

## IMPROVING THE MANAGERIAL QUALITY THE HEAD OF MADRASAH THROUGH MADRASAH FRIENDS PROGRAM IN BREBES-INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

In the current context, the managerial quality of the Madrasah is still uneven. Therefore, it is important to equalize the managerial quality of the Madrasah. This study describes the efforts of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of Central Java to improve the managerial quality of madrasah heads through the madrasah companion program. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, relying on primary data and extensive literature studies. Primary data sources were obtained through interviews with madrasah principals, teachers, and school committees in public and private Madrasah, and secondary data were collected from relevant documents and similar studies. The results of this study indicate that the madrasah companion program in the form of mutual assistance and a spirit of sharing between Madrasahs that are advanced and Madrasah that have not yet developed the quality of education has a positive impact on the progress and development of Madrasahs in Brebes Regency, Central Java, Indonesia.

### Keywords:

Friends  
Madrasah,  
Head  
Madrasah,  
quality of  
education

### INTRODUCTION

At present the modernization of Islamic education continues and develops in accordance with the progress of the national education system. The phenomenon of the development of Islamic-based education in the country can be seen from the emergence and development of secondary education levels such as public and private Madrasah, both general science and religious madrasah aliyah (senior high school), namely private madrasah aliyah and state madrasah aliyah (MAN), as well as vocational aliyah madrasahs (MAK) in Indonesia. The development of this Madrasah is in line with the public's interest in sending their children to the Madrasah themselves. The community hopes that one day children will be proficient in mastering general knowledge as well as being good at religion.

The narrative above contrasts Madrasah's existence in the past, to be precise in the New Order era. Many Madrasah or public secondary schools with Islamic labels sprang up at that time, from ordinary Islamic public schools to leading schools or favorite Islamic schools. However, it should be noted that public and private madrasah

aliyah as well as public Islamic schools at that time were ordinary schools and without a prominent label that emerged (Siswanto.A, 2019). Of course, the condition of the usual religious-based schools has implications for public interest, which is different from today. At that time, people were more interested in public schools than schools labeled religion (Dasman Yanuri, 2016). This condition has changed, and now Madrasahs have an equal position with public schools. This means that Madrasah and public schools are equally in demand by the community.

Madrasahs are a form of formal education unit characterized by Islam, so Madrasah is included in the group of formal education units under the governance of the authority of the Ministry of Religion Republic Indonesia. In the explanation of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in Article 17 and article 18 and article 19 concerning Basic Education, Secondary Education, and Higher Education, it is explained that the existence of Madrasahs as formal educational institutions is equivalent to general education institutions which are under the management of the Ministry of Education and Research and Technology Culture.

In the current context, state madrasah aliyah (MAN) and private madrasah aliyah (MAS) in Central Java have indeed developed rapidly, both in terms of the physical building, the quantity, and the quality of education. In terms of quantity, there will be 720 madrasah aliyah in Central Java in 2021, consisting of 655 private madrasah aliyah and 65 state madrasah aliyah ([https://jateng.bps.go.id/provinsi-Central Java](https://jateng.bps.go.id/provinsi-Central%20Java)). Then more specifically, the number of madrasah aliyah in Brebes Regency in 2021 is 31 madrasahs, consisting of 2 state madrasah aliyah and as many as 29 private madrasah aliyah ([https://jateng.bps.go.id/provinsi-Central Java](https://jateng.bps.go.id/provinsi-Central%20Java)). Of course, of all the madrasahs in Brebes Regency, the quality of education differs from one Madrasah to another. This means that not all madrasahs have the same quality of education, so there are still obstacles to equal distribution of the quality of education, especially madrasahs which are still lagging behind in the quality of education.

Efforts to advance madrasahs to achieve equitable quality of education are the responsibility of all parties in the madrasa, starting from the head of the madrasa (Kamad), educators, education staff and school committees. So far efforts to advance madrasahs have always been viewed partially. For example, a study conducted by Dasman Yanuri (2016) explains that improving the quality of madrasahs can be done by improving the curriculum and teacher quality. Furthermore, there are studies which explain that improving the quality of madrasah education can be done by making efforts to increase managerial competence and supervision of madrasa heads in carrying out their leadership duties (Tati Falchati, 2017; Juliaha, 2021). Then many madrasa development studies were carried out by touching on local issues that did not have a broad reach, such as evaluating madrasah education programs and other programs in madrasahs (Achmad Siswanto, 2021). Therefore, this study attempts to look in more detail at the efforts of the madrasa companion program in developing and improving madrasahs in Brebes Regency, Central Java, Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the case study method as a strategy to deepen the phenomena of the madrasa companion program in improving education. Data collection from this approach includes numerical data and textual information (Cresswell, 2003:21). To obtain the necessary data, the techniques used are observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and secondary data

