

Leadership That Inspires: Unlocking Teacher Potential In Islamic Primary Education

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Abstract :

This study explores Leadership That Inspires: Unlocking Teacher Potential In Islamic Primary Education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Salafiyah in Cirebon. Employing a qualitative approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that madrasah leaders effectively implement key strategies such as regular weekly briefings, the provision of supportive infrastructure, and targeted professional development initiatives. These efforts foster a positive working climate, strengthen teacher-principal relationships, and stimulate teachers' intrinsic motivation to grow. Nevertheless, the leadership process is not without its obstacles – limited supervisory capacity, technological constraints, and time management issues continue to pose challenges. This study underscores the crucial role of participative and communicative leadership in cultivating teacher excellence and highlights the ongoing need for adaptive training and support to sustain high performance within the Islamic educational context.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Teacher Performance, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah in Cirebon, Educational Leadership, Professional Development, Islamic Education, Participative Leadership, Teacher Motivation,

INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital cornerstone of national development, as it cultivates individual potential, shapes moral character, and contributes to the overall improvement of societal well-being (Attahakul, 2025; Hidayati & Nihayah, 2025). Within the framework of Islamic education, madrasah holds a strategic position as institutions that not only disseminate academic knowledge but also nurture spiritual and ethical values. In the face of globalization, technological advancements, and the dynamic nature of curriculum reforms, madrasah is increasingly required to adopt adaptive strategies and implement professional educational management to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

One of the most critical elements in realizing this transformation lies in the leadership of the madrasah principal. The principal is not only the administrative head but also the driving force behind the enhancement of educational quality, particularly in improving teacher performance. According to the Indonesian

Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 13 of 2007 (*Permendiknas No. 13/2007*), a madrasah principal must possess a set of competencies encompassing personal integrity, managerial capability, entrepreneurial vision, supervisory skills, and social awareness (Tadius et al., 2024). These competencies are essential for navigating the complex demands of educational leadership in the 21st century.

Research has shown that effective madrasah leadership has a direct impact on the professional performance of teachers (Azizah & Apdila, 2021; Hasibuan, 2022). An ideal principal does not merely manage, but leads by example—building a collegial atmosphere rooted in mutual respect, open communication, and shared commitment to the madrasah's vision. According to Kaharudin & Hannah (2021), a successful madrasah head is one who demonstrates approachability, empathy, and genuine regard for teachers, thereby fostering a professional learning community that supports growth, motivation, and sustained improvement.

Teacher performance is a fundamental determinant of learning success, as it reflects the educator's competence in designing, executing, and evaluating instructional processes in a systematic and meaningful way (Almufarreh et al., 2023; López-Martín et al., 2023). It encompasses the full spectrum of professional responsibilities carried out by teachers, including their roles as educators, facilitators, mentors, and classroom leaders. High-quality teacher performance is evidenced not only through lesson planning and instructional delivery, but also through effective student assessment, classroom management, and personalized guidance aimed at nurturing each student's potential (Khan et al., 2024; Padillo et al., 2021)). In this regard, teacher performance serves as both an indicator and driver of educational quality, making its enhancement a central priority in any institutional improvement strategy.

This study is grounded in the empirical phenomenon observed at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* in Cirebon City, where teachers demonstrate notable enthusiasm in their instructional duties, yet continue to encounter persistent challenges. These include limited opportunities for effective supervision, difficulties in adapting to the Merdeka Curriculum, and suboptimal time management. Such issues underscore the urgent need for strategic leadership interventions from the madrasah principal to enhance overall teacher performance in a sustainable and holistic manner. Despite the critical nature of this issue, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the comprehensive strategies employed by madrasah principals at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* level—particularly in the areas of academic supervision, professional capacity building, motivational support, and readiness for curriculum transformation.

This study seeks to address that gap by offering both theoretical insights and practical contributions to the discourse on Islamic educational leadership. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) examine the leadership strategies implemented by madrasah principals to enhance teacher performance; (2) explore the manifestations of teacher performance at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*; and (3)

identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the effectiveness of these leadership strategies. Through this inquiry, the study aspires to enrich the understanding of strategic leadership in the context of primary Islamic education and provide actionable recommendations for educational practitioners and policymakers.

