THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF MADRASAH HEADS IN IMPROVING TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE IN MEDAN CITY

Satriyadi[1](*), Asmayani[2], Didik Santoso[3], Selpi Trianda Sari[4]

Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, Indonesia[124]
Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia[3]
satriyadi@insan.ac.id[1], asmayani@insan.ac.id[2], didiksantoso@uinsu.ac.id[3],
selpitrianda@gmail.com[4]

Abstract

This study aims to find out the leadership role of madrasah heads in improving the pedagogical competence of teachers in Medan City. Pedagogical competence is one of the basic competencies that teachers must have to create an effective and meaningful learning process. The research method used is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The subjects in this study are school principals, teachers in the city of Medan, while the objects in this study are several schools in the city of Medan. After the data was collected, the researcher carried out data analysis through several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. Furthermore, the researcher carried out a data validity test using triangulation and member check. The results of the study show that visionary, communicative, and participatory leadership of madrasah heads has a positive influence on improving teachers' pedagogical competence. The head of the madrasah plays an active role in providing coaching, facilitating training, and creating a work climate that supports the development of teacher professionalism. This study concludes that the leadership role of madrasah heads is very important in fostering and directing teachers to continue to develop in pedagogical aspects, which ultimately has an impact on improving the quality of education in madrasas.

Keywords: Leadership, Pedagogical Competence, Teachers, Education

(*) Corresponding Author: **Satriyadi, satriyadi@insan.ac.id, 0895-4110-60682**

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are a key component of the educational system, playing a strategic role in determining the success of the teaching and learning process (Umi Kalsum P. S., 2023). To fulfill their professional duties effectively, teachers are required to possess a range of competencies, one of which is pedagogical competence defined as the ability to design, implement, and evaluate instruction effectively (Dahlia, 2024). In light of the ever-evolving curriculum demands and the needs of 21st-century education, the enhancement of pedagogical competence is increasingly urgent (Hendri Yahya Sahputra, 2024).

As leaders of educational institutions, madrasah principals bear significant responsibility for creating a conducive school climate and fostering teacher potential (Netty Zakiah, 2024). Effective leadership by madrasah principals is regarded as a key

factor in improving teacher competence through direct guidance, training, academic supervision, and motivation (Iskandar, 2021). However, in practice, not all madrasah principals are able to perform their leadership roles optimally (Intan Bayzura Sirait, 2025). Some teachers in Medan have voiced concerns regarding the lack of attention to professional development, particularly in the area of pedagogy. This highlights the need for research into how the leadership of madrasah principals tangibly contributes to the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical competence in the region.

Education is a central pillar of national development, and teachers are the primary agents of the educational process (Nurlaila Sapitri, 2023). Therefore, the quality of teachers greatly influences the overall quality of a nation's education. Pedagogical competence is one of the most critical indicators that every teacher must possess to deliver instruction appropriately, based on students' characteristics (Putri Syahri, 2024).

In addition to acting as managers and administrators, madrasah principals also serve as instructional leaders (Topan Iskandar, 2023). The leadership style of madrasah principals significantly impacts teacher performance, especially in the area of pedagogy. A supportive, open, and innovative leadership approach can foster a learning environment that motivates teachers to continually learn and improve their competencies (Rizki Inayah Putri, 2023).

Although numerous studies have explored the relationship between school leadership and teacher quality, most have remained general in nature, focusing on managerial or administrative aspects rather than the specific enhancement of pedagogical competence (Fitria & Slamet, 2024). Furthermore, research has primarily concentrated on general education settings, while studies specifically examining the madrasah context remain limited especially in Medan.

Madrasah principals play a strategic role in shaping the direction and quality of education, particularly in guiding and enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence. As outlined in Indonesia's Ministerial Regulation No. 16 of 2007, pedagogical competence includes the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning processes effectively, tailored to students' needs. In the context of madrasahs, which are characterized by their Islamic educational framework, principals are not only expected to possess managerial capabilities but also instructional and spiritual leadership qualities that promote ongoing teacher development (Zahiq, 2024).

However, research observations in Medan reveal that the pedagogical competence of madrasah teachers has yet to reach optimal levels. Several studies and teacher performance reports indicate that many teachers still struggle to design innovative teaching materials, conduct continuous assessment, and respond effectively to student learning needs. These issues raise questions about the extent to which madrasah principals are actively facilitating and leading the development of teachers' pedagogical capabilities.

Theoretically, instructional and transformational leadership models emphasize the critical role of principals in fostering teacher development through academic coaching, training, and the creation of a positive learning culture (Hidayat & Siahaan, 2023). Nonetheless, these models remain broad and do not explicitly address leadership interventions within religious educational settings such as madrasahs. Currently, no theoretical framework clearly integrates both spiritual and instructional dimensions in the context of enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence in madrasah environments (Nia Sari, 2020).

While many studies have explored school leadership in formal education settings, there is a lack of research specifically examining how madrasah principals contribute to pedagogical competence, especially in localized contexts such as Medan. For instance, studies by (Subaidi & Jupri, 2022) largely focus on managerial aspects and do not assess

the direct impact of leadership on pedagogical improvements. Moreover, much of the existing research is descriptive and qualitative, lacking measurable connections between leadership variables and teacher competence.

Findings from studies in other regions (Hasan, 2021) suggest that effective madrasah leadership can contribute to improving teacher professionalism, including pedagogical skills. However, these findings cannot be generalized to madrasahs in Medan due to differing institutional characteristics, sociocultural contexts, and human resource capacities. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of quantitative research providing empirical evidence of a significant relationship between leadership styles and pedagogical competence levels among teachers in the area.

Pedagogical competence is a fundamental ability required by teachers to manage effective, engaging, and student-centered learning. Initial observations in five madrasahs in Medan show that only 47% of teachers are capable of systematically designing lesson plans based on student needs. Additionally, a survey of 80 madrasah teachers reveals that 62% still struggle to implement student-centered approaches such as project-based learning and differentiated instruction. This indicates that enhancing pedagogical competence remains a pressing challenge, which, if not addressed, will directly impact the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes.