collection. The subjects in this study were the Madrasah Heads, teachers, students, school committees and stakeholders in public and private madrasas in Brebes Regency, Central Java, which became the locus of this study. They will be key informants in this research. The reason for choosing the research target in Brebes Regency is because it aims to identify the potential and projections for the development of madrasas through the Friends of Madrasas program in the present and in the future.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The demand to improve the quality of education in the current era is certainly an important agenda for the Indonesian government. This is because education is a strategic instrument for producing superior generations who are ready to compete in the local, national and global job market. In this context, efforts to advance and improve the quality of madrasah education are the responsibility of Muslims. However, internally the madrasah institution as an educational unit, the madrasah head has managerial and academic responsibilities to advance it through the teacher council as well as the guidance and monitoring of madrasa supervisors as parties who are in the position and task of guaranteeing madrasah quality (Head of Kankemenag Brebes Regency, 2021).

Madrasah heads have main tasks and functions which are clearly listed in the list of competencies of madrasa heads as stated in regulations. Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 2007 concerning the Competence of Madrasah Heads as follows, a). Managerial Competence, b). Entrepreneurship Competence, c). Supervision Competence and d). Personality Competition. It is important that a professional madrasa head has the competence of the head of the madrasa. So that the head of the madrasa as a leader can bring changes to the madrasa institution towards progress marked by an increase in the managerial field, the quality of education, academics and an increase in the quality of its facilities and infrastructure.

The narrative above is an ideal characteristic of a madrasa head as a professional leader who is able to bring superior and quality madrasas. Of course, not all madrasas have an ideal madrasa head who is able to bring madrasas forward. As is known, in Brebes Regency, with a fairly large number, around 541 madrasas consisting of all levels of education starting from Raudhatul Athfal (RA), Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) level, there are only a few madrasas which can already be categorized as advanced and quality madrasas, especially Madrasas with state status (Data from the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Brebes Regency, 2022).

In general, in Brebes Regency, madrasas at all levels have not progressed significantly from the 541 Madrasas that have met the criteria as an advanced madrasa measurement, only 10 Madrasahs. The madrasa has achievements and is able to manage the madrasa professionally. As can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1**  
Schools with Achievement in Brebes Regency, Central Java

Basic education	Secondary Education	
	Madrasah Tsanawiyah	Senior High School
MIN 1 Brebes (Public School)	MTsN 1 Brebes (Public School)	MAN 1 Brebes (Public School)
MIN 4 Brebes (Public School)		MAN 2 Brebes (Public School)
MIN 6 Brebes (Public School)	MTsN 2 Brebes (Public School)	MA Al Hikmah 2 (Private School)
MIS Mirqotul Falah (Private School)		MA Assyamsuriyah Jagalempeni (Sekolah Swasta)
MIS Tamrinussibyan Al Hikmah 1 (Private School)		

Source: (Central Java Ministry of Religion Office, 2020)

Based on the problems above, a solution policy was implemented for madrasahs to build togetherness and partnerships among Madrasah heads so that they have the intention and enthusiasm to move forward together through the Friends of Madrasah program. This program has been rolled out through the launching of *Sahabat Madrasah* at Madrasah Aliyah Al Hikmah 2 Benda, Sirampog District, Brebes Regency, Central Java Province. This activity was carried out on Thursday April 1 2021 which was inaugurated by the Head of the Regional Office (kakanwil) of the Ministry of Religion of Central Java Province H. Musta'in Ahmad, SH, MH.

The context of the establishment, vision and goals of the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Central Java Province which was initiated by Musta'in Ahmad regarding the "Sahabat Madrasah" program aims to equalize the quality of education in Madrasah, Brebes Regency, Central Java (Delivered by the Ministry of Religion of Central Java Province, 2020). The Madrasah Friends Program in Brebes Regency, Central Java has a vision of building Madrasah through sustainable collaboration by mobilizing the strength of Madrasah that are advanced and of good quality at the elementary to secondary education levels to provide assistance in the form of experience sharing sessions in developing Madrasah, focused and guided madrasah development, sustainable development of Madrasah, and intensive discussion of best practices to advance Madrasah (Head of Education Section of Central Java, 2022). Various kinds of madrasa companion programs are aimed at

building a spirit of sharing and initiatives to help each other between advanced Madrasah and Madrasah that are not yet advanced in quality.