Several recent studies have explored principal leadership in improving teacher performance across different contexts. Sintasari & Khaerani, (2023) examined managerial leadership at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, while Nizar (2022) investigated leadership in digital learning environments. Ahmad et al., (2022) focused on strategies for improving mathematics teacher performance, and Resti & Firdaus, (2022) analyzed the influence of leadership on teacher work ethic. Additionally, Arasoki et al., (2022) investigated how school leadership affects teachers' pedagogical competencies.

While these studies offer valuable contributions, a critical gap remains in the literature regarding strategic leadership practices at the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* level—particularly within the *Salafiyah* tradition. Most existing research either centers on general Islamic schools, secondary-level madrasahs, or focuses narrowly on specific subjects or digital contexts. There is a lack of comprehensive studies that examine the leadership strategies of madrasah principals in enhancing teacher performance holistically—especially in relation to academic supervision, professional development, teacher motivation, and curriculum transformation readiness within *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* environments.

This study aims to address that gap by providing an in-depth, contextual analysis of the strategies employed by madrasah principals at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* in Cirebon City. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on a unique educational setting that blends traditional Islamic values with contemporary demands of professional education. It also offers a theoretical contribution to the discourse on educational leadership in faith-based primary schools and a practical framework for improving teacher performance in similar institutional contexts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* in Cirebon City, an Islamic educational institution that reflects the authentic dynamics of madrasa-based educational leadership. The site was purposefully selected due to its relevance to the research focus: exploring the principal's strategic leadership in enhancing teacher performance. The fieldwork spanned from March to May 2025, during which the researcher engaged directly with the school environment to capture rich, contextual insights.

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to enable a holistic exploration of the phenomenon from the perspectives of key educational actors. This methodology is particularly suited for unpacking leadership practices in narrative, reflective, and analytical terms—not merely documenting events, but interpreting the meaning behind the strategies and actions taken by the school leadership. The qualitative lens also aligns with the study's objective of

understanding the principal's role as a transformative agent within the framework of Islamic elementary education.

The research subjects included the school principal and teachers at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, as suggested by Jailani, (2023). These methods were integrated through method triangulation to ensure the consistency and credibility of the information obtained.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Huberman and Miles, (2002), which involves three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Triangulation of methods was used as a validation strategy by comparing data obtained through multiple techniques, allowing the researcher to construct a comprehensive and authentic portrayal of the leadership strategies implemented to elevate teacher performance in a faith-based educational context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The leadership strategy employed by the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* Cirebon reflects a robust and intentional framework designed to elevate teacher performance within a complex and evolving educational landscape. This study reveals several main methods to improve teacher performance.

1. Strategic Leadership Frameworks Employed by the *Madrasah* Principal to Optimize Teacher Performance at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, Cirebon.

Strategy, in its most essential form, refers to a deliberate and systematic set of actions formulated to achieve specific objectives by optimizing the use of available resources. This conceptualization aligns with Ajepri et al., (2022) dan Aulia (2024), who describe strategy as a sequence of well-structured plans or procedural steps aimed at attaining defined goals in an organized and purposeful manner. Complementing this view, Renfro, (2024) underscores strategy as not merely a roadmap but a guiding mechanism—an integrated design of actions crafted to steer and manage an activity toward the realization of desired outcomes. In the educational context, such strategic planning is not only essential but indispensable, particularly when navigating institutional complexities and driving performance improvement.

a. Academic supervision strategy

The academic supervision practices implemented by the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, reflect a profound commitment to the quality of the teaching and learning process. Far beyond fulfilling administrative obligations, the principal engages directly with instructional realities, adopting an active and empathetic stance in supporting teachers. Through routine classroom observations, the principal monitors how educators deliver content, manage classroom dynamics, and cultivate meaningful relationships with their students. This presence is not intended as a mechanism of control, but rather as a

participatory effort to understand instructional challenges and provide authentic, real-time support.

