

Revitalizing Education Quality and Services: A Closer Look at Islamic Religious School Committee Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the utilization of school-based management (SBM) principles to enhance the quality of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and the implementation of the school-based management concept to improve the quality of MTs. Its purpose is to This study employs a qualitative research methodology utilizing a case study approach. The data collection process involved the utilization of observational techniques, interviews, and films. The acquired data is evaluated using data reduction techniques and then displayed in tables to establish themes that are connected to the current theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the autonomy of MTs in terms of meeting facilities and the availability of infrastructure is commendable. Subsequently, MTs engaged in collaboration with a diverse range of domestic and international players. Furthermore, the participation of stakeholders in school administration is apparent in the provision of funds, facilities, and support for the implementation of the work program at MTs. The madrasah demonstrates transparency by its open communication of information via congregational activities, MTs bulletin boards, and websites. This study suggests that school leaders should familiarize all stakeholders with the concept of school-based management in order to ensure that they all have a strong sense of responsibility for their particular jobs, with the goal of enhancing the quality of education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

School-Based Management (SBM) is a framework that provides schools with the autonomy to develop their own strategies for enhancing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of education to better meet the needs of their local communities. This approach also fosters strong collaboration between schools, communities, and governments (Pratiwi, 2016). Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS)

exemplifies an educational model that adheres to rigorous and high standards, with a focus on delivering affordable, high-quality learning. The curriculum at MTS is more comprehensive than that of regular schools, particularly in fostering intellectual, personal, creative, and profound development among students, supported by a conducive school environment.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in informing the public about the progress of regional autonomy in Indonesia (Ismail, 2018). A key strategy to enhance MTS involves granting significant autonomy to these institutions, coupled with implementing financial management responsibilities and growth strategies tailored to local conditions (Hamid, 2013). The application of the SBM concept and the unique approach of MTS in Indonesia underscore the importance of collaboration and customized educational strategies, which are vital for improving educational quality and producing capable graduates.

In the current era of globalization and intense competition across several aspects of life, it is imperative for every individual to possess the ability to adapt to any changes that occur. The need for constant progress led to the emergence of various new skills in every aspect of life. Currently, Indonesia is grappling with three challenging concerns in the field of education. Firstly, there is a notably abhorrent ethical crisis in the public's perception. Furthermore, the learning structure in MTS is inadequate. Furthermore, the quality of training remains subpar, especially at the fundamental and supplementary levels. However, the government and several groups persist in their efforts to improve the quality of education. Islamic educational institutions have been improved through the development and improvement of curriculum, assessment methods, educational infrastructure, procurement of literature and learning materials, training, and the growth of teacher competence. (Pratiwi, 2016a; Saberani, Susilawati, Mustakim, & Saberani, 2019; Sutarto, Darmansyah, & Warsono, 2014). However, such development initiatives have not led to a major increase in the quality of Islamic schools, particularly in rural or disadvantaged regions.

A necessary phase is the transition from centralized to decentralized national education. The government's discriminating stance towards MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) and the private sector must be diminished or eliminated if decentralization of education based on madrasah autonomy is to be successful (Mohammad Naufal Zabidi & Abd. Bassith Tamami, 2021; Wahyudi, 2019). If Islamic educational institutions are granted more power, it is anticipated that they will be able to compete on both a qualitative and quantitative level. Despite this, the government does not surrender its role in education. As stated by the 1945 Indonesian constitution, the government continues to be accountable for education as a facilitator, mediator, and, most significantly, a financier (Egel & Fry, 2013; Saripudin & Rosari, 2019; Suhaimi, 2019).

In general, the reform movement in Indonesia promotes the implementation of democratic and decentralized ideas and respects human rights in national and state life. Law No. 32 of 2004 pertaining to municipal governance is a watershed moment. A decentralized management approach, which is currently known by the phrase School-Based Management school management, is one of the most important innovations in education today. As a means to enhance the quality of national education, school-based management has evolved. Using MTS as the primary educational unit, school-based management is an alternate formal option for managing a decentralized educational organizational structure.