Madrasah principals hold a strategic position as instructional leaders, responsible not only for administrative management but also for guiding and developing teacher competence. In several madrasahs in Medan with improving teacher performance, it was found that principals actively engaged in academic supervision, mentoring, and encouraging teachers to join training programs and learning communities. At Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Medan, for example, 73% of teachers stated that their pedagogical development was strongly influenced by the principal's consistent support for professional growth. This suggests that the principal's leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Although prior research has explored the role of principals in teacher professional development, most studies have been general and have not specifically examined how madrasah principals contribute to pedagogical competence enhancement. Additionally, studies focusing on madrasahs in local contexts like Medan remain limited, despite the unique characteristics of madrasah education compared to general schools. Thus, in-depth and context-specific research is needed to understand how madrasah leadership functions as a catalyst for improving pedagogical competence and to formulate relevant, applicable strategies.

This study offers novelty in several aspects. First, it specifically focuses on pedagogical competence rather than general performance or competence. Second, it examines madrasahs, which differ from general schools in terms of curriculum and institutional culture. Third, it is contextually grounded in Medan—a region with diverse and dynamic madrasah education.

Moreover, the use of a case study approach allows for a deeper exploration of madrasah leadership practices, including strategies, challenges, and outcomes perceived by teachers. As such, this research not only fills a gap in the literature but also offers practical contributions to the development of effective madrasah leadership models aimed at enhancing teacher quality within Islamic education settings.

As a major educational hub in North Sumatra, the city of Medan is home to numerous madrasahs that are striving to improve their instructional quality. In this context, research on the role of madrasah principals in improving teachers' pedagogical competence is both timely and relevant. The findings of this study are expected to provide concrete insights and practical recommendations for madrasah principals to lead more effectively and enhance educational quality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative case study approach as explained by (Moleong, 2000). This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth and contextual understanding of the dynamics of the leadership of madrasah heads in improving teachers' pedagogical competencies. The research focus was directed at several madrasahs in the city of Medan that were selected purposively, considering certain criteria such as the accreditation status of the madrasah, the number of educators, and the level of involvement of the madrasah heads in professional development activities for teachers.

The subjects of the research include the head of the madrasa, teachers, and madrasa supervisors, which were determined based on the principle of data saturation (Sugiyono, 2022), meaning that the selection of informants is carried out until the data obtained is considered sufficient and no longer produces significant new information.

Data collection was conducted using several techniques, namely: (1) direct observation of the leadership practices of the madrasah head and the learning environment in the madrasah; (2) in-depth interviews with the madrasah head and teachers to explore perceptions, experiences, and strategies applied in the process of improving pedagogical competencies; and (3) documentation studies of various documents such as the madrasah head's work programs, reports on teacher training activities, and academic supervision results.

The collected data were analyzed using an interactive model as described by (Amanda Afriza Putri, 2024), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The validity of the data is ensured through the application of source and method triangulation, member checking, and discussions with colleagues to enhance the validity of the findings. Through this approach, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the contribution of leadership styles and strategies applied by the heads of madrassas in improving teachers' pedagogical competencies, particularly in the context of madrassas in Medan City.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Results
Transformational Leadership in Practice

From direct observation in the field, it appears that the principal carries out his leadership function with an inspiring, collaborative, and change-oriented approach. He actively builds open communication with teachers, not only as a supervisor but as a partner in improving the quality of education. The leadership shown includes providing motivation to teachers, direct involvement in training programs, and support for learning innovations.

Principals consistently encourage teachers to participate in internal and external training, form learning communities, and apply active learning methods such as project-based learning and differentiated learning. The impact of this leadership can be seen from the increased enthusiasm of teachers in developing themselves and adopting a more relevant and interactive pedagogical approach. Teachers are starting to dare to use technology in teaching, develop digital teaching media, and prepare more contextual learning evaluations. The school environment has become more collaborative, characterized by increased discussions between teachers and sharing of good practices.

However, challenges are still found such as resistance from a small number of teachers to change, as well as limited time for self-development due to administrative

burden. Nevertheless, school principals continue to strive to take a humanistic and adaptive approach in overcoming these obstacles. Overall, the results of the observations show that transformational leadership plays an important role in creating positive change, especially in improving the pedagogical competence of teachers in the school environment.

With a leadership style that builds passion and participation, the school is demonstrating progress in a more advanced, open, and dynamic learning culture. The results of the observations are also in line with the findings of interviews from several informants about transformative leadership driving positive change. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with AB imisial, he said that;

"Transformational leadership is very important. I strive to be a leader who inspires and motivates teachers to continue to grow. For example, we regularly conduct internal training, form teacher learning communities, and provide space for learning innovation. As a result, teachers become more confident and creative in teaching."

Additional interviews on transformative leadership encourage positive change. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with SR immisial, he said that;

"There has been a significant increase in the use of technology in learning, increased collaboration between teachers, and the quality of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) has improved. Teachers are also more active in looking for learning methods that suit the character of students."

It was clarified again with the results of interviews about transformative leadership driving positive change. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with RH's imissal, he said that;

"It has a huge impact. The Principal not only gives direction, but is also directly involved in our development process. I personally feel more motivated to take training, try differentiated approaches, and evaluate my teaching methods. We feel supported, not just watched."

Additional interviews on transformative leadership encourage positive change. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with an IT isisial, he said that;

"Of course there is. Not all teachers are immediately open to change. Some feel comfortable the old way. But with a personal approach, dialogue, and giving real examples, they slowly moved along. The key is open and consistent communication."

It was clarified again with the results of interviews about transformative leadership driving positive change. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the WTA immigrant, he said that;

"I hope that all school principals in Medan can become leaders who encourage positive change. Teachers need support from above to dare to try new things and grow. I want to see a learning culture grow not only among students, but also teachers and school leaders. Transformational leadership is key to truly moving our education system forward."

From the results of the interview, it can be understood that transformational leadership has a significant impact on improving teachers' pedagogical competence. Leaders who can inspire, support, and provide space for self-development will create a positive culture in schools. This is important for achieving adaptive, innovative, and quality education in the city of Medan. The findings from the research interviews are further detailed in the table below.

