

# Spiritual-Instructional Leadership: Reframing Academic Supervision for Educational Quality in a Pesantren-Based Madrasah

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyses how academic supervision is enacted as an instructional leadership practice to improve educational quality in a *pesantren*-based madrasah, a context that remains underexplored despite its distinctive integration of formal schooling and religious formation. Using a qualitative single-case study design at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darullughah Wadda'wah (MTs DALWA) Bangil, Pasuruan, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the principal, the vice-principal, and six teachers, alongside non-participant observation and documentation study, and analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña with source and technical triangulation. The findings show that supervision is conducted systematically across three stages, namely participatory planning, dialogic classroom observation and feedback, and evaluation tied directly to teacher professional development, functioning as continuous professional development rather than administrative control. The study's central contribution is the identification of a *Spiritual-Instructional Leadership* model, in which supervisory legitimacy derives not only from the principal's managerial position but from religious authority embedded in the *pesantren*. This spiritual legitimacy, expressed through the ethic of mutual learning (*mudzakarah*), converted initial teacher resistance into collaborative engagement, demonstrating that Western-derived instructional leadership frameworks require contextual reworking in faith-based settings. The study contributes to educational management theory and offers practical guidance for the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), showing how *pesantren*-based madrasahs can operationalise academic supervision in ways that respect local religious-cultural norms while meeting national quality standards.

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## INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education has become a strategic priority in human resource development across many countries. Contemporary debate now extends past student achievement to the quality of educational leadership, teacher professionalism, and the learning process itself (Dorukbaşı & Cansoy, 2024; Hsieh et al., 2025; Mavi et al., 2025). A substantial body of research identifies leadership as a decisive factor in this regard. Effective leadership shapes a productive academic culture. It strengthens teacher professionalism and raises the quality of classroom learning (Perry et al., 2022; Tucholka & Gold, 2025; Wang et



al., 2022). The capacity of leaders to manage and develop learning has become central to educational reform. This shift reframes the principal as a developer of teaching quality rather than a mere administrator. The present study situates itself within this broader concern. This concern motivates a closer look at how leadership operates in specific institutional contexts.

Madrasahs occupy a strategic position in Indonesia's educational agenda. They are charged with producing graduates who are academically capable yet grounded in Islamic and moral values (Maryana, 2024). This dual mandate is demanding amid the pressures of global educational change. It requires principals who can integrate the managerial, pedagogical, and spiritual dimensions of schooling. The madrasah principal is therefore expected to act as more than an administrator. The role demands an instructional leader responsible for the quality of learning and the professional growth of teachers (Huang et al., 2024; Thien & Hallinger, 2025). This expectation raises a practical question. Principals need concrete strategies through which to fulfil such a role. Academic supervision is widely regarded as the primary strategy (Bakokonyane, 2022). Supervision accordingly forms the focus of this study.

Instructional leadership centres on directing, guiding, and supporting teachers to improve classroom learning. Research has consistently linked it to gains in learning quality and teacher development (Huang et al., 2024; Lapidot-Lefler & Israeli, 2024; Llinares, 2021). Academic supervision is its most concrete expression. Supervision is a professional-development process through which principals help teachers strengthen their pedagogical and professional competence (Ortiz et al., 2025). Effective supervision enhances teacher competence and fosters more innovative and reflective practice (Lama, 2023; Lavín & Goodman, 2023). It sustains learning effectiveness when integrated with teacher development (Shaked, 2025a). Supervision often falls short of this potential, however. Many administrators still treat it as an administrative routine concerned only with appraisal. Weak instructional leadership or the absence of a development system can render it ineffective (Liu & Yin, 2023; Porter & Peters-Burton, 2021).

