on Islamic values (Riyan Rizaldi et al., 2021) so that the quality of madrasa is reflected in the management pattern in the Islamic educational organization activities. It is because the competition to develop the quality of education will only be won by educational institutions that can adapt to changing times (Kisbiyanto & Setyoningsih, 2018).

Madrasa-based quality improvement management can be an alternative solution to various problems madrasah face (Aziz, 2015). Moreover, they face various challenges and problems and the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Madrasa-based management is a strategy to realize an effective and productive madrasa (Mustapid et al., 2021). It is the decentralization of the level of authority for madrasa administration to the madrasah level (Rahmatullah, 2021). Responsibility and decision-making for implementing the madrasa have

been handed over to the head of the madrasa, teachers, parents, students, and other school community members (Suparlan, 2013).

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a complex impact on madrasah. It requires a new paradigm in management, reforming conventional madrasa services towards new adaptive services through revamping the management system. Thus, Madrasa-Based Management (MBM) is necessary to develop an effective madrasa (Hadijaya et al., 2021). Based on a study, Aisyah (2021) shows that the application of madrasa-based management principles can improve the performance of madrasa heads. They are 1) the principle of equivalence goes well – by making a strategy according to madrasa conditions both short-term, medium-term, and long-term; 2) the principle of decentralization also works well – when the teacher has difficulties, it should do in various ways; one of which is by using a persuasive approach; 3) independent management goes well – the madrasa can develop learning objectives; 4) the principle of initiative goes well.

The situation of Covid-19 entrusted the breakthrough of adaptive madrasa management. Because of realizing a quality madrasa, not everything can run smoothly (Kurniawan, 2017). It has many problems. It needs to find the best solution to solve them so that improving its quality does not experience obstacles (Sihombing & Fatra, 2021).

Some researchers have conducted some studies related to madrasa management. However, the novelty of this study lies in improving the quality of madrasa in Ponorogo, East Java, in the Covid-19 situation by applying a madrasa-based management paradigm. Researchers studied 15 madrasa in Ponorogo, consisting of Madrasa Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah and Aliyah. This research is necessary due to various considerations. First, madrasah in the Covid-19 situation face various internal and external challenges, so adaptive management patterns are needed. Second, the madrasah-based management paradigm is needed for quality improvement in the Covid-19 situation. Third, each madrasah has diverse potentials, so the initiation and innovation of managing the potential of madrasahs are essential – the principles of madrasah-based management. Fourth, in any situation, the quality of madrasahs remains a priority, so quality assurance in the Covid-19 situation is vital.

Thus, it is essential to conduct research entitled Madrasa-Based Management: Strategies for Improving the Quality of Madrasah in the Covid-19 Era. It is hoped that the findings of this research can foster the spirit of improving madrasa management to improve quality sustainably.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design (Rahardjo, 2020). This research investigates and describes schools' and teachers' efforts to well-organized teaching learning during a pandemic. The data was described factually, systematically, and accurately using quantitative measuring instruments that describe the entire sample and also the questions in the study. The population in this study was madrasa educators and education staff in Ponorogo. It involved 15 madrasah, consisting of 4 Ibtidaiyah, 7 Madrasa

Tsanawiyah , and 4 Madrasa Aliyah. The sample in this study was 195 people. They were educators and education staff. It was taken randomly using the cluster random sampling technique. The instrument was distributed using an online questionnaire using a google form. The instrument included several aspects. First was the planning aspect. The second was the intelligent system innovation aspect. The third was the educator and education staff aspect. The fourth was the aspect of parental support. Then, the researcher analyzed it descriptively.