Following these observations, the principal facilitates weekly briefings in an atmosphere marked by openness, collegiality, and mutual respect. These sessions offer a platform for teachers to engage in professional dialogue, exchange experiences, and receive constructive feedback—often in the form of appreciation and actionable suggestions. Such a model nurtures a sense of value and intrinsic motivation among teachers, encouraging continuous professional growth. Crucially, academic supervision at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* is not a sporadic intervention, but an integral component of a sustained and intentional capacity-building framework aimed at enhancing instructional quality and cultivating a culture of professionalism (Daracan, 2023; Okafor et al., 2024).

b. Professional Development Strategy

Following the implementation of academic supervision, the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* advances teacher performance enhancement through a well-structured professional development strategy. Recognizing the critical role of continuous learning, the principal actively encourages teachers to participate in certified training programs facilitated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other professional institutions. To institutionalize this effort, the madrasah mandates that each teacher engage in at least one professional development activity annually.

What distinguishes this initiative is its reflective and collaborative follow-up: teachers are expected to share insights from these trainings during weekly briefing forums, fostering peer learning and the translation of new knowledge into classroom practice. In parallel, the school provides a range of instructional resources and infrastructural support to facilitate effective teaching and learning processes. These combined efforts have significantly elevated teachers' professionalism, pedagogical competence, and overall instructional performance—contributing to a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment (Bhardwaj et al., 2025; Saerang et al., 2023).

c. Motivation Strategy

Enhancing teacher performance and satisfaction requires a multifaceted approach—one that integrates sustained motivation, professional discipline, a positive organizational climate, visionary leadership, and collective resilience in the face of challenges (Jusoh et al., 2024). When these elements are harmoniously aligned, they cultivate an educational ecosystem that is both meaningful and empowering for teachers, students, and the broader institution.

Observational data from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* affirm this perspective. The principal plays a pivotal role in cultivating teacher enthusiasm through a warm, relational, and hands-on leadership style. A

prime example of this approach is the implementation of weekly briefings, which transcend their administrative function. These sessions serve as a forum not only for disseminating information but also for offering recognition, fostering intrinsic motivation, and facilitating open dialogue. In doing so, the principal nurtures a culture of appreciation and professional intimacy that strengthens teacher engagement and commitment.

d. Management Strategy

At the heart of this strategy lies the cultivation of discipline—not as an imposed obligation, but as a collective commitment born from shared awareness. The principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* emphasizes internalized responsibility, particularly in conducting timely instructional activities, preparing content aligned with curricular themes, and fostering a classroom environment that is both engaging and emotionally supportive for students. This leadership approach gradually shapes a school culture that is simultaneously professional and compassionate, where teachers feel valued, empowered, and inspired to continuously grow.

When educators find joy and fulfillment in their teaching, that positive energy is mirrored in student enthusiasm, making the learning process more vibrant, participatory, and impactful. In such an atmosphere of mutual support and shared purpose, educational success transcends metrics and becomes a natural outcome of synergistic collaboration and a strong sense of institutional solidarity (Nadeem, 2024; Syafarina et al., 2021)

2. The Concept of Teacher Performance at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*

Performance represents the concrete manifestation of an individual's actions in fulfilling tasks aligned with their designated roles and responsibilities within an organizational structure (Blokland & Reniers, 2021; Ceresia, 2023). This definition underscores the functional and outcome-oriented nature of performance in professional settings. Further reinforce this perspective by emphasizing that every employee serves as a critical agent in organizational success; it is through the quality and consistency of their performance that institutions are able to operate effectively and realize their collective goals (Bankins et al., 2024; Darmawan, 2024).

a. Discipline

Discipline stands as a foundational pillar at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, and is regarded as a critical determinant of teacher performance. Observational findings underscore that discipline in this madrasah transcends its conventional definition as mere rule compliance. Rather, it is internalized as a manifestation of professional responsibility and moral commitment—both to the students and to the integrity of the learning process. Teachers who arrive punctually,

thoroughly prepare instructional materials, and carry out their duties with dedication contribute significantly to the creation of a structured, comfortable, and engaging educational environment.