Pesantren-based madrasahs give these tensions a distinctive character. Such institutions pursue academic success alongside the formation of Islamic values and character. The principal must integrate formal academic supervision with a religious-cultural order. Authority, learning, and moral formation are deeply intertwined within that order. This configuration has no straightforward parallel in public schooling, where supervision rests on largely secular and bureaucratic foundations. The way supervision actually operates under these conditions remains poorly understood. The principal's religious authority may also shape how supervision is exercised and received, yet this dynamic is rarely examined. These uncertainties matter because the *pesantren* educates a large share of Indonesian students. Understanding supervision in this context is therefore both a theoretical and a practical concern. This concern justifies the close, contextualised inquiry pursued here.

A closer reading of the literature reveals more than a scarcity of studies in this setting. It exposes a set of empirical and methodological inconsistencies. Rasyidin et al. (2022) characterise supervision in Islamic boarding schools as administrative. McDonald (2023) emphasises collaborative practice but addresses general boarding schools without attending to their specific context. Khusni et al. (2025) examine principal leadership for teacher competence yet treat supervision only obliquely. Jang & Reeve (2021) discuss collaborative and participatory leadership without locating supervision within instructional leadership. Sari et al. (2025) foreground character and religious education but overlook the instructional leadership exercised through supervision. Most prior work relies on questionnaires and general qualitative designs. The in-depth case study that this context demands remains largely unused. The field thus lacks a contextualised account of supervision in *pesantren*-based madrasahs.

This study addresses that gap. It advances a specific theoretical claim in doing so. Supervision in the *pesantren* is best understood through a *Spiritual-Instructional Leadership* lens. Supervisory legitimacy derives not only from the principal's managerial position. It also draws on religious authority embedded in the institution. This dynamic reshapes conventional

instructional leadership models, most of which originate in secular Western contexts. The study positions academic supervision as a professional-development practice. Supervision supports teachers' pedagogical competence and the effectiveness of learning (Woods et al., 2024). The study also attends to the religious-cultural conditions that give supervision its force. This combined focus distinguishes the present work from earlier studies. It clarifies the contribution the study seeks to make to educational management.

This study analyses the planning, implementation, and evaluation of academic supervision at MTs Darullughah Wadda'wah, Bangil, Pasuruan. The aim is to understand how supervision improves educational quality in a *pesantren*-based madrasah. Three research questions guide the inquiry. The first asks how academic supervision is systematically planned by madrasah leaders. The second asks how supervision is implemented in the daily processes of learning. The third asks how evaluation and subsequent follow-up enhance the overall quality of education. These questions trace supervision across its full cycle, from preparation through enactment to follow-up. They also structure the findings and discussion that follow. The study thereby offers a contextualised account of instructional leadership in a faith-based institution. It contributes both to supervision theory and to the practice of madrasah management.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm, using a single-case study design. The interpretive orientation suited the aim of understanding how madrasah leaders and teachers construct and enact academic supervision within their own institutional context, rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses. A case study design was chosen because it enables an in-depth, contextually grounded examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life setting, where the phenomenon and its context are inseparable (Lordick & Todesco, 2024; Taylor & Muir, 2025). Academic supervision in a *pesantren*-based madrasah is precisely such a phenomenon, embedded in religious, cultural, and organisational dynamics. The study was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darullughah Wadda'wah (MTs DALWA) in Bangil, Pasuruan, selected purposively for its integration of the national formal curriculum with a traditional *pesantren* system. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling and comprised the principal, the vice-principal for curriculum, and six teachers. To clarify the range of perspectives captured by the sample, the roles, years of service, and certification status of the eight participants are summarised in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Profile of Research Participants

Code	Role	Years of Service	Professional Certification
P-01	Madrasah Principal	8	Certified
VP-01	Vice-Principal (Curriculum)	5	Certified
T-01	Classroom Teacher	15	Certified
T-02	Classroom Teacher	12	Certified
T-03	Classroom Teacher	9	Certified
T-04	Classroom Teacher	7	Not certified
T-05	Classroom Teacher	5	Not certified
T-06	Classroom Teacher	4	Not certified