The question items were valid and reliable based on the instrument validity and reliability tests that researchers conducted using Excel 2019. The item was valid if the r-test was more significant than the r-table with a 5% confidence level of 0.23. Meanwhile, the item was reliable when the reliability of Cronbach's Alpha was more significant than 0.60. The researcher analyzed it descriptively. The data for each question was obtained directly after the distribution of the questionnaire through the google form. The entire data was analyzed through tabulation by changing the respondents' answers to scores of 1, 2, and 3 according to the instrument's score table. The total score was then determined, followed by calculating the percentage. All data were processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS Version 26.00.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The madrasah were located in Ponorogo, East Java. To improve quality in the Covid-19 pandemic situation, madrasah in Ponorogo have made various management breakthroughs to ensure quality control of educational services and the demands of adaptation to the Covid-19 situation. The various management breakthroughs made by the madrasa in question are described as follows.

**Table 1: Steps of Quality Improvement in Madrasah**

Statement	Yes	Sometimes	No	Criteria
<b>Planning</b>				
Adjustment of services for students according to the needs and policies of the Covid-19 situation	89,8%	10,2%	-	Good
Student learning services in online learning during Covid-19	92%	8%	-	Very good
Determining students' performance during the Covid-19 era	82,4%	17,6%	-%	Good
Formulate a curriculum using an emergency curriculum developed by the teachers of each subject	93%	7%	-	Very good
<b>Smart System Innovation</b>				
The online madrasa administration services use a smart system	51,5%	38,2%	10,3%	Poor
Parents can easily access their children's academic development through a smart system developed by madrasah.	63,2%	22,1%	14,7%	Poor
<b>Management of educators and education personnel</b>				
Ensure that educators and education personnel continue compliance with the health protocols based on Covid-19 policies.	89,7%	10,3%	-	Good

Conducting programs to improve the competence of educators and education according to the needs of the Covid-19 situation.	85,3%	13,2%	1,5%	Good
<b>Parental support</b>				
Parents provide support for madrasa services according to Covid-19 policy	85,3%	14,7%	-	Good
Madrasa provides a parent consultation room to support optimal learning services for the Covid-19 situation	86,6%	11,9%	1,5%	Good
Parents participate in parenting activities to improve parenting and learning assistance in the Covid-19 situation.	50,7%	32,8%	16,4%	Poor

Based on the data findings, madrasah have made some breakthroughs to improve the quality of education during the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings of the study illustrate a pretty good result. It can be seen from several madrasah conducting optimal services for students based on the policies and needs of students during the Covid-19 pandemic. 89.8% of leaders, educators and education staff provide maximum student services. It is in line with the interview; I have followed government policies and health protocols in the madrasa, especially in curriculum and learning adjustments (Interview, Mh, June 23, 2022). In addition, another 10.2% of some stakeholders ignore madrasa services and policies that have been implemented. 92% of learning is done online. 8% of teachers also do blended learning occasionally for a particular subject.

Madrasa also continues to determine the target of overall performance achievement. It is evidenced by the fact that 82.4% of human resources have done the performance achievement targets that have been determined by the institution effectively. However, 17.6% of madrasah sometimes determine the target of institutional performance achievements. The achievement of this performance target determines that the institution has guaranteed education personnel to continue to carry out their duties in the Covid-19 situation. Madrasa also ensures educators and education staff continue doing their duties in the Covid-19 situation based on its policy and health protocols. The educators and education staff do their jobs by adjusting all aspects of learning activities to the pandemic situation, such as adjusting the emergency curriculum, relevant and contextual teaching materials, fun media, and practical evaluation to measure student learning outcomes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Curriculum adjustments use emergency curricula issued by the government and developed by teachers of each subject. Stakeholders developed 93% of the subject curriculum in Ponorogo. It means that the majority of teachers have adopted the developed emergency curriculum.

Meanwhile, in administration services, madrasah provide services by innovating smart systems. It means that several madrasah have applied online services. It is unfulfilled. 51.5% are implemented online, and 38.2% are offline and online. It is relevant to the results of the interview as follows.

Madrasa, in the Covid-19 situation, despite its limitations, my madrasa still made breakthroughs through online-based learning and online

administration services, except for children who do not allow teachers to make home visits despite its limitations (Interview with Er, June 28, 2022).