This atmosphere of order and care not only enhances instructional effectiveness but also positively influences student behavior—cultivating greater respect, attentiveness, and appreciation for learning. The role of the madrasah principal is equally vital; rather than enforcing discipline through authoritative control, the principal leads by example, guiding teachers with a supportive and constructive approach. At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, discipline is not imposed from above, but rather emerges as a collective cultural value—strengthening interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, and the broader school community in pursuit of meaningful and transformative education (Habibulloh et al., 2024; Payne & Welch, 2022).

b. Personality

Arifudin dan Ali (2022) emphasize that a teacher must possess a strong personality and uphold high standards of integrity. Beyond their instructional role, teachers are central figures in shaping student character, particularly in cultivating internal discipline. In this context, educators serve not only as behavioral exemplars through their attitudes and habits but also as active, empathetic participants in the personal growth of their students—guiding them to become responsible and values-driven individuals.

At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, the personality traits of teachers significantly contribute to the creation of a warm and supportive learning environment. Teachers here are not solely preoccupied with delivering academic content; they also prioritize the cultivation of meaningful relationships—with students, parents, and colleagues alike. Through qualities such as patience, kindness, attentiveness, and empathy, they foster emotional closeness that makes students feel respected, understood, and intrinsically motivated to learn. This climate of mutual care and togetherness transforms the school into more than just a place of instruction—it becomes a nurturing community where learning flourishes naturally and meaningfully.

c. Professionalism

A professional teacher is not only characterized by a strong command of subject matter, but also by the capacity to select and implement pedagogical strategies that are contextually responsive and tailored to the diverse needs of learners. With careful attention, professional educators adapt their teaching approaches to accommodate various learning styles and student backgrounds. This aligns with the perspective of (Nwachukwu, 2024), who argue that professional teachers must continually refine their competencies in

order to nurture students into becoming high-quality human capital.

At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, teacher professionalism plays a pivotal role in advancing educational quality. These educators exhibit not only mastery of academic content but also demonstrate strong discipline, effective classroom management, motivational engagement, and the ability to cultivate harmonious relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. Efforts to enhance professionalism are actively supported through targeted training programs organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other educational institutions. These initiatives have shown a substantial positive impact on both teacher competence and overall performance.

Crucially, the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* has been instrumental in promoting and facilitating professional development—encouraging participation in training such as classroom action research, innovative teaching methods, and curriculum reform. Such strategic leadership expands teachers' pedagogical insight and equips them to navigate the evolving challenges of modern education. Through a collaborative culture and commitment to lifelong learning, educators at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* successfully foster an active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment—ultimately elevating the broader quality of education within the madrasah.

d. Evaluation

Evaluation serves as a critical mechanism for assessing teacher performance in a manner that is both fair and evidence-based. It enables stakeholders to measure the extent to which teachers fulfill their professional responsibilities, identify their strengths, and pinpoint areas requiring further development. Thus, evaluation should not be perceived merely as a judgmental tool, but as a strategic process aimed at fostering professional growth and enhancing the quality of instruction—for the benefit of both students and the broader educational community. This perspective emphasize that an effective teacher evaluation system must offer constructive feedback that addresses classroom needs while simultaneously supporting the development of both individual educators and the institution as a whole (Bepari et al., 2024; Kraft & Christian, 2022).

Findings from field observations at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* reveal that evaluation is conducted in a comprehensive and ongoing manner. The principal demonstrates a strong commitment to instructional quality, as evidenced by efforts to monitor administrative documentation and conduct classroom visits—despite certain limitations—to observe teacher-student interactions and pedagogical practices firsthand. Teachers, in turn, actively engage in self-evaluation through reflective practices, student performance analysis, and feedback mechanisms. Many educators conduct post-

teaching reflections to assess what worked effectively and what could be improved, signaling a commitment to continuous improvement.

This culture of mutual accountability and reflective practice at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* transforms evaluation from a top-down assessment into a collaborative learning process. Rather than serving as a punitive measure, evaluation becomes an integral part of the school's professional ecosystem—empowering teachers to refine their craft, enrich student experiences, and contribute to a more engaging, effective, and meaningful learning environment.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Enhancing Teacher Performance at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*.