*Note.* All participants met the study's purposive sampling criteria.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques, namely in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation study, a combination chosen to enable methodological triangulation (Geissbühler et al., 2021; Kypouropoulos, 2023; Penker & Eder, 2024). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were the primary technique, used to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of academic supervision. The interview protocol was validated beforehand by an expert panel of two professors of educational leadership and one senior madrasah principal with more than fifteen years of experience,

who assessed its content validity, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives, prompting minor revisions to question wording and sequencing. Non-participant observation captured supervision as it occurred, including classroom observation and post-observation feedback dialogue, recorded through structured field notes. Documentation study examined records associated with supervision, including the supervision programme, schedules and instruments, activity and results reports, and the teacher professional development plan, coded Doc-MTs-01 to Doc-MTs-05. Prior to data collection, all participants gave informed consent, and confidentiality was preserved through coding.

Data were analysed using the interactive model, which proceeds through three concurrent activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Lyublinskaya & Du, 2023). The material gathered from interviews, observation, and documents was first organised, focused, and simplified, then arranged in descriptive displays that allowed patterns across sources to be compared, after which conclusions were drawn and progressively verified. Coding followed a three-stage hierarchy: open coding identified initial supervision concepts, axial coding grouped these into categories such as feedback mechanisms, planning procedures, and evaluation protocols, and selective coding mapped the categories onto the principal themes. Trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and member checking (Rutakumwa et al., 2020) the principal's statements were cross-matched with teacher lesson plans, observation notes, and institutional records, and interpretations were returned to participants for confirmation. **Table 2** traces representative extracts through the coding stages to the resulting interpretation.

**Table 2.** Thematic Analysis of Academic Supervision Practices

Raw Data	Initial Code	Category	Theme	Interpretation
"Supervision is planned at the beginning of the academic year, including scheduling and preparation of instruments." (P-01)	Supervision planning	Programme preparation	Planning of academic supervision	Supervision is organised in advance as a deliberate strategy to direct teaching, not as a late administrative formality
"The principal observes our teaching and evaluates how we manage the classroom." (T-03)	Classroom observation	Monitoring teaching practice	Implementation of supervision	Direct observation lets the principal read instructional effectiveness in situ rather than infer it from documents
"After observation, the principal usually gives suggestions for improving teaching strategies." (T-01)	Feedback provision	Professional guidance	Implementation of supervision	Feedback is framed as developmental guidance, repositioning supervision from judgement toward support
"The supervision results are discussed to identify weaknesses and strengths in teaching." (VP-01)	Evaluation of performance	Supervision assessment	Evaluation and follow-up	Evaluation diagnoses practice so that improvement can be planned rather than assumed
"Teachers are encouraged to join training or professional discussions after supervision." (P-02)	Teacher development	Professional development	Follow-up supervision	Supervision results feed directly into a development cycle, closing the loop between diagnosis and growth
"Supervision helps us improve lesson planning and classroom management." (T-05)	Improvement of teaching	Teaching improvement	Contribution to educational quality	The supervisory cycle registers in teachers' day-to-day instructional decisions

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The findings are organised around the procedural stages of academic supervision that emerged consistently across the data, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation with follow-up, and conclude with an account of how these stages converged to shape educational quality. For every theme, convergence was established by reading the principal's accounts against teacher and vice-principal testimony and against the institutional documentary trail, so that no claim rests on a single voice. As an orientation to the findings that follow, **Table 3** maps each supervisory dimension to its key activities, the triangulated evidence supporting it, and its contribution to educational quality.