Informant	Key Statement	Aspects of Transformational Leadership	Impact on Teachers	Thematic Findings Pattern
AB	Becoming a leader who inspires and motivates teachers, organizes internal training, learning communities, and learning innovations.	Inspiration and motivation, support for innovation	Teachers are more confident and creative.	Strengthening motivation and facilitating innovation
SR	The utilization of technology is increasing, collaboration among teachers is improving, and the quality of lesson plans is getting better.	Encouraging innovation & collaboration	Teachers are more active and adaptive.	Improvement of collaboration and planning quality
RH	The school principal is directly involved in the development of teachers, not just giving directions.	Active involvement, teacher empowerment	Teachers are more motivated, evaluative, and feel supported.	Participatory and motivational leadership
IT	Not all teachers are open to change, but with a personal approach and open communication, they begin to change.	Open communication, personal approach	Gradual change, reduced resistance	Strategies to overcome resistance and build trust
WTA	School leaders must promote a learning culture at all levels. Transformational leadership is key.	Vision of change, systemic support	Teachers dare to try new things, the culture of learning grows.	Strengthening the vision and culture of collective learning

Based on field observations and in-depth interviews, it is evident that the leadership style of school principals in madrasahs across the city of Medan predominantly adopts the principles of transformational leadership. This leadership style is manifested not only through structural directives but also through participatory, inspirational, and progressive relationships between principals and teachers. Principals act as active agents of change not merely directing, but embodying the vision of professional development for teachers through personal example and direct involvement.

The transformation led by the principals is reflected in various aspects: increased frequency of internal training sessions, the establishment of teacher learning communities, and support for the use of technology and contextually relevant teaching innovations. Teachers have responded positively, as seen in their growing enthusiasm for developing pedagogical competencies, their courage in exploring more relevant teaching

methods, and their active participation in building a collaborative learning culture. Furthermore, open communication patterns and personal approaches by the principals have proven to be key factors in overcoming teachers' resistance to change. Although there are challenges, such as time constraints due to administrative burdens and the reluctance of some teachers to embrace change, the principals' humanistic and adaptive leadership approaches have succeeded in creating a safe space for teachers to grow.

Overall, transformational leadership has proven to be a key catalyst in driving positive change within the madrasah environment. It has fostered the development of a more dynamic and supportive learning ecosystem not only for students but also for educators and school leaders themselves. These findings affirm that the success of improving teachers' pedagogical competence is highly influenced by the quality and orientation of school leadership that effectively integrates transformational values into managerial practices and interpersonal relationships within the school. The results of this study will be presented in more detail through a visual concept map, as shown below.
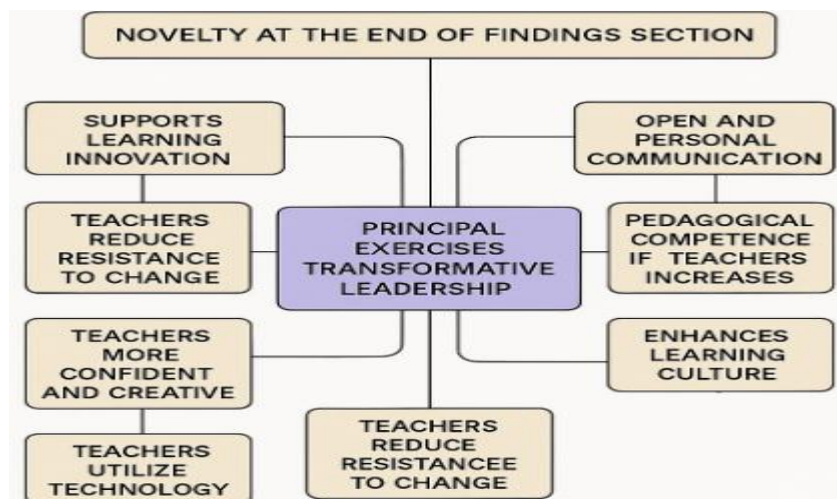
Figure 1. Concept map of the research results on Transformational Leadership in Practice.

Implementation of Academic Supervision Regularly and Quality

Based on the results of observations in the field, it was found that the majority of schools observed had implemented academic supervision on a regular and scheduled basis, usually one to two times a semester. The supervision process begins with a notification of the schedule to the teachers to be supervised. Supervision activities are carried out by the principal or vice principal for curriculum. In its implementation, supervisors directly observe the learning process in the classroom, using observation instruments such as standard supervision formats, lesson plan assessment sheets, and learning reflection notes.

From observations in several classes, it appears that academic supervision does not only focus on the implementation of learning, but also on aspects of planning, classroom management, media use, and learning approaches used. Supervised teachers are usually asked to hand over learning tools before supervision activities are carried out. After the class observation is completed, the supervisor conducts a reflective discussion with the teacher. In this session, teachers are invited to reflect on the learning process that has taken place and are given constructive feedback. Some teachers said that they felt helped because the input from the principal was practical and could be directly applied in the next teaching activity.

The results of the observation also showed an improvement in the quality of learning from teachers who often received supervision. Teachers look more confident, creative in using learning media, and more structured in delivering material. Some of the students who were interviewed briefly also admitted that they understood the material better because the teacher's methods became more varied and interesting. On the other hand, there are still several obstacles in the implementation of supervision, such as limited supervisor time, lack of special training for school principals in effective supervision techniques, and lack of structured follow-up in some cases.

In general, it can be concluded that the implementation of academic supervision that is carried out regularly and with quality has a positive contribution to improving the pedagogical competence of teachers in the city of Medan. This activity needs to continue to be improved, both in terms of frequency, implementation methods, and strengthening the competence of the supervisor itself. The results of the observations are also in line with the findings of the interviews of several informants, as for the results of the interviews below, namely. The results of the observations are in line with the findings of the interview results regarding the implementation of routine and quality academic supervision. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the SY immisial, he said that;

"We carry out academic supervision regularly, at least twice a year. We prioritize a coaching approach over evaluation. Supervision is carried out by directly observing the learning process in the classroom, then providing constructive feedback. Teachers are asked to submit the lesson plan before supervision so that we can provide relevant suggestions. We also have reflective discussions after class observations to discuss things that can be improved."

It was explained again with findings from interviews regarding the implementation of regular and quality academic supervision. The interview results with one of the school principals in Medan, with the initials TI, stated that;

"The impact is very positive. We see an improvement in teachers' abilities to create lesson plans, manage classrooms, and use more creative teaching methods. The teachers are also becoming more skilled in utilizing technology in learning. Students feel more engaged and enthusiastic in participating in lessons. Overall, student learning outcomes are improving."

Supported by the findings of interview results regarding the implementation of routine and quality academic supervision. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the NA image, he said that;

"Good morning. The implementation of academic supervision in the city of Medan has generally gone quite well, although of course there are still challenges. We as education supervisors ensure that supervision is carried out periodically, both by the principal and school supervisors. The approach is more about coaching, not just evaluation. We encourage principals and teachers to collaborate in improving the quality of learning. However, I also see that there are still some teachers who are less open to feedback."