The enhancement of teacher performance at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* is shaped by a constellation of supporting and inhibiting factors, both internal and external, that either reinforce or hinder teachers in achieving optimal professional outcomes. These dynamics reflect the framework articulated by Fatimah et al. (2022), who assert that internal factors—such as motivation, self-efficacy, and commitment—originate from within the individual and significantly influence work behavior and performance. Conversely, external factors encompass institutional conditions, leadership support, professional development opportunities, and socio-environmental influences that operate beyond the individual yet exert a substantial impact on professional effectiveness.

This conceptualization is also supported by Kanya et al. (2021) who highlight that teacher performance is the product of both driving and constraining variables, the effects of which are observable through concrete outcomes and achievement of learning objectives. At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, several enabling conditions have been identified as key contributors to improved teacher performance, ranging from strong managerial leadership and access to training, to a collaborative school culture and effective communication channels. At the same time, certain barriers—such as limited supervision capacity, technological adaptation challenges, and time management constraints—continue to pose obstacles that must be addressed strategically.

a. Managerial Support of the Madrasah Principal

The principal holds a pivotal role as a managerial leader—responsible for guiding the school and ensuring that all strategic steps are taken to effectively realize institutional goals (Ismaya et al., 2023; Palah et al., 2022). This perspective is strongly reflected in the findings of this study, which reveal that the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* demonstrates exceptional managerial commitment in fostering teacher performance. The principal's role transcends the conventional boundaries of administrative supervision; rather than merely issuing directives, the principal engages proactively with teachers, accompanying them throughout their professional journey.

One of the most notable manifestations of this support is the regular weekly briefing, which serves not only as a platform for communication but also as a space for empowerment. Within this forum, a culture of mutual cooperation and openness is cultivated—allowing teachers to freely exchange ideas, collaboratively resolve challenges, and explore innovative instructional strategies. This inclusive and participatory leadership style has proven instrumental in building a dynamic, supportive work environment where continuous improvement and pedagogical creativity are both encouraged and sustained.

b. Accessibility of Training and Workshop Facilities for Teacher Development

The availability of training and workshop facilities plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' professional competencies. Through relevant and high-quality training programs, educators are able to expand their pedagogical knowledge, refine their instructional skills, and explore more engaging and effective teaching methodologies. The principals can significantly improve teacher performance by facilitating access to professional development opportunities, providing adequate instructional resources, assisting in the certification process, and motivating teachers to pursue higher levels of education (Ahmed et al., 2021; Dahri et al., 2023).

Observational data from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* further affirm this assertion. The principal is actively and consistently involved in supporting teacher development—not only by offering moral encouragement, but also by ensuring the availability of concrete resources and opportunities for growth. This support is evident in the provision of training facilities, access to workshops, and continuous encouragement for teachers to engage in lifelong learning and adapt to educational advancements. The training initiatives offered at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* address a wide range of essential areas, including instructional improvement, integration of technology in teaching, and the implementation of creative, student-centered learning strategies. These efforts collectively contribute to elevating both the professionalism and performance of the teaching staff, while simultaneously enriching the overall quality of education in the madrasah.

c. Interpersonal Communication between madrasah principal and educators

The principal plays a critical role in enhancing teacher performance by fostering effective communication across all levels of the teaching staff, thereby cultivating a productive and collaborative work culture (García-Martínez et al., 2021; Sirait, 2021). Findings from field observations at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah in Cirebon City indicate that communication between the principal and teachers is

established in a manner that is open, effective, and imbued with a familial atmosphere. The principal's leadership extends beyond administrative duties—functioning also as a mentor and motivator who actively nurtures a harmonious environment rooted in mutual trust and respect.

This communicative approach is characterized by the principal's willingness to accept suggestions and deliver messages in a transparent and dialogical manner. Such two-way, participatory communication fosters a strong sense of ownership and shared accountability among all members of the school community. As a result, the institution benefits from a healthy organizational climate that not only supports individual teacher development but also contributes to the overall improvement of educational quality.