**Table 3.** Summary of Academic Supervision Practices at MTs DALWATable

Dimension of Supervision	Key Activities	Triangulated Evidence	Contribution to Educational Quality
Planning	Formulating the annual supervision programme, setting the schedule, and developing observation instruments	Programme document (Doc-MTs-01); coordination meeting minutes (Doc-MTs-02); principal and vice-principal interviews (P-01, VP-01)	Establishes a shared, structured reference that directs instructional improvement before observation begins
Implementation	Classroom observation, evaluation of teaching, and post-observation feedback dialogue	Pre- and post-feedback observations (Obs-01, Obs-02); teacher interviews (T-01, T-03); principal's completed instruments	Shifts teaching toward reflective, student-centred practice and builds a collaborative relationship
Evaluation and Follow-Up	Analysis of supervision results, feedback sessions, and design of professional development	Supervision results report (Doc-MTs-03); professional development plan (Doc-MTs-04); teacher interviews (T-02, T-04, T-06)	Converts identified weaknesses into targeted, continuous teacher development
Contribution to Quality	Strengthened lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional variety	Post-supervision observation (Obs-03); institutional summary report (Doc-MTs-05); teacher testimony (T-01 to T-06)	Consolidates teacher professionalism and improves the quality of the learning process

Following this overview, each dimension is examined in turn, beginning with the planning of academic supervision.

### Planning of Academic Supervision

Academic supervision at MTs Darullughah Wadda'wah begins not in the classroom but in the deliberate construction of an annual programme at the opening of each school year. The programme sets out the objectives of supervision, its schedule, its instruments, and the criteria by which results will later be judged. Rather than working alone, the principal draws the vice-principal for curriculum and senior teachers into the process, so that the priorities of supervision are negotiated rather than imposed. "Supervision is planned at the start of the school year. We determine the schedule, prepare supervision instruments, and identify aspects of teaching that need improvement (Principal, P-01)." The principal's account does not stand on its own. The vice-principal independently describes the same collaborative logic and adds the diagnostic basis on which priorities are set: "The involvement of senior staff ensures the plan is comprehensive and contextual. We map out which teachers need more focus based on last year's evaluation before finalising the schedule (Vice-Principal, VP-01)."

Read together, these two voices converge with the documentary record to reveal the same planning architecture from three angles: the supervision programme document specifies objectives and instruments (Doc-MTs-01), the minutes of the start-of-year coordination meeting record the collaborative setting of priorities (Doc-MTs-02), and the

vice-principal's testimony confirms that the previous year's evaluation feeds directly into the new schedule (VP-01). The agreement of two informants and the documentary trail indicates that participatory, evidence-informed planning is an embedded institutional routine rather than a claim made for the interview. Examination of the instrument itself further reveals that it is built to evaluate four concrete dimensions of practice, namely lesson planning, classroom management, teaching method, and student engagement, signalling from the outset that supervision is oriented toward the substance of teaching rather than toward administrative verification. The collaborative character of this preparatory phase is documented in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Coordination meeting for academic supervision planning involving the principal and teaching staff

*(Source: Research Documentation)*

### Implementation of Academic Supervision

In the implementation stage, planning translates into presence: the principal enters the classroom and observes teaching as it unfolds, attending to lesson delivery, teacher-student interaction, instructional method, and classroom management, each recorded through the structured forms prepared during planning. Yet observation is not the endpoint. What gives the stage its developmental character is the feedback dialogue that follows, in which principal and teacher jointly examine the lesson and consider how it might be strengthened. "After observing the class, the principal usually discusses the teaching process with us and provides suggestions for improving our teaching strategies (Teacher, T-01)."

A second teacher independently characterises this dialogue not as inspection but as partnership, which is precisely the quality that allows feedback to be received rather than resisted: "During the observation, I initially felt nervous, but the principal positioned himself as a partner rather than a judge, which made the process much more comfortable (Teacher, T-03)." That this dialogue produced change, rather than mere commentary, is supported by the convergence of three independent sources. Two teachers describe feedback oriented toward strategy and framed as collegial partnership (T-01, T-03); the principal's completed observation instruments document the same focus on method and interaction; and the paired classroom observations record an observable shift in practice, with the post-feedback session (Obs-02) showing increased student questioning, greater participation in group discussion, and a wider range of instructional strategies relative to the pre-feedback baseline (Obs-01). The alignment of teacher testimony, supervisory record, and observed behaviour indicates that feedback functioned as a mechanism of instructional change and not as a ritual of compliance.