In addition to the findings of interview results regarding the implementation of routine and quality academic supervision. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the NR image, he said that;

"One of the challenges is time. Many schools have difficulty in arranging supervision schedules that do not interfere with lesson schedules. In addition, although there has been training for supervisors and principals, there are still some who find it difficult to provide constructive feedback to teachers. This affects the effectiveness of supervision. On the other hand, even though supervision has been carried out regularly, sometimes there are still teachers who feel uncomfortable with the process."

It was clarified again with the findings of the interview results regarding the implementation of academic supervision on a regular and quality basis. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the immissal DM, he said that;

"My experience is very positive. As a teacher, I feel helped by regular academic supervision. Every time I was supervised, I got a lot of feedback that helped me in developing my way of teaching. For example, several times I was given input on how to make the subject matter easier for students to understand. In addition, I also got the opportunity to discuss with the principal about the challenges I faced, and that was very helpful."

In line with the findings of the interview results regarding the implementation of routine and quality academic supervision. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the AZ imisial, he said that;

"Supervision helps me to be more creative in designing learning. Previously, I used the lecture method more, but now I use technology-based learning media more often and involve students more actively in learning. In addition, I also paid more attention to learning planning, and started using more different approaches according to the needs of students. All this is thanks to the feedback I received after supervision."

Based on interviews with various informants, it can be concluded that the regular and high-quality implementation of academic supervision in Medan plays a significant role in improving teachers' pedagogical competence. School principals stated that supervision in their schools focuses on guidance and has had a positive impact on teachers in designing and implementing effective learning. Educational supervisors acknowledged that, although supervision has been carried out routinely, challenges such as time constraints and the lack of effective training for supervisors remain obstacles. Teachers have greatly benefited from supervision, particularly in enhancing their teaching skills and utilizing technology in the learning process. Overall, the regular and high-quality implementation of academic supervision has indeed proven to have a positive impact on the development of teachers' pedagogical competence in Medan, although challenges still exist, particularly in terms of time and training for supervisors and principals. The researcher also presents the findings in more detail in the table below.

Informant	Key Statement	Aspect of Academic Supervision	Impact on Teachers/Students	Pattern/Theme
SY	Supervision is conducted twice a year with a coaching approach. It includes direct observation, feedback, and reflective discussion.	Coaching-based, reflective, and participatory supervision	Teachers are better prepared, with improvements in teaching practices	Collaborative supervision and continuous coaching
TI	Improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, creativity, use of	Supervision as a driver of instructional quality	Students are more enthusiastic, learning outcomes improve	Positive impact on teaching quality and learning outcomes

Informant	Key Statement	Aspect of Academic Supervision	Impact on Teachers/Students	Pattern/Theme
	technology, and student engagement			
NA	Supervision is conducted by both the principal and the supervisor, with a focus on coaching. Some teachers are still resistant to feedback.	Collaboration between supervisor and principal, challenges in teacher openness	Supervision runs well but needs improved communication	Challenges in teacher receptiveness to feedback
NR	Challenges in supervision timing; training is uneven; some supervisors struggle to provide constructive feedback	Systemic limitations in supervision implementation	Supervision is sometimes ineffective, teachers feel uncomfortable	Technical constraints and implementation barriers
DM	Received valuable feedback after supervision, felt supported in developing teaching methods	Supervision supports teachers' professional development	Teachers are assisted in overcoming teaching challenges	Feedback as a tool for self-development
AZ	Became more creative and innovative after supervision; uses technology and varied approaches based on student needs	Supervision encourages innovation and differentiated instruction	Improvement in the quality and diversity of teaching methods	Supervision promotes technology use and active learning

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that the implementation of academic supervision in Medan has evolved into a more mature process, oriented toward the professional development of teachers rather than merely administrative evaluation. Supervision, which is generally conducted on a scheduled and regular basis typically twice per semester has transformed into an educational dialogue between principals and teachers. This process includes not only classroom observations but also joint reflections on lesson planning, implementation, and instructional approaches.

The findings indicate that when supervision is carried out seriously and continuously, teachers become more confident, creative, and adaptive in designing more meaningful and contextual learning experiences. Students also benefit from this process,

showing increased enthusiasm and better understanding of lesson content. This suggests that academic supervision impacts not only teaching quality but also student learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, the implementation of academic supervision is not without structural and cultural challenges. Obstacles such as time constraints, limited training for supervisors, and resistance from some teachers toward feedback continue to hinder the overall effectiveness of supervision. Several principals and supervisors emphasize the importance of strengthening principals' capacity to provide constructive feedback and fostering a culture of openness among teachers.

In conclusion, academic supervision in Medan is moving in a positive and progressive direction, but still requires improvements in the quality of implementation, ongoing training for supervisors, and a more inclusive culture of collaboration. The success of supervision lies not only in its frequency but also in how effectively it shapes teachers into lifelong learners and encourages student-centered learning. The results of this study have been presented in a concept map below.
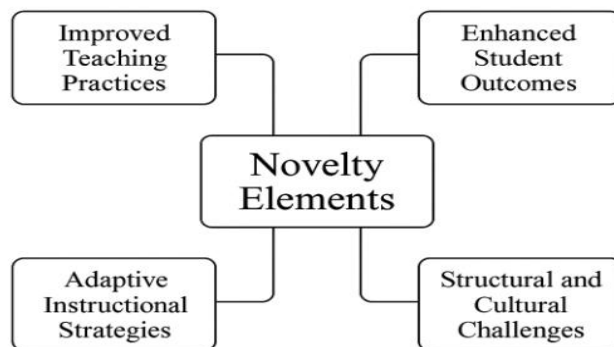

Figure 2. Results of the Research on the Implementation of Academic Supervision Regularly and Quality

The Role of Academic Supervision Empowering Teachers through Collaboration

The results of the observation show that teacher empowerment through training and collective activities such as Subject Teacher Deliberation is running quite well and structured. The training provided by the Education Office takes place regularly and is focused on improving pedagogical capabilities, especially in terms of innovative learning strategies and differentiation approaches. The teachers involved showed high enthusiasm in participating in training and Subject Teacher Deliberation activities. They actively discuss, develop teaching tools together, and share teaching experiences. The results of these activities can be seen from real changes in classroom learning practices, such as the application of group discussion methods, project-based learning, and the use of digital media to deliver materials.