However, 10.3% of these services are not effectively implemented. This online service system uses a smart system developed by madrasah. Based on the information, the ineffectiveness of this administrative service is caused by the many components of the system that are still implemented manually and have not been fully transferred using a smart system. As a result, it is prone to miscommunication between madrasa management, teachers, education staff and parents. Lack of knowledge from each other causes the service to be less than optimal. This condition requires readiness for changes in work procedures and leadership support to improve the quality of madrasa administrative services.

The excellence of these services is that parents are given facilities to access students' academic development. This access can be monitored through a smart system developed by madrasah. However, not all parents use the system. 63.2% of parents use smart systems to monitor their children's academic development, and 22.1% of parents only occasionally monitor the activities of their respective children. Meanwhile, 14.7% of parents do not review their child's academic development.

In addition to ensuring educators and other stakeholders do their jobs, madrasah also provide guarantees for the quality of educators and education personnel. 89.7% of teachers said to have met the quality in carrying out learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to guaranteeing and supervising in carrying out tasks in a pandemic situation, 85.3% of schools also implement programs to increase the competence of educators and education personnel under the needs of the Covid-19 situation. According to several other human resources, 13.2% of institutions implement programs to increase the competence of educators.

Based on the interview results is as follows. Dealing with the Covid-19 crisis is difficult because not all teachers are ready. However, in the madrasa where I teach, I continue to improve my competence so that teachers can adjust to Covid-19 policies and the demands of the digital era (Interview with MF, June 29, 2022).

In addition to providing support to educators and education staff, madrasah also provide attention to the role of parents in ensuring the quality and success of student learning at home during the pandemic. The role of parents is enormous in the success of student learning outcomes during the pandemic. 85.3% of parents support students' teaching and learning activities during the pandemic. While 14.7% of parents sometimes provide support. On the other hand, the madrasa also provides a parent consultation room to support optimal learning services for the Covid-19 situation. 86.6% of madrasah provide parental consultation rooms to support optimal learning services for the Covid-19 situation. The activity is to improve parenting and learning assistance in the Covid-19 situation.

The parenting program aims to increase parental competence so that children's growth and development are optimal. It is important because parents

are the first people to play a significant role in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Most 50.7% of parents followed, 32.8% sometimes followed and sometimes did not follow, and 16.4% did not follow the parenting program.

Based on the results, to develop the quality of education in madrasah during the Covid-19 pandemic, the first thing that must be adapted for madrasah is to make systematic planning adjustments so that the quality of madrasa services is as expected. Especially in the Covid-19 situation, the quality of services and health protection must be maintained. The adjustments to government policies must be made so that the two interests in question can go hand in hand.

Since Indonesia was declared a country with high cases of exposure to Covid-19, the government has placed restrictions on some aspects, including worship, education, economy, social and other strategic aspects. The paradigm of educational services in madrasah shifted from conventional patterns to virtual-based patterns. Except for those areas that do not allow virtual learning, it is still carried out offline with stringent restrictions.

Consequently, the planning aspect should be changed with new patterns and adjustments according to the policy demands of the Covid-19 situation. Changes in the pattern of learning process services in madrasah must be adjusted to achieve the desired learning objectives while still paying attention to the safety and health of students. In his research, Fauzi et al., (2020) also said that the Covid-19 pandemic requires schools or madrasah to innovate in everything, including planning teaching-learning to run well. The important thing that should be planned and implemented is how schools can shift offline learning to online and can run well according to the learning objectives that have been formulated (Almusharraf & Khahro, 2020).

To realize virtual learning (online), face-to-face activities, facilities and infrastructure using technology are needed so that work and learning can occur properly. According to Zam (2021), in his research, technology is the main thing that must be considered for learning to occur. Adopting smart learning or e-learning in teaching and learning activities is widely applied by schools so that learning can run well. As Hadi's research, in addition to supporting learning during a pandemic, e-learning can also improve the quality of learning more effectively and consistently (Elyas, 2018). The e-Learning system is necessary to anticipate the development of the times with the support of information technology, when everything is digital, both mechanisms and content (Huba & Kozák, 2016). However, how to use and utilize technology is also an important part that must be socialized among teachers, parents, and students as users of the technology.