Due to school-based administration, the MTS principal plays a crucial role in establishing and improving educational institutions, education staff, and their output. On this side, school-based management is a means of encouraging administrators to take more responsibility for the quality of their pupils (Maghfuri & Rasmuin, 2019). For this reason, MTSS principals are expected to establish a comprehensive educational curriculum to meet the requirements of all pupils (Irsad, 2016; Nasir, 2020). Because they are most familiar with the requirements of their pupils, all school workers should embrace the development of a more operational programmer. This is the most fundamental principle of school-based administration.

The study examines the approach employed by the Islamic religious education school committee to enhance the quality of education. Jamilus (2023) investigates the school committee's role in increasing the quality of Islamic religious education. The text explores the four tasks of the school committee, namely advisory, supportive, controlling, and liaison. The committee's contributions encompass providing advice, offering support, monitoring and assessing, and encouraging collaboration (Jamilus, 2023). The article by Suyudi and Janah (2020) focuses on the School Committee at MI Ma'arif Mungging 1. The text explores the committee's responsibilities and tactics for enhancing the quality of education. The committee functions as an advisory, supportive, and regulatory entity. Additionally, it serves as a mediator among the school, parents, the community, and the government. The school principal has devised measures to cultivate trust among stakeholders and empower dedicated individuals (Suyudi & Janah, 2020). The article by Usman et al. (2022) explores the strategic management practices employed by school administrators to enhance the quality of Islamic religious instruction at SD Alkautsar Temanggung. The study discovered that the school principal enhanced the quality of Islamic religious education at SD Alkautsar Temanggung by employing diverse evaluation methods, including student assessments, teacher observations, and parent feedback strategies (Usman, Purwaningsih, Wardana, & Nurhariyanti, 2022).

Quality is the sole determinant that holds significance in education, industry, and government (Yusof, Hassan, Rahman, Ghouri, & Abdul Raheem Mohamad Yusof, 2012). Schools are among the three primary centres of education that are required to generate outstanding outcomes. The endeavor to establish a school organisation consists of multiple school administration teams composed of diligent individuals. School-based administration is proposed as an alternative to and a criticism of the current centralised approach to education. Centralised education fails to equip schools with the necessary skills and autonomy to independently engage in the development of MTS in areas such as leadership management, institutional development, curriculum creation, provision of learning materials, resource allocation, and community involvement. The growing influence of MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) necessitates collaboration among stakeholders, including local authorities and educational bodies (headmasters, educators, students, parents, and community leaders). In Indonesia, school-based management has been effective in establishing successful and efficient Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) institutions (Hasibuan, Syah, & Marzuki, 2018; Pratiwi, 2016a). Granting increased autonomy to MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) gives the school additional authority to run its schools, enhancing its autonomy. To enhance the quality of education, schools can be infused with greater creativity. Nevertheless, the correlation between the implementation of school-based administration and the improvement of Islamic school quality is insignificant. This study aims to assess the use of school-based management (SBM) principles in order to enhance the quality of MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) and implement the concept of school-based management to improve its quality. This study investigates the correlation between implementing school-based management systems and enhancing the educational standards in Indonesian public junior high schools.

2. METHODS

This study employs qualitative research methodologies (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Otani, 2017). Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that relies on verbal or written accounts of observable individuals or actions. Qualitative inquiry is commonly known as naturalistic or natural exploration. In-depth interviews with informants are conducted to obtain firsthand knowledge about the subject being examined. This study examines the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. This study has obtained authorization. The study participants comprise the principal, vice principal for student affairs, vice chairman of the curriculum, teachers, school committee chairman, students, and parents. These individuals were probably chosen to offer a wide range of viewpoints on the application of SBM concepts. Verbal informed consent was provided. All pupils were