In addition, students responded positively to changes in teachers' teaching methods. They feel more engaged, understand the material more easily, and have a greater opportunity to participate in the learning process. This indicates that teacher training and collective activities have a direct impact on improving the quality of the teaching and learning process in schools. Overall, teacher empowerment activities through training and collective work have proven to contribute significantly to improving the pedagogical competence of teachers in Medan City. The program not only enhances teachers' knowledge and skills, but also strengthens a collaborative culture within the educational community. The results of the observations are in line with the findings of the interview results regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective

activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the SY immisial, he said that;

"In the city of Medan, we hold pedagogic training periodically every semester. The training is focused on active learning approaches, the use of technology in the classroom, as well as authentic assessments. In addition, we also work with universities and Education Quality Assurance Agencies to develop training materials that are relevant to the needs of teachers."

It was clarified again with the findings of the interview results regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the imitation of the hospital, he said that;

"The collective activities that we promote are the Teacher Working Group and the Subject Teacher Deliberation. This activity is very effective because it allows teachers to share experiences, develop teaching tools together, and discuss problems faced in the classroom. We also encourage teachers to do lesson studies and peer teaching."

The findings of the interview results regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the RM immissal, he said that;

"From the results of our evaluation, schools that are active in teachers' collective activities show an increase in student learning outcomes. Teachers become more confident, creative in delivering material, and better understand the characteristics of students."

The same is the result of the interview findings regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the AF image, he said that;

"It's very helpful. One of the trainings on differentiated learning strategies is very much applied in class. I can adapt the teaching method to the students' abilities and learning styles."

The findings of the interview were re-clarified regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with the SY immisial, he said that;

"Teacher Working Group and Subject Teacher Deliberation provide space for discussion and learning from colleagues. For example, we once co-developed a project-based teaching module that was very effective in use in the classroom. This activity also strengthens cooperation between teachers."

The findings of the interview were re-clarified regarding teacher empowerment through training and collective activities. As for the results of an interview with one of the principals in the city of Medan with RH's imissal, he said that;

"I hope that this program will continue to be improved, especially in access to online training, because not all teachers can take part in offline training. In addition, hopefully there will be incentives or awards for teachers who are active in self-development activities."

Interview results indicate that teacher empowerment in the city of Medan, through training and collective activities, plays a crucial role in enhancing pedagogical competence. Activities such as thematic training, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), and Subject Teacher Consultations (MGMP) serve as effective means to improve the quality of instruction. Active teacher participation and support from the local government are key factors in the success of these programs. The researcher has also clearly presented the findings in the table below.

No	Informant Initials	Interview Focus	Key Findings	Additional Notes / Patterns
1	SY	Pedagogical training	Training is conducted every semester, focusing on active learning, technology use, and authentic assessment.	Collaborates with universities and the LPMP to ensure material relevance.
2	TI	Collective teacher activities (KKG & MGMP)	Teachers share experiences, develop teaching materials, and discuss instructional issues.	Encouraged to conduct lesson study and peer teaching.
3	RM	Impact of collective activities on learning outcomes	Schools actively involved in KKG/MGMP show improvement in student learning outcomes and teacher competence.	Teachers become more confident and better understand student characteristics.
4	AF	Effectiveness of specialized training	Training on differentiated instruction strategies is very helpful and directly applied in class.	Methods are adapted to students' learning styles and abilities.
5	SY	Implementation of collective activity outcomes	KKG/MGMP are used to develop project-based modules.	Enhances teacher collaboration and instructional innovation.
6	RH	Challenges and expectations in teacher development	Access to online training needs improvement. Incentives or recognition are needed for teachers actively engaged in professional development.	Equal access and motivation for teachers need to be strengthened.

Based on observations and interviews, it is evident that teacher empowerment through training and collective activities such as MGMP (Subject Teacher Consultations) and KKG (Teacher Working Groups) in Medan is not only conducted regularly and systematically, but also has a tangible impact on classroom teaching practices. This empowerment process has shifted from merely transferring knowledge to creating a collaborative space that empowers teachers as professional learners. Teachers are no longer just curriculum implementers, but have become innovative learning designers who are responsive to students' needs and reflective of their own teaching practices.

Training programs that focus on active learning approaches, the use of technology, and differentiated strategies have driven a pedagogical transformation that is more contextual and inclusive. In collective forums like MGMP and KKG, teachers are given the space to learn from one another, share best practices, and collaboratively develop instructional materials. This culture of reflection and collaborative learning strengthens professional cohesion among teachers and creates a school ecosystem that is more adaptive to change.

In addition to improving teachers' competencies, these activities also have a direct impact on students. Students become more actively involved, find it easier to understand the material, and show greater enthusiasm for learning, which is an indication that pedagogical changes among teachers have achieved the core educational goal:

meaningful learning for students. Nevertheless, some challenges remain, such as limited access to online training and a lack of optimal incentives for teachers who actively pursue professional development. This highlights the importance of ongoing support for teacher empowerment through adaptive policies, adequate resource allocation, and recognition of teacher professionalism. Therefore, empowering teachers through training and collective activities is not just a technical intervention, but a long-term strategy for building sustainable education quality in the city of Medan.
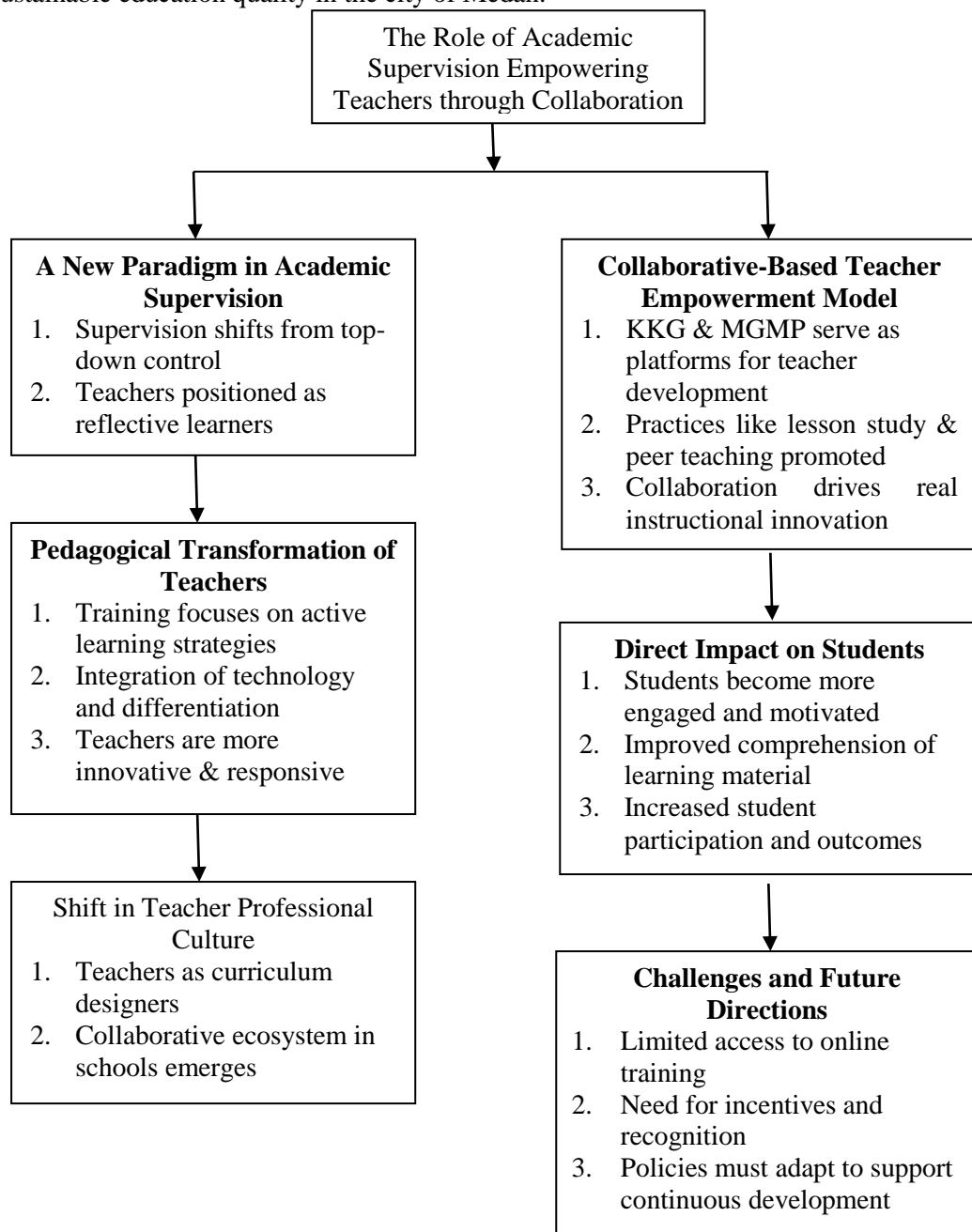
```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   The Role of Academic      │
│  Supervision Empowering     │
│ Teachers through Collaboration │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

A New Paradigm in Academic Supervision
1. Supervision shifts from top-down control
2. Teachers positioned as reflective learners

Collaborative-Based Teacher Empowerment Model
1. KKG & MGMP serve as platforms for teacher development
2. Practices like lesson study & peer teaching promoted
3. Collaboration drives real instructional innovation

Pedagogical Transformation of Teachers
1. Training focuses on active learning strategies
2. Integration of technology and differentiation
3. Teachers are more innovative & responsive

Direct Impact on Students
1. Students become more engaged and motivated
2. Improved comprehension of learning material
3. Increased student participation and outcomes

Shift in Teacher Professional Culture
1. Teachers as curriculum designers
2. Collaborative ecosystem in schools emerges

Challenges and Future Directions
1. Limited access to online training
2. Need for incentives and recognition
3. Policies must adapt to support continuous development

Figure 3. The Role of Academic Supervision in Empowering Teachers through Collaboration

Discussion
Transformational Leadership in Practice
Transformational leadership is widely recognized as a leadership approach that emphasizes inspiration, motivation, and empowerment to create sustainable change within organizations. In the context of education, this form of leadership becomes particularly relevant when linked to efforts aimed at improving teachers' pedagogical competence an urgent need in facing the complexities of 21st-century learning.

Transformational leaders promote values such as collective vision, innovation, and professional development (Faizi & Wulandari, 2024). In the city of Medan, several school principals have begun to apply these principles by facilitating regular training sessions, establishing learning communities like MGMP and KKG, and creating collaborative spaces for teachers. Research by (Zahiq, 2024) confirms that school principals who adopt a transformational leadership style significantly enhance teachers' motivation and engagement in professional development activities.

Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical competence which encompasses the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning is strongly influenced by leadership support. A study by (Jauhari & Bahri, 2023) found that transformational school leaders in Medan are effective in encouraging teacher participation in professional development programs, which directly impacts the quality of classroom instruction.

However, the successful implementation of transformational leadership is not without challenges. Empirical realities reveal a significant level of resistance to change, particularly among senior teachers who have long been accustomed to conventional methods. In addition, limited budgets and training infrastructure pose serious constraints. (Hidayat & Siahaan, 2023) note that while many school principals have strong intentions to implement transformational leadership, they are often hindered by inadequate policy support and a lack of enabling infrastructure.

In this context, it is essential not only to view transformational leadership as an ideal model, but also to critically assess how local factors such as school culture, teacher readiness, and policy support affect its effectiveness. This highlights the need for a more contextual and adaptive approach to implementing transformational leadership, including practice-based leadership training and the provision of sustained funding for teacher development.

A study by (Iskandar, 2021) even shows that transformational leadership not only enhances individual teacher competence, but also transforms school culture into one that is more inclusive, collaborative, and open to innovation. The impact is felt not only by teachers, but also by students, who respond positively to more varied and participatory learning approaches.

Thus, while transformational leadership offers great potential in driving educational change in Medan, its success is highly dependent on the alignment between leadership vision, teacher readiness, and structural support within the education system. Responsive policy interventions, adequate budget allocation, and data-based monitoring and evaluation are key to ensuring that this transformation proceeds sustainably and delivers tangible results.

Implementation of Academic Supervision Regularly and Quality
Academic supervision is not merely an evaluative mechanism within the education system, but a strategic instrument for professional development aimed at enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence. According to various studies, structured and collaborative academic supervision has proven effective in improving the quality of classroom learning (Subaidi & Jupri, 2022). However, its implementation in the field

including in Medan continues to face a range of dynamics and challenges that require more critical examination.

Normatively, the goal of academic supervision is to provide constructive feedback to help teachers improve their ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning. A study by (Umi Kalsum Z. Z., 2024) indicates that when conducted systematically, supervision can enhance teachers' skills in classroom management and student assessment. In Medan, some schools have implemented supervision involving both principals and education supervisors, but the practice remains inconsistent and not yet fully sustainable.

The collaborative element of supervision is also a key area of focus. (Aisyah & Ibrahim, 2020) highlight that dialogic and reflective supervision models are more effective than one-way, directive approaches. Supervision that allows space for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices has been shown to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes. In Medan, some promising practices are beginning to emerge, particularly in schools where principals have a strong understanding of the developmental purpose of supervision.

Despite this promising potential, real-world challenges both structural and cultural cannot be overlooked. Time constraints, a mismatch between the number of supervisors and the number of schools, and the administrative burden on principals remain major obstacles (Hasan, 2021). In practice, many supervision activities are carried out merely to fulfill formal requirements, rather than as a meaningful and continuous development process.

Moreover, the quality of supervision largely depends on the competencies of supervisors and school principals. (Hendri Yahya Sahputra, 2024) notes that supervisors who lack the ability to provide reflective and constructive feedback often fail to act as agents of change. In Medan, although there have been training programs for principals, the outcomes remain inconsistent many supervisory activities still do not meaningfully address pedagogical aspects.