While these enabling factors are instrumental in driving teacher performance, they are not without their limitations. As Fatimah et al., (2022) note, both internal and external factors must be strategically managed to ensure their sustained effectiveness. In the case of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, observational data reveal several key challenges that may hinder optimal teacher performance if not adequately addressed. These inhibiting factors will be examined in the following section to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced by the institution in its pursuit of educational excellence.

a. Suboptimal Implementation of Academic Supervision Practices

Despite the principal's earnest efforts in conducting academic supervision at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah*, the research findings reveal the presence of certain constraints that hinder the optimal implementation of supervisory practices. One significant challenge pertains to physical limitations experienced by the principal, which restrict their ability to consistently conduct direct classroom observations across all teaching environments. This limitation, though unintended, has implications for the consistency and depth of instructional monitoring.

In light of this, it becomes imperative to strengthen the existing supervisory mechanisms—either through delegation, the integration of peer observation models, or the utilization of digital tools—to ensure that all instructional spaces receive adequate attention and guidance. Enhancing the scope and continuity of academic supervision is essential for sustaining improvements in teaching quality and for fostering a culture of reflective, data-driven instructional practices. Addressing these challenges with strategic solutions will allow the madrasah to optimize its educational quality and uphold high standards of professional accountability.

b. Low Responsiveness of Senior Teachers to *Merdeka Curriculum*

Based on the findings from field observations, one of the primary challenges in implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* lies in the limited technological readiness of several teachers—particularly those from more senior cohorts. These educators often face difficulties in adapting to digital tools and instructional technologies that are integral to the curriculum's success. Nonetheless, despite these initial obstacles, there is a growing awareness among teachers regarding the pivotal role of technological proficiency in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This recognition reflects a positive shift in mindset and a willingness to engage in professional growth, which, if adequately supported through targeted training and continuous assistance, holds the potential to transform instructional practices and foster a more modern, student-centered learning environment.

c. Lack of Effective Strategies in Managing Time and Task Demands

Research findings indicate that time management and task distribution in the teaching and learning process at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* have not yet reached an optimal level. Constraints in time allocation often hinder the full execution of instructional plans, compelling teachers to modify or condense lesson materials in order to align with the practical realities of the classroom and the specific needs of students. This limitation can affect the depth and consistency of content delivery, potentially impacting learning outcomes.

To address this issue, it is essential to implement more comprehensive planning strategies and strengthen time management practices. Effective scheduling, clear delineation of instructional responsibilities, and prioritization of essential competencies are critical to ensuring that the learning process proceeds efficiently without compromising quality. Enhancing these operational aspects will not only support more effective teaching but also contribute to a more structured and goal-oriented educational environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the strategic leadership approach implemented by the Principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Salafiyah* has had a substantial and transformative impact on enhancing teacher performance. Prior to the adoption of a structured and intentional strategy, the relationship between the principal and teachers was characterized by rigidity, limited communication, and the absence of routine platforms for addressing pedagogical concerns. However, the introduction of initiatives such as weekly briefings, encouragement to participate in professional training, and the provision of instructional support facilities has significantly improved the organizational climate—fostering a more communicative, collaborative, and professionally nurturing environment.

These strategic interventions have directly contributed to measurable

improvements in key areas of teacher performance, including discipline, personal character, and professional competence. Teachers have increasingly demonstrated the ability to create learning environments that are more dynamic, engaging, and pedagogically meaningful. These positive shifts have also supported the development of a harmonious, value-based Islamic educational atmosphere, which in turn has had a favourable impact on student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, several enabling factors—such as ongoing training, transparent communication, and consistent institutional support through periodic briefings—have served as key drivers in sustaining performance enhancement. Nevertheless, the study also identifies persistent challenges that must be addressed, including limitations in supervision capacity, varying levels of teacher readiness in integrating technology, and inefficiencies in time management. These barriers, if left unresolved, could undermine the long-term effectiveness of the leadership strategy.

Therefore, continuous and adaptive improvement efforts are essential to ensure that the strategic model for enhancing teacher performance evolves in alignment with the changing demands of education. A sustained commitment to reflective practice, professional development, and inclusive leadership will be critical in realizing the full potential of teachers and advancing the overall quality of education within the madrasah context.

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