The implementation stage was not, however, uniformly smooth. In the early phase of the study a negative case emerged in which several senior teachers were initially defensive toward classroom observation, reading it as a critique of their established practice. The principal addressed this resistance not through administrative insistence but through the culturally embedded practice of private, informal conversation, reframing feedback as

collegial professional exchange grounded in the *pesantren's* ethic of mutual learning (*mudzakarah*). Through this reframing, initial reluctance was gradually converted into active participation. The episode is analytically significant because it shows that the collaborative climate reported by other teachers was not automatic but was actively produced through culturally attuned leadership; the resolution of this tension is examined further in the discussion. The practical conduct of these observations, including pedagogical delivery and student engagement under evaluation, is documented in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**.



**Figure 2.** Lesson Delivery and Student Engagement  
(Source: Research Documentation)



**Figure 3.** Monitoring Teaching Methods and Classroom Management  
(Source: Research Documentation)

### **Evaluation and Follow-Up of Academic Supervision**

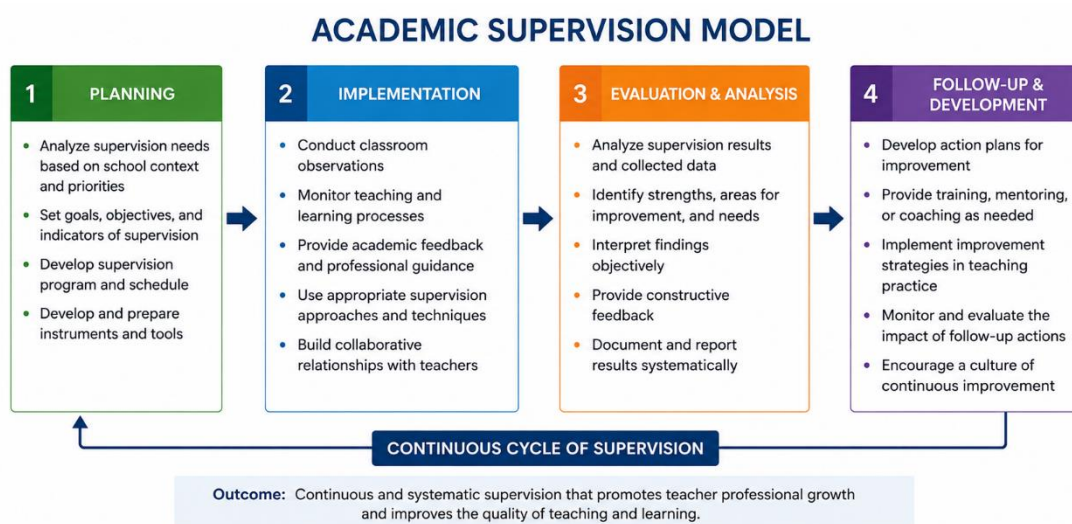
Evaluation at MTs Darullughah Wadda'wah is treated as the hinge between observation and development rather than as a terminal verdict. Its purpose is to locate the strengths and weaknesses of instructional practice precisely enough that the next round of support can be targeted. Critically, the diagnosis does not remain on paper: it is conveyed to teachers in structured feedback sessions and then converted into concrete professional development. "The evaluation didn't just point out what I did wrong; it gave me a direct recommendation to a workshop on active learning methods which really helped my professional growth (Teacher, T-04)." The vice-principal describes the same mechanism from the institutional side, confirming that the pairing of weakness and support is systematic rather than incidental: "Every weakness identified in the supervision report is directly paired with a professional development opportunity or peer-mentoring session for the respective teacher (Vice-Principal, VP-01)."

The claim that follow-up is genuinely derived from evaluation, rather than scheduled independently of it, thus rests on the convergence of three sources. The supervision results report records the specific instructional weaknesses identified during observation (Doc-MTs-03); the professional development plan maps those same weaknesses onto planned activities (Doc-MTs-04); and teachers independently confirm that the training, workshops, and mentoring they received responded to the issues raised in their own supervision (T-02, T-04, T-06). The traceable line from documented weakness, to planned activity, to teacher experience demonstrates a closed developmental loop in which evaluation functions less as accountability than as the design stage of teacher growth.