fully informed of the pertinent facts and necessary prerequisites pertaining to the research by the researcher. Students responded voluntarily. They experienced no difficulty in perceiving and comprehending the command. The researcher ensured that he remained unaffected by any cultural or political biases of the students. The researcher maintains an impartial perspective. Data was collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and written materials. The collected data was then processed utilising a thematic approach, where themes were identified from the data. The data collected from the interviews, observations, and written materials were analysed using data reduction techniques. The process entailed consolidating and streamlining the data to discern crucial themes and patterns pertaining to the application of SBM principles in MTS schools. The findings of this investigation were displayed in tables and examined in the "Findings and Discussion" section.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 School-Based Management Implementation in the MTS

The introduction of school-based management in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) schools is well-aligned with the current era of educational autonomy, aimed at enhancing the quality of these institutions. The implementation of MTS is guided by principles of involvement, transparency, and accountability. MTS schools require school-based management to independently oversee and effectively utilize their available resources. The concept of independence in MTS is centered on two key indicators: the authority to supervise teachers and educational activities, and the provision of school facilities and infrastructure. To meet the human resource needs of MTS, including teachers and educational professionals, it is essential to comply with relevant laws and regulations while adapting to the specific needs of the school.

In MTS schools in Pontianak, the presence of qualified instructors meets the government's standards, as participants reported. Specifically, 70% of the staff meet the requirement of holding a bachelor's degree, while 30% possess a master's degree. This compliance aligns with Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, which addresses National Education Standards. According to these standards, the minimum qualification for teaching in MTS or similar institutions is a bachelor's degree. MTS has a total of 868 educators, with 2,860 holding S1/D4 degrees. All educators and educational personnel have at least a bachelor's degree, with some holding advanced degrees, reflecting the high level of educational attainment among the staff.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) has taken significant steps to ensure it has the necessary facilities and infrastructure, reflecting its independence in meeting these essential needs. MTS is equipped with a comprehensive range of facilities and infrastructure that enhance both staff productivity and the learning environment. On-site inspections have confirmed that MTS has commendable and sufficient infrastructure to effectively support its educational activities. The provision of these facilities has been carried out in accordance with Regulation No. 24 of 2007 issued by the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, which sets the standards for facilities and infrastructure at elementary, junior, and high schools.

The school is well-equipped with various facilities, including classrooms, library rooms, science laboratories, computer labs, language labs, leadership rooms, teacher rooms, administration rooms, worship spaces, counseling rooms, School Health Unit rooms, student organization rooms, latrines, storage areas, circulation spaces, and play/sports areas. Based on this information, it is evident that MTS in Pontianak has successfully implemented the concept of school autonomy in managing its resources. This autonomy is demonstrated through the effective management of human resources, instructional facilities, and infrastructure.

The educators and educational staff at MTS are highly skilled professionals in their respective fields, highlighting the importance of maintaining high standards for human resources and school infrastructure in the effectiveness of school-based management systems. Prior research has identified that a key characteristic of school-based management (SBM) is the authority granted to schools to

operate independently. MTS possesses the necessary resources to fulfill its responsibilities and achieve autonomy.

3.2. *Partnership in MTS*

When MTS implements School-based management, schools establish substantial internal and external collaboration or partnerships. Therefore, the primary objective of the school is to cultivate both internal and external collaborations. The aim of the work programme is to enable the involvement of all members of the school community, such as teachers, employees, students, parents, the environment, and government and private institutions, in maximising their individual abilities and collaboration, and supporting the MTS head in school management tasks. The aim of this programme for the 2019-2021 academic year is to cultivate positive relationships among various stakeholders, including members of the school community, the local community, the environment, universities, community leaders, alumni, and the mass media. The goal is to promote harmonious and well-established relationships, as well as mutual understanding. Cooperation at MTS revolves around two key aspects, namely internal and external harmony.