In this context, a new approach is needed one that is more participatory and sustainable. (Setiawan & Sutrisno, 2023) emphasize the importance of involving teachers in the supervision process, not merely as objects of evaluation but as active participants in reflecting on and developing their teaching practices. Unfortunately, this culture of reflection has yet to take root widely in many schools in Medan.

Therefore, several strategic steps must be prioritized. First, academic supervision should be designed as part of the ongoing professional learning cycle for teachers, not merely as an administrative agenda. Second, it is essential to strengthen the capacities of supervisors and principals through practice-based training. Third, a data-driven monitoring and evaluation system is needed to ensure that the supervision process genuinely impacts the quality of learning. By addressing implementation challenges and building a supervision system that is collaborative, reflective, and focused on professional development, Medan has the potential to make academic supervision a strategic tool in shaping more competent teachers and fostering more meaningful learning for students.

The Role of Academic Supervision Empowering Teachers through Collaboration

Empowering teachers through training and collective activities has proven to be a crucial strategy in enhancing pedagogical competence, ultimately leading to improved classroom learning quality. Pedagogical competence defined as a teacher's fundamental ability to manage and deliver instruction effectively has become the central focus of various empowerment programs implemented in the city of Medan.

Recent studies confirm the importance of teacher training in updating pedagogical knowledge and skills. (Pratama, 2024) asserts that training focused on

improving educational technology skills enables teachers to optimize digital tools and multimedia in their teaching, making learning more innovative and relevant. This aligns with practices in Medan, where the Department of Education has initiated training programs emphasizing the development of active and technology-based teaching methods. A study by (Rizki Inayah Putri, 2023) also reveals that such training boosts teacher creativity and expands the variety of strategies used, tailored to the diverse learning styles of students.

In addition to formal training, collective activities such as Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and Subject Teacher Consultations (MGMP) also play a strategic role in teacher empowerment. (Aisyah & Ibrahim, 2020) highlight that regular MGMP meetings provide opportunities for teachers to share best practices, develop lesson plans, and conduct targeted assessments. In Medan, these activities have formed strong professional networks among teachers across schools in the same area, strengthening collaboration and innovation in project-based learning (Hidayat & Siahaan, 2023).

Active teacher participation in training and collective activities has a positive impact not only on the improvement of pedagogical competence but also on student learning outcomes. (Jauhari & Bahri, 2023) affirm a positive correlation between teacher training and student achievement, noting that trained teachers are more capable of managing classrooms and effectively motivating students. Observations at SMP Negeri 5 and SMP Negeri 13 Medan support these findings, showing that students feel more engaged and interested when teachers use varied teaching methods tailored to their needs (Zahiq, 2024).

However, behind these successes lie several real challenges that still hinder the implementation of teacher empowerment. (Dahlia, 2024) reveals that time constraints due to teaching and administrative burdens limit teachers' participation in training and collective activities. Another challenge is the disparity in access to training across different areas, which may lead to unequal education quality between regions. In Medan, although online training has been introduced to overcome geographic barriers, many teachers feel that face-to-face sessions are more effective due to the higher level of interactivity and opportunities for direct discussion.

From a critical perspective, teacher empowerment should not be designed as a one-way program but rather as a process that is responsive to real needs and conditions in the field. Logistical aspects, time flexibility, and inclusive training models must be prioritized to ensure that all teachers including those in remote areas can benefit to the fullest extent. Synergy between local government, the Department of Education, and relevant institutions must be continually strengthened to ensure that empowerment programs are effective and sustainable.

In conclusion, teacher empowerment through training and collective activities in Medan has made a tangible contribution to improving pedagogical competence and the quality of learning. Nevertheless, challenges related to time, accessibility, and training models remain pressing issues that must be addressed. With the right support and adjustments, this program holds great potential to produce more professional teachers and foster more meaningful learning experiences for students in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to thoroughly examine the role of madrasah principals' leadership in enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence in the city of Medan. Pedagogical competence is a key aspect of teacher professionalism as it reflects their ability to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful learning experiences for students. To understand the dynamics of madrasah principals' leadership in this context, the research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through direct observations at four madrasah tsanawiyah, in-

depth interviews with principals and teachers, and document analysis such as academic supervision reports, training agendas, and classroom observation results. Data analysis was carried out using triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of information and provide a comprehensive understanding of the leadership practices implemented.

The results show that madrasah principals perform roles that are not only administrative but also instructional and transformational. They act as professional mentors who actively guide teachers to improve the quality of learning. This aligns with Bass & Avolio's theory of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the importance of leaders as inspirers, motivators, and facilitators of change. The dominant leadership style observed in the field is democratic and participative. Principals involve teachers in decision-making, open space for discussion, and provide moral and technical support for teacher development. This approach strengthens teacher engagement and builds a collaborative work climate, as emphasized by Michael Fullan, who argues that sustainable educational change requires leadership capable of building collective capacity.

Teacher empowerment in this context is not abstract. Principals implement it through routine and reflective academic supervision, organizing internal training tailored to teachers' needs, and conducting learning evaluations based on feedback. These practices reflect principles of instructional leadership and contemporary pedagogical leadership approaches, which stress the importance of leaders' direct involvement in the learning process. Empirically, data show that madrasahs with principals actively conducting supervision and training programs experience significant improvements in pedagogical competence indicators. The average increase in teaching quality, based on classroom observations and learning evaluations, ranges between 18% and 25% compared to madrasahs with minimal leadership intervention.