### **Contribution of Academic Supervision to Educational Quality**

Across the three stages, the cumulative effect of supervision registered in the observable quality of teaching. Teachers came to plan lessons more deliberately, manage their classrooms more effectively, and draw on a broader repertoire of instructional methods. These were not impressions volunteered by a single enthusiastic informant but patterns that recurred across the sample. "Through supervision, we become more aware of how to improve our teaching. The feedback provided helps us develop better teaching strategies (Teacher, T-02)." A second teacher reports the same gain at the level of concrete classroom dynamics, locating the change in their own students' behaviour: "Since applying the new classroom management strategies suggested during the feedback session, my students have become much more engaged and proactive during lessons (Teacher, T-06)."

Here too the finding is anchored in three converging sources. Teachers across the sample described concrete gains in planning, classroom management, and instructional variety (T-01 to T-06); the post-supervision classroom observation independently recorded these improvements in practice (Obs-03); and the institutional supervision summary report documented them at the level of the madrasah as a whole (Doc-MTs-05). The agreement of teacher testimony, direct observation, and institutional record indicates that the improvements were real and shared rather than self-reported and isolated. Teachers also reported that supervision prompted them to reflect more critically on their own teaching and to move toward more student-centred approaches, while the recurring post-observation dialogue strengthened professional collaboration among colleagues. Taken together, the evidence positions academic supervision not as a discrete evaluative event but as a continuous leadership process through which teacher professionalism, and with it the quality of learning, was progressively built.



**Figure 4.** Model of Academic Supervision for Improving Educational Quality  
(Source: Authors' Conceptualization)

**Figure 4** presents the supervisory process as a continuous cycle rather than a linear sequence, comprising four interconnected stages: planning, which develops the supervision programme, schedule, and instruments; implementation, which carries out classroom observation and monitors teaching method; evaluation and feedback, in which supervision results are reviewed and constructive feedback is returned to teachers; and follow-up and professional growth, which encompasses training, coaching, and continuous improvement. These stages feed back into one another, and their combined effect is registered in strengthened pedagogical competence, a higher-quality learning process, and more effective teaching practice, which together raise the quality of education in the madrasah. The model thus represents academic supervision as an ongoing instructional leadership process rather than a periodic act of evaluation.

## Discussion

The findings establish that academic supervision at MTs Darullughah Wadda'wah functions not as an instrument of administrative control but as a continuous process of professional development, and the value of this result lies less in the fact of supervision than in explaining why it took this developmental form. Across planning, implementation, and evaluation, supervision was consistently enacted as guidance rather than inspection, a pattern that confirms the broader claim that learning-oriented leadership cultivates the conditions for teacher growth and instructional improvement (Choy-Brown et al., 2023; Sibbald et al., 2021). What the case adds is an account of the mechanism behind that pattern, namely the way the religious and cultural fabric of the *pesantren* shapes how supervisory authority is exercised and received.

The planning stage illustrates this mechanism in organisational terms. Supervision was constructed collaboratively at the start of each year, with the vice-principal and senior teachers drawn into priority-setting on the basis of the previous year's evaluation. This participatory architecture aligns with evidence that systematically designed supervision allows leaders to target guidance more precisely and that collaborative leadership strengthens both policy implementation and professional culture (Dorukbaşı & Cansoy, 2024). Yet participation here was not merely a managerial technique; it reflected a *pesantren* ethic in which collective deliberation carries moral as well as practical weight, which helps explain why teachers treated the plan as shared rather than imposed.

The implementation stage sharpens the central argument. Classroom observation followed by dialogic feedback positioned teachers as reflective professionals, consistent with

international findings that observation and collaborative reflection drive instructional reform (Perry et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). The decisive moment, however, was the negative case: senior teachers who initially resisted observation were brought into active participation not through hierarchical insistence but through informal conversation framed by the *pesantren*'s ethic of mutual learning (*mudzakarah*). This is theoretically significant because it shows that the cultural respect embedded in the *kyai-santri* relationship did not suppress reflective dialogue, as hierarchical structures often do (Gawali et al., 2025), but instead converted potential friction into receptiveness. Authority grounded in spiritual standing lowered, rather than raised, the barrier to feedback.