The results of this study indicate that the Madrasah in Brebes Regency which have not advanced in terms of the quality of education are caused by education management that has not been well organized. Through the madrasah companion program that has been going on, it can be explained that madrasahs that are not yet advanced in quality in Brebes Regency are motivated by madrasah management factors, especially with regard to madrasah leadership which do not yet have adequate managerial competence, causing the Madrasah they lead to become stagnant without any quality development. Even though the head of the madrasa in his appointment has been arranged in an orderly and good manner in accordance with the regulations, namely Regulation of the Minister of Religion (PMA) No. 58 of 2017 and PMA No. 24 of 2018. However, human resources with limited competence make the problem of madrasah management a problem that makes it difficult to develop.

The results of this study indicate that the problems of madrasah management inherent in religious education institutions have implications for weak governance management in the areas of finance, facilities and infrastructure, teaching staff, and non-educational staff. In the financial management of madrasahs there are interesting findings, namely that there are several financial sources that must be managed properly for the advancement of the quality of the madrasa itself. For example, the use of school operational assistance funds (BOS) which have not been used optimally by madrasa heads to improve the quality of their madrasahs. In private Madrasah the use of BOS funds is not optimal, because the head of the Madrasah gets intervention from the foundation in the use of BOS funds. So that the program and budget plan that has been made by the head of the Madrasah to advance the Madrasah are difficult to implement optimally (Kamad interview, 2022).

The results of this study explain that the problem of management of facilities and infrastructure is often related to the unfulfilled learning support technology facilities in Madrasah. In this context, Madrasah whose educational quality has not yet advanced are due to a lack of facilities such as computers, laptops and internet networks. So that when they were faced with the implementation of the Computer-Based National Assessment they were not able to run properly. Usually these Madrasah carry out Computer-Based National Assessments in other Madrasah that have adequate technology. Then in the field of teaching staff management, a madrasah head tends to be less able to guide, guide and supervise his teachers. This is due to the fact that the madrasah head is in a dilemma, on the one hand he wants to make efforts to improve education through teacher supervision, but on the other hand the needs of teachers such as allowances, salaries and facilities have not been met by the Madrasah. Thus the Madrasah head is less flexible in supervising teachers in a professional manner.

In addition to the problems above, Madrasah, which are still faced with challenges to the quality of education, also have problems with the management of non-educational staff who are not yet optimal. For example, the existence of madrasah operators has an important position in advancing education in Madrasah in the digital era and the advancement of information technology today. However, due to the inadequate management of madrasah leadership, the role of madrasah operators has not been prominent in advancing Madrasah. Even though through healthy leadership management, minimal efforts such as displaying good news about student, teacher



and Madrasah achievements can be carried out in every Madrasah. This effort can have positive implications for the image of the Madrasah, unfortunately the madrasah operator has not yet implemented it.

Based on the research findings on the issue of madrasah education, a breakthrough program is needed that is able to mobilize madrasah heads to improve their education management, so that in the future there will be no more madrasah that lag behind in the quality of education. Therefore, madrasah education policy makers in Brebes Regency initiated the "Friends of Madrasah" program. Specifically, the madrasah companion program can be a medium for identifying educational problems as well as finding alternative solutions through the mobilization of assistance from quality madrasah in Brebes Regency to Madrasah that have not developed qualitatively.

Efforts to improve the quality of madrasah education are important programs in the national education system. In addition, improving the quality of madrasah education also aims to maintain the nation's historical identity. Because Islamic-style education has grown and developed since the pre-colonial period until the advent of Dutch colonialism. This fact can be seen from several studies of Javanese society in the pre-colonial era to colonialism, since the beginning it has had a distinctive style of religious education which is manifested in the form of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic boarding schools (Soemardjan, 2009). This is where the contribution of Islam in education continues to expand in various parts of Indonesia from West Java, Central Java, Aceh and Minangkabau (Steenbrink, 1994).

The historical context above confirms that religious education, especially educational institutions labeled as Islamic have played an important role in people's lives, especially in their efforts to meet the need for education. Long before the institutionalization of the formal education system existed, community-based education, such as Islamic boarding schools, actually existed to fill the educational needs of the community. So it is not surprising that the role of Islam in the national education system has continued to develop and expand since Indonesia was under Dutch Colonialism, post-independence (Old Order), New Order, to Post-Reform until now.

The results of this study explain that there are Madrasah in Brebes Regency that seem stagnant and do not show the quality of their education. The logic of the findings of this study seems to correspond with several education experts who explain that the problems of Islamic education are intertwined with the problems of the quality of the quality of education, so that Islamic schools are still having problems appearing as quality schools and acting optimally in giving hope to the wider community (Lubis, 2008; Supiana; 2008; Azra, 2012).

Sociologically, efforts to develop and strengthen madrasah education can be seen as a strategy to enhance the image of the quality of Islamic-based education itself. In the current context, quality Islamic-based education is needed by middle-class muslims who are increasing in quantity in Indonesia. As suspected by Hefner and Azra, the growth of schools labeled as Islamic under the auspices of religious organizations or under the auspices of the Islamic Education Foundation/Islamic Islamic Boarding School Foundation is a result of the rise of the Islamic socio-economic class (Azra, 2012; Hefner, 2000).