For example, at a madrasah tsanawiyah in East Medan, the application of supervision based on reflection and feedback over one semester directly contributed to improvements in lesson plan quality and the use of active learning methods in the classroom. Teachers became more skilled in preparing learning materials oriented toward student needs and more creative in delivering lessons. The impact of the principals' leadership was also evident in the creation of collaborative spaces such as learning evaluation forums, peer teaching, and teacher learning communities. Although terms like "collaboration" and "visionary leadership" are often used in educational discourse, these findings show that these concepts are genuinely realized in concrete practices on the ground.

However, the implementation of this strategy is not without challenges. Budget limitations, heavy administrative burdens, and differences in teacher motivation and competence are major obstacles. Many principals admit that bureaucratic responsibilities reduce the time available to focus on teacher development. This aligns with findings by Burns (1978), who highlighted the importance of educational leaders avoiding domination by technical tasks to better focus on human resource development. Some teachers also report that internal training is not always sustainable, and collaborative forums sometimes do not function optimally due to time and facility constraints. Therefore, stronger policies and support from stakeholders are needed to ensure that programs for enhancing pedagogical competence can be implemented consistently and evenly.

The conclusion of this study confirms that the leadership role of madrasah principals is crucial in driving improvements in learning quality at madrasahs. Participative, reflective, and goal-oriented leadership has been proven to significantly enhance teachers' pedagogical competence. However, to guarantee the sustainability of these impacts, policy support is required to enable principals to focus more on their

instructional and collaborative roles. By creating a work environment that supports continuous learning and professional collaboration, madrasah principals have the potential to become key agents in the transformation of Islamic education that is both high-quality and relevant to contemporary challenges.

REFERENCES

Aisyah, & Ibrahim, M. (2020). Pengaruh Supervisi Akademik terhadap Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran di Sekolah Menengah Pertama. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran, 9*(1), 45-56.

Dahlia, T. I. (2024). Strategi Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Kedisiplinan Guru Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta Tahfidzul Quran Kota Tanjungbalai. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Studies (IJOMSS), 2*(5), 12-21. doi:https://doi.org/10.33151/ijomss.v2i5.359

Faizi, & Wulandari, S. (2024). Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan: Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah dalam Pengembangan Profesionalisme Guru. *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan, 7*(2), 1228–1233.

Fitria, & Slamet. (2024). Upaya Kepala Madrasah dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Agama Islam, 6*(2), 404–415.

Hasan, D. (2021). Pengaruh Supervisi Akademik terhadap Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 23*(4), 331-344.

Hendri Yahya Sahputra, S. W. (2024). Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Sarana Pendukung Keberhasilan Pendidikan Di SMP Bumi Qur'an Siantar. *Jurnal Mudarrisuna: Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam, 14*(4), 476-487. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/jm.v14i4.24509

Hidayat, N., & Siahaan, A. (2023). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah terhadap Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru di MTs Negeri 3 Medan. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 5*(3), 101–115.

Intan Bayzura Sirait, J. D. (2025). ANALISIS FAKTOR – FAKTOR PENGHAMBAT PERUBAHAN DALAM KURIKULUM MERDEKA Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta Kota Tanjungbalai. *Jurnal Abshar (Hukum Keluarga Islam, Pendidikan, Kajian Islam dan Humaniora), 5*(1), 20-24.

Iskandar, T. (2021). Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. *PENDALAS: Jurnal Penelitian Tindakan Kelas dan Pengabdian Masyarakat, 1*(2), 174-197. doi:https://doi.org/10.47006/pendalas.v1i2.80

Jauhari, & Bahri, R. (2023). Manajemen Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah sebagai Administrator dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP), 7*(3), 1–12.

Moleong, L. J. (2000). *Metode Penelitian Kualitaif.* Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.

Netty Zakiah, M. S. (2024). *Manajemen Transdisipliner: Suatu Konsep Pendidikan dari Perspektif Kajian Transdisipliner.* Nganjuk: Dewa Publishing.

Nia Sari, H. H. (2020). PERAN KEPEMIMPINAN KEPALA MADRASAH DALAM MENINGKATKAN PROFESIONALITAS GURU. *ISLAMIC MANAGEMENT: JURNAL MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM, 3*(2), 200-2016. doi:https://doi.org/10.30868/im.v3i2.852

Nurlaila Sapitri, S. N. (2023). Textbook Analysis of Al-ʿArabiyyah Baina Yadai Aulādinā Vol 1 in The Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah's Perspective. *Asalibuna, 7*(01), 1-13. doi:https://doi.org/10.30762/asalibuna.v7i01.1053

Pratama, P. (2024). Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Melalui Supervisi Akademik yang Terstruktur. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia, 15*(1), 65-78.

Putri Syahri, S. S. (2024). Implementasi moderenisasi agama di Kampus UIN Raden Fatah Palembang dengan tujuan bisa saling menghargai antar budaya dan agama. *Academy of Education Journal, 15*(1), 278-287. doi:https://doi.org/10.47200/aoej.v15i1.2171

Rizki Inayah Putri, T. I. (2023). PENGEMBANGAN MODUL FIKIH BERBASIS INQUIRY LEARNING DI KELAS VIII MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH NEGERI II MANDAILING NATAL. *Edu Global: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 4*(1), 54-62. doi:https://doi.org/10.56874/eduglobal.v4i1.1159

Sa'diyah, & Falah. (2023). Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan KompetensPedagogik Guru di MTs Miftahul Ulum Cermenan. *Nusantara Journal of Multidisciplinary Science, 21*(1), 212–217.

Setiawan, & Sutrisno. (2023). Efektivitas Supervisi Akademik dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan, 12*(2), 101-110.

Subaidi, & Jupri, M. (2022). Supervisi Kepala Madrasah dalam Mengembangkan Kompetensi Profesional Guru. *J-MPI (Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam), 7*(1), 1–17.

Sugiyono. (2022). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D.* Bandung: CV. Alfabeta.

Topan Iskandar, U. K. (2023). *Filsafat Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Telaah manajemen Pendidikan dari Sudut Pandang Filsafat Islam.* Nganjuk: DEWA PUBLISHING.

Umi Kalsum, P. S. (2023). *ISU-ISU KONTEMPORER.* Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing.

Umi Kalsum, Z. Z. (2024). Strategi Ketua Jurusan PAI Kampus Universitas Ahmad Dahlan dalam Mengembangkan Kampus Merdeka untuk Mutu Lulusan. *Journal of Education Research, 5*(1), 76-83. doi:https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i1.764

Zahiq. (2024). Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru. *Al-Idaroh: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 8*(1), 88–102.