Therefore, innovation in the planning aspect is a necessary principle so that madrasah cannot only be gradual but still superior. In this case, madrasa planning should consider the management of madrasa novation quality-oriented, which is managing new resources to achieve educational goals or solve educational problems in madrasah. Madrasah develops some innovations in planning education. It includes (1) planning innovation in branding, (2) innovations in student admissions, (3) innovation in the curriculum, and (4)

innovation in relevant learning (Sofanudin & Rokhman 2016). As well as other innovations and breakthroughs, they develop madrasa to be more competitive, despite facing a relatively complex Covid-19 situation.

The educational process is to change something for something better. In this process, planning innovations to improve the quality of student learning must be carried out in a planned and systematic manner. Because the educational output is the result of process performance, and process performance is the result of school performance. School performance outcomes are school achievements resulting from school processes and behaviours. The quality of the school can measure the performance of a school.

Amid intense madrasa competition, management is a crucial factor. With an adaptive management concept, madrasa can prepare a superior generation amid a crisis. Moreover, the presence of a superior generation closely correlates with increasing work productivity in winning the competition amid rapid changes in the world of education, business, political economy and culture (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). By having increasingly competitive world economic turmoil, Indonesia must remain consistent in increasing economic growth rates to answer the problem of improving people's welfare. It coincides with the rapid expectations to make Indonesia a developed country with the potential for demographic bonuses and the gift of sufficient natural resources (Widarni & Bawono, 2021).

Adaptive aspects of madrasa planning for changes in madrasa service management in times of crisis will be essential in improving the quality of education in madrasah (Royhatudin et al., 2020). Madrasah have a vital role in improving the quality of the plenary generation. Thus, breakthroughs in madrasa management need to be made amid the low quality of education, which is the cause of the crisis in human resources (Kassymova et al., 2019). Today's changes in society are rapid and global demands are dynamic. It is appropriate for madrasa-based management to continue developing to improve education quality and synergize with stakeholders (Lestari et al., 2021). The things that madrasah must consider. First is increasing teacher competence in managing to learn to catch up with the quality of services in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic (Sihombing & Fatra, 2021). Learning needs improvement, especially since monotonous learning is still prone to dull students (Ahmadi & Romadlon, 2020). Thus, in the Covid-19 situation, learning services must be rich in innovation and breakthroughs to foster a comfortable and enjoyable student ecosystem. According to Nurhayati et al. (2021), one of the innovations that need to be developed is the strategy of improving the quality of madrasa services through innovations in improving the quality of learning based on madrasa characteristics and situation analysis carried out by each madrasa.

Teachers in the current technological era must be able to adapt faster. It is not only limited to preparing learning devices but also must be able to operationalize technology. The devastation of technological developments today is not appropriately blamed for the negative impact caused (Burgess, 2018). However, they should provide adequate literacy so that technology



becomes a positive potential rather than a negative side. With this literacy guidance, the role of the teacher cannot be replaced by the sophistication of information technology (Tabroni et al., 2022). Teachers do not merely transfer knowledge; the main thing is to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess and evaluate each student. Therefore, the teaching profession is closely related to values and examples. The teacher's position as an educator is to instil the fundamental values of student character development in their lives, including in the wise use of information technology advances, as well as an inspiration for their students (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2018).

With this role of the teacher, technological advances can be put to good use. Students are not objects of technological progress, especially if exposed to digital media. It is undoubtedly an unexpected thing. When teachers can become pioneers of literacy by using healthy technology and information for students, the role of teachers has fulfilled part of the indicators of professional teachers. A professional teacher has at least three characteristics. First, professional teachers are teachers who have fulfilled core competencies and expertise, not just teachers (MacPhail et al., 2019). Second, a professional teachers should build peers with peers, develop themselves, and improve their skills (Ma et al., 2018). Third, a professional teacher should be able to care for their social psyche (Simmie & Moles, 2020).