This dynamic is where the study extends existing theory. Conventional instructional leadership frameworks, most influentially that of Gedifew (2023), locate the legitimacy of supervision in the leader's managerial role and emphasise goal clarity and academic focus. The present case reveals a hybrid that may be termed *Spiritual-Instructional Leadership*, in which supervisory legitimacy derives not only from positional authority but from the principal's religious standing within the *pesantren*. Where Western models rest primarily on rational-bureaucratic legitimacy, the *pesantren*-based model adds a layer of moral-spiritual legitimacy that modifies how pedagogical authority is received, reducing teacher resistance and deepening engagement with feedback. This is consistent with the mandate of Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) No. 58 of 2017, which positions the madrasah principal as both instructional leader and supervisor, but it shows that the regulation is operationalised through a distinctly religious-cultural logic rather than a purely administrative one.

The evaluation stage confirms that this spiritually grounded supervision remained substantively developmental. Identified weaknesses were systematically paired with professional development, including workshops and peer mentoring, so that evaluation served as the design stage of teacher growth rather than its terminus. This accords with evidence that supervision integrated with professional development sustains continuous improvement in learning quality and reinforces the principal's role as a learning leader responsible for teacher competence (Beckett, 2021; Smet, 2022). The closed loop from diagnosis to development indicates that the model's spiritual legitimacy did not come at the expense of professional rigour, but rather underwrote it.

Taken together, these stages explain the observed gains in instructional quality, including more deliberate lesson planning, more effective classroom management, and a wider instructional repertoire, gains that corroborate the established link between effective supervision and learning quality (Lavín & Goodman, 2023; Llinares, 2021). Beyond improving individual practice, supervision strengthened the professional culture of the madrasah by fostering reflection and collaboration among teachers, echoing the role of professional reflection in building teacher competence (Tucholka & Gold, 2025). The contribution of this study, however, is not simply to add another confirmation of that link, but to specify the conditions under which it holds in a religiously infused setting.

For the field of educational management, the study's specific contribution is to demonstrate that instructional leadership models developed in secular, Western contexts require contextual reworking before they can account for leadership in faith-based institutions. By identifying spiritual legitimacy as a distinct source of supervisory authority, the study offers educational management a more culturally responsive account of how supervision motivates compliance and growth, and it provides a transferable analytic lens for examining leadership in other religiously grounded education systems. In practical terms, it suggests that supervision in such settings is most effective when formal instructional leadership is deliberately integrated with, rather than imposed upon, the institution's spiritual and pedagogical traditions, an insight that reframes academic supervision from a compliance mechanism into a culturally embedded strategy for educational quality improvement.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyse how the principal of MTs Darullughah Wadda'wah plans, implements, and evaluates academic supervision to improve educational quality, and it concludes that supervision in this setting operates as a continuous, developmental process of instructional leadership rather than an exercise in administrative control, one whose legitimacy derives not only from the principal's managerial position but also from the spiritual authority embedded in the *pesantren*, giving rise to what the study terms a *Spiritual-Instructional Leadership* model. Through systematic planning, dialogic classroom observation and feedback, and evaluation tied directly to teacher professional development, supervision strengthened teachers' pedagogical competence and the quality of the learning process, while the *pesantren*'s ethic of mutual learning transformed potential resistance into collaborative engagement. These conclusions, however, rest on a single-case design conducted in one modern *pesantren*, so the findings are analytically rather than statistically generalisable and should be read as transferable insights rather than universal claims. Future research could therefore extend this work through comparative, multi-site studies across diverse *pesantren* and, where appropriate, mixed-methods or quantitative designs that test the reach of the *Spiritual-Instructional Leadership* model and examine how it operates under different institutional and cultural conditions.

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