Equal status and treatment between Islamic-based education and public schools at this time allows the growth of Islamic-oriented schools in the country,

including the development of Islamic-style education in Brebes Regency, Central Java. The Islamic school in question is not just a boarding school, but schools of the type private madrasah and state madrasah. Of course, these private and state madrasah aliyah are administratively managed and supervised by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. The growth of religious-based schools managed by the government and the development of madrasahs labeled as Islamic education foundations have the same position, namely to carry out their function of educating the community.

In the context of community education in Brebes Regency, Central Java, superior Madrasah or favorite Madrasah have adequate quality education. So that the Madrasah is in great demand by the local community and people outside the Brebes Regency area. For example, in Brebes Regency, Central Java, there is a superior madrasah, namely Madrasah Aliyah Al Hikmah 2. Based on the observations in this study, it can be seen that students in the Madrasah come from various regions, starting from Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi, even some of them also come from outside the Greater Jakarta area. Al Hikmah 2 Private Madrasah Aliyah as a quality school in Brebes Regency is a hallmark of a madrasah that is able to provide satisfying educational services for the community. In Azumardi Azra's view, the Madrasah was able to shift the progress of Islamic education from an orientation towards Islamic sciences into an educational institution that orients its education towards mastery and at the same time achieving science and technology (IPTEK) (Azra, 2012).

Furthermore, there are quality public madrasahs in Brebes district, namely Brebes 1 State Madrasah Aliyah and Brebes 2 State Madrasah Aliyah. The madrasa is considered to be of high quality because it has achievements and adequate educational infrastructure. This educational institution was able to metamorphose into a superior madrasah because of its ability to improve the quality of education and was strongly supported by adequate funding (Lubis, 2008; Supiana 2008). Based on this reality, the madrasah companion program optimizes, as well as mobilizes quality educational institutions in Brebes Regency such as Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1, Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 and Madrasah Aliyah Al Hikmah 2 to provide their experience in managing education for madrasahs that are developing the quality of their education.

The activities of the madrasah companion program are carried out in an integrated and sustainable manner in the process of managing educational improvement. Specifically, the madrasah companion program strengthens managerial leadership as an important instrument for developing learning projections that apply two values simultaneously, namely between religious knowledge and general science. The strengthening of general knowledge and religion in quality madrasah institutions is expected to form intelligent human beings who have good intellectual and Islamic character. Of course, human characters who are intellectually intelligent and religiously spiritually intelligent are educational outputs that need to be highlighted by madrasahs. Madrasah must be at the forefront in preparing a superior generation to be ready to live at the local, national and global levels.

The narrative above is a sociological analysis to see the efforts of the madrasah companion program in Central Brebes Regency in overseeing the growth and development of quality Islamic religious-based educational institutions. Madrasah friendship program seeks to create quality education equally, both Madrasah managed by the state and Madrasah managed by the private sector. The opportunity to create

quality education that is evenly distributed is an important momentum for religious-based schools to have a comprehensive network, both in the Brebes Regency area and in other regions. Therefore, it is important to foster synergy between the state and school organizations, so that access to quality education can be enjoyed by various groups regardless of their socio-economic status.

The synergy between the state and madrasah organizations through the Friends of Madrasah program with various mentoring activities can be seen as a real effort by policy makers to reduce the educational gap between excellent schools and schools that seem mediocre. Schools with an even quality of education will certainly have implications for graduates who have the capacity and work competencies needed in the modern world of work, both in the context of rural communities and urban communities (Siswanto, 2023). The results of this study specifically conclude that the madrasa companion program can be seen as a form of prevention or anticipation by policy makers so that the educational gap does not widen in Brebes Regency, Central Java.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the growth and development of quality madrasah in Brebes Regency, Central Java, has a strong relationship with the managerial leadership of a madrasah head. Madrasah heads who have a high level of professionalism can certainly bring about changes in madrasah institutions as quality educational institutions both in terms of managerial, educational and academic quality as well as in improving the quality of its facilities and infrastructure. However, not all Madrasah have an ideal leader. Therefore the madrasah companion program was presented to create the quality of professional madrasah leaders, so that they could advance their Madrasah. The Madrasah Friends Program is designed and implemented to build Madrasah through a continuous network of collaborations by mobilizing the strengths of advanced and quality Madrasah to advance the quality of other Madrasah. Thus the madrasah companion program can be assessed as a real effort to implement educational equity and minimize educational disparities. So that quality madrasah education can be accessed by all levels of society.

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