Indonesian teachers are real education warriors, carrying out noble roles, duties and responsibilities as the soul's vocation. The way to practice creativity is to broaden your horizons and teach resources. Thus, they are constantly required to try new things and find innovative ways of teaching that can help the learning process and support students to capture the materials provided more efficiently.

Teachers should create innovation and creativity in organizing learning tools (Ajmai et al., 2019). Innovative and creative teachers are able to diagnose problems that arise from students and overcome these problems, both academic and non-academic problems (Sithole et al., 2017). Another advantage of creative and innovative teachers is to create an active and fun learning environment for students so that the learning process can run well (König et al., 2020). A creative teacher will compile teaching materials and formulate learning objectives according to the needs of students' current thinking power (Tu et al., 2018). The objectives of achieving the education of students today are directed at the development of spiritual attitudes, breadth of knowledge and insight, adaptability to the times, high social attitudes, and obedience to religion (Susanto, 2021b).

In addition to the contribution of formal education, the achievement of child development depends on the educational patterns applied in the family environment, in this case, parents (Rohaeni et al., 2021). In the aspect of parents, it is necessary to cooperate reasonably between the institution and the parents. In other words, parents play a significant role in the child's future success by cultivating attitudes. The importance of the role of parents in children's education is not a trivial matter because education is the principal capital that every living individual must own to survive the times (Passey et

al., 2018). As it is today, parents are increasingly aware of the importance of providing the best education to their children from an early age. The involvement of parents in children's education has proven to have many positive impacts on children (Romero et al., 2020). Many achieve success after they reach adulthood and plunge into the real social world. The active role of parents, of course, needs to be supported by good communication between parents and the school (Bhamani et al., 2020). Like parents involved in any school, activity will reap positive effects that will last a lifetime for the child. So not only is the teacher's role and the environment essential, but the role of parents also plays a crucial role in children's learning achievement.

Meanwhile, parents who have only been resigned to school and teachers must take care of and unite their children while studying at home (Lilawati, 2020). Families indifferent to learning at home become obstacles for students and teachers in the teaching and learning process (Susanto, 2021a). The student's families work daily to escort and unite the students studying at home. Third, the responsibility of students in carrying out and completing student tasks. Most students feel bored and bored when constantly studying from home, so the learning that is followed is also not optimal. Fourth, in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, facilities in the form of technology-based tools or facilities are needed (Ahmed & Opoku, 2021), and most parents have a hard time getting the price of online learning facilities (Prasad et al., 2018). Among them are laptop facilities, Android-based mobile phones, and additional funds for routine purchases of internet allowances for Brave Learning facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic (Susanto, 2021b).

From the findings and discussions, madrasa-based management is an alternative to improving the quality of madrasa services amid the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Consequently, the creativity of madrasa management and stakeholders is necessary so that madrasah not only survive amid a crisis but remain competitive amid a crisis. Adjustments to madrasa service management must be made while maintaining the peculiarities of madrasa values even in a pandemic situation with various crises experienced by madrasa. However, this study has limitations, especially regarding the effectiveness of strategies applied in the Covid-19 pandemic situation in other madrasah. In principle, quality development innovation must pay attention to the potential and analysis of the situation of each madrasa so that the breakthroughs developed can answer factual needs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the researcher draws four conclusions about madrasa-based quality improvement strategies in Ponorogo during the Covid-19 pandemic. First, madrasah has learned about the policies during the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, madrasah innovates by developing smart systems to support the effectiveness of learning and administrative activities. Third, the madrasa has ensured that educators and education personnel compliance with health protocols and increase capacity according to the needs of the Covid-19 situation. Fourth, madrasah provide a parent consultation room for

optimization of learning services and competency improvement through skill criticality. This research has limitations, especially related to the effectiveness of the quality improvement strategy developed by the research sample madrasa to be applied in other madrasah. Because each madrasa has diverse situations and challenges, other researchers can follow up to conduct further studies that can help to improve the quality of madrasah according to the internal and external challenges of the madrasa.

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