MTS, which includes administrators, instructors, staff, and students, participates in internal collaboration. The correlation between collaboration and internal school communication is favourable, and the MTS in Pontianak City does not encounter any problems. This is demonstrated by the fact that all students in the school work together and fulfil their individual responsibilities and duties. Communication between instructors and MTS personnel is typically characterised by regularity and a well-defined framework. Prior to the commencement of the academic year, educators and personnel convene for work meetings and briefings, with the purpose of strategizing and coordinating. Furthermore, the aim is to enhance the communication skills of teachers and staff members, in addition to their in-person interactions at school. Harnessing the intricacies of technology and social media, such as by initiating a WhatsApp group, is expected. These organisations have established indirect communication connections and encouraged the exchange of knowledge among instructors. Pontianak City's MTS takes extra measures to strengthen the school's internal connections by arranging an Outbound activity for teachers and school staff.

Based on the statement provided, it can be concluded that all informants reported that MTS made significant efforts to establish an internal cooperative relationship with all members of the school community. More precisely, the tasks are divided based on specific divisions, work meetings are held at the beginning of the school year, debriefings are conducted before starting work, and social media platforms like WhatsApp groups are used for highly efficient coordination (Adinolfi, 2012; Haßler, Major, & Hennessy, 2016; Muhdi, Nurkolis, & Yuliejantiningasih, 2020). We argue that the school's internal cooperative relationship is advantageous as it promotes strong synergy among the school community. The School-Based Management Executive emphasises the significance of MTS establishing connections with external school stakeholders. The purpose of establishing alliances with relevant parties is to facilitate the implementation of the school's intended curriculum. MTS establishes partnerships with external groups, including as school committees, education offices, and private organisations, under the guidance of the Deputy Head of Madrasah Public Relations. The Education Office of Pontianak currently oversees the administration of the Islamic Junior High School, under the supervision of the MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The MTS holds regular official meetings to facilitate communication and foster collaboration with the provincial education office and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Pontianak City. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, MTS established social media platforms for communication, including WhatsApp groups and Zoom sessions. The collaboration between MTS and the school committee is expected to enhance parental participation in the implementation of school activities. The involvement of parents in school activities has been recognised as a vital factor in the academic success of young students. Furthermore, this MTS establishes partnerships not only with education administration and school committees, but also with corporations and private groups. The objective of establishing partnerships with these

organisations is to streamline the execution of school initiatives, including student learning procedures, training for teachers and staff, and the recruitment of graduates. A party coordinator stated that the memorandum of understanding requires the preservation of cooperative contacts with relevant entities.

3.3. MTS Participation

Before the implementation of SBM, stakeholder involvement in education delivery was not significant. Because of a lack of comprehension on the sense of belonging and collective concern for the school, school stakeholders are perceived to have made minimal contributions to the development of MTS. MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) conducted supplementary discussions and focus groups regarding the implementation of educational programmes to enhance stakeholder involvement. Government and private groups' support will expedite the implementation of educational initiatives. The SBM technique is expected to enhance schools' self-sufficiency by leveraging their resources and tackling difficulties through three indicators: financial support, facilities support, and people support. MTS received financial help from two sources. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the school committee, allocated the necessary funds as per the agreement reached between the parents and the school. Nevertheless, the ability for parents of students to provide crowdfunding is limited, as the Ministry of Religious Affairs is the main source of funding. Undoubtedly, the implementation of school-based administration grants schools the authority to manage finances, which includes accepting financial assistance from parents in the form of committee contributions. MTS mandates that parents of physically capable children contribute to cross-subsidization.

3.4. Transparency of MTS

School-based management facilitates the transparent implementation of many educational programmes. Transparency is achieved by the distribution of information regarding school budgets and programming. A study conducted by LaForett and Mendez (2010) found that transparency in the school environment enhances mutual trust between school officials and educators. MTS aims to foster transparency in schools by involving all stakeholders, including teachers, staff, and committees, in the process of developing school budgets and goals. An informant revealed the following information: The individuals involved in the development of the school's budget are the vice principal, the principal, the administration, and the school committee. The State Junior High School Budget Plan was developed with the input of all school administrators. The school committee was included as it held responsibility for the budget plan of the State Junior High School. MTS (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) organises monthly committee meetings to facilitate the development of the school programme. The objective of managing the school programme is to foster a sense of caring and belonging among all senior schools. MTS has utilised the SBM implementation methodology to generate novel innovations. This is apparent from the school's efforts to involve school stakeholders and committees in the implementation of the project. Therefore, the efforts made by school administrators to establish a clear and open MTS align with the principles of administrative management and educational institutions (Newton & Riveros, 2018).

3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted with rigor and consistency to gather data that informs decision-making processes. The primary objective of supervision is to prevent deviations and minimize inefficiencies in achieving goals early on (Adu, Akinloye, & Olaoye, 2014). A key responsibility of the principal is to oversee and evaluate the performance of staff. This supervision aligns with the execution of plans, encompassing the processes of planning, organizing, and implementation. All stakeholders are actively and continuously engaged in transparent observation.

The Management Transparency System is specifically designed to enhance school management by incorporating transparency, accountability, and active participation. The process begins with careful planning, followed by implementation and supervision that encompasses all aspects within the school's and community's jurisdiction. MTS ensures that educational programs are evaluated consistently, objectively, and responsibly. Principals, teachers, and school committees regularly assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of educational management by monitoring school administration. The principal and school superintendent evaluate the oversight of academic administration based on the supervision plan established at the beginning of the school year, ensuring the principal's duties and responsibilities are fulfilled.

Supervision is a fundamental duty of the principal, who, alongside educators and subject matter experts, evaluates the acquisition of knowledge and skills using predefined benchmarks, evaluation standards, and learning assessments. Regular assessments are conducted after each critical skill is mastered, in addition to midterm, end-of-term, and ongoing evaluations throughout the program's duration. One participant noted that the principal, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, instructors, school committees, and the community are all involved in the evaluation and monitoring of assessment implementation. These activities ensure that the program is executed as intended.

The principal's daily monitoring and evaluation primarily involve overseeing the teaching and learning process. Additionally, weekly meetings are held on Saturdays, where instructors and administrators gather to discuss and resolve various issues. Monthly evaluations focus specifically on assessing the implementation of educational activities, and identifying obstacles and challenges. The school committee plays a vital role in the monitoring process, particularly in reviewing the school's budget, with special attention to funds received from the community.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of school-based management (SBM) in MTS aims to enhance the standard of education by granting schools the authority to independently select and employ teaching and academic staff. The school also has autonomy in terms of the availability of facilities and infrastructure. In addition, schools have the option to establish alliances and collaborate with suitable entities. Therefore, the school's performance may be assessed based on its robust internal networks, which are evident through regular meetings, debriefings, and subject-teacher meetings. In addition to establishing partnerships with various universities, the school also engages in cooperation with many institutions. When implementing educational programmes, the presence of financial aid, the ability to overcome challenges, and the participation of individuals from many stakeholders are all key markers of involvement. Effective school transparency entails the school's readiness to furnish precise information during meetings, on school websites, and on bulletin boards. Schools demonstrate their financial management responsibility by providing accountability reports. The constraints of this study have restricted its capacity to be applied to a broader population. The study centres on Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) institutions in Indonesia. The findings may not have direct relevance to other categories of educational institutions or different nations. The study may not encompass the enduring impacts of school-based management on educational excellence. The short-term improvements may not be inherently sustainable in the long run. Subsequent investigations should encompass a wider array of educational establishments and geographical areas to evaluate the relevance of school-based management principles in other settings. Analyse the experiences and results of implementing School-Based Management (SBM) in Islamic religious schools in Indonesia, and compare them with similar schools in other countries to gain cross-cultural insights. Carry out extended research to evaluate the long-term viability of the enhancements ascribed to school-based administration. This will aid researchers in determining if the good outcomes endure over an extended period.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

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