IJECA (International Journal of Education & Curriculum Application)
Journal homepage: http://journal.ummat.ac.id/index.php/IJECA
ISSN 2614-3380 | Vol. 9, No. 1, April 2026
https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v9i1.38098

The Role of Madrasah Principles and School Culture in Enhancing Teacher Performance at Muhammadiyah Schools

Abd. Rahman[1*], Mowafg Masuwd[2], Mohd Aizul Yaakob[3], Hasanuddin[1]
[1]Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia
[2]University of Zawia, Libya
[3]Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (UniSIRAJ), Malaysia
✉ Author Corresponding: abdul.rahman@unismuh.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines how madrasah principals' leadership practices and school culture shape teacher performance in Muhammadiyah schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. While previous studies have extensively addressed leadership and school culture, evidence remains limited regarding the specific mechanisms by which faith-based leadership in Muhammadiyah madrasahs is manifested and experienced at the school level, particularly outside of key areas. Addressing this gap is crucial because leadership and culture are practical levers for strengthening teacher development and maintaining school quality in a values-based educational environment. This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design in three Muhammadiyah madrasahs in South Sulawesi. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with participants (madrasah principals, vice-principals, and teachers) who were purposively selected based on criteria such as position, minimum tenure, integration into professional development programs, and non-participant observation and document analysis (e.g., school policies and professional development records). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis through iterative coding, theme development, and cross-case comparison. Findings indicate that principals support teacher performance through (1) structured professional development planning (e.g., training/workshops aligned with teacher needs), (2) instructional supervision and feedback routines, (3) cultivating a collaborative culture (peer support, shared problem-solving), and (4) recognition practices that strengthen motivation and commitment. Based on these themes, we recommend strengthening needs-based professional development cycles, institutionalizing regular feedback and supervision protocols, and implementing transparent recognition criteria aligned with agreed-upon performance indicators.

Keywords: Educational Leadership; Madrasah Principal; School Culture; Professional Development.

Article History:
Received: 03-02-2026
Revised : 24-02-2026
Accepted: 03-03-2026
Online : 01-04-2026

How to Cite (APA style):
Rahman, A., Masuwd, M., Yaakob, M. A., & Hasanuddin. (2026). The Role of Madrasah Principles and School Culture in Enhancing Teacher Performance at Muhammadiyah Schools. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*, *9*(1), 171-185. https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v9i1.38098

This is an open access article under the CC–BY-SA license

1. INTRODUCTION

The strategic role of madrasah principals in Muhammadiyah institutions of South Sulawesi is multifaceted (Bunyamin et al., 2024). Unlike leadership in many conventional public schools that often prioritizes administrative and instructional routines (Nasution & Marpaung, 2023), Muhammadiyah madrasah principals are expected to simultaneously demonstrate managerial competence, instructional vision, and moral integrity (Sulistyorini et al., 2022). In practice, this means that principals not only manage day-to-day operations but also cultivate an organizational culture grounded in Islamic values (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; Lateh et al., 2024). Such leadership is

particularly consequential because teacher performance reflected in lesson preparation, classroom engagement (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2020; Aquino et al., 2021), innovation, and professional collaboration varies across settings, and principals may shape these practices by aligning professional expectations with faith-based ethical standards (Idris, 2023).

Indonesian studies have consistently shown that integrating Islamic values into educational leadership can support teacher motivation and character development (Sary et al., 2024; Sokip et al., 2019). Principals who lead through Islamic values have been linked to stronger character formation among teachers and students (Yusuf et al., 2024), while leadership emphasizing extracurricular enrichment through Islamic principles has been associated with improved teacher performance and student character development (Slamet et al., 2020; Subaidi et al., 2024). This emphasis on competence development and ethical behaviour is also widely viewed as essential for producing graduates who are academically capable and morally grounded (Zakariyah, 2024).

However, the existing evidence base remains insufficient for three reasons. First, although value-driven and visionary leadership is associated with teacher performance (Yaqin et al., 2021), much of the empirical work has been conducted in more generic contexts or concentrated in public schools, including settings in Java (Sary et al., 2024). Second, while research on Indonesian Islamic boarding schools demonstrates that leadership integrating religious values can shape teachers' professional practices in nuanced ways (Kusumaputri et al., 2023), the organizational characteristics of Muhammadiyah schools and madrasahs particularly in South Sulawesi are not always directly comparable. Third, despite a systematic international review highlighting the importance of contextualized Islamic-based educational leadership since the 1990s (Arar et al., 2022), empirical accounts that specify *how* principals' faith-aligned practices translate into a school culture of religiosity and professionalism and how that culture supports teacher performance remain limited. This gap is important because faith-based leadership is expected to operate through cultural mechanisms that are sensitive to regional and institutional conditions (Suhan et al., 2017). Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in explaining the leadership culture performance linkage as a set of contextual mechanisms within Muhammadiyah schools in South Sulawesi, rather than treating leadership and performance as broadly correlated constructs.

To address this gap, the present study asks: How does the leadership of the madrasah principal shape school culture, and how does that culture, in turn, enhance teacher performance in Muhammadiyah schools of South Sulawesi? Three subsidiary questions guide the inquiry: (1) What leadership behaviours do principals employ to align the school's vision and mission with Islamic values?; (2) How do those behaviours influence the formation of a school culture characterised by religiosity and professionalism?; and (3) In what ways does the resulting culture motivate teachers to innovate and improve instructional quality? These questions aim to generate actionable insights for principals, policymakers, and teacher training programmes.

The rationale for this investigation rests on two intertwined needs (Wekke et al., 2019). First, Muhammadiyah schools operate in an environment of rapid social change, technological disruption (Altmann et al., 2018), and competitive educational standards (Hamami, 2021). Principals must therefore balance tradition with innovation yet empirical guidance on how to do so remains scarce. Second, national education policies increasingly emphasise teacher professionalism and student character, goals that can only be realised if school culture provides consistent moral and professional reinforcement (Suwandi et al., 2020). Unpacking the principal's role in cultivating such a culture will illuminate a pathway for sustainable teacher development and, ultimately, improved student outcomes (AlKasasbeh & Amawi, 2024; Almufarreh et al., 2023).

Conceptually, this study integrates transformational and spiritual leadership perspectives to explain how leadership practices connect to school culture and teacher performance. Transformational leadership highlights the principal as an agent of change who shapes shared direction and builds collective commitment, while spiritual leadership emphasizes values-based influence and meaning-making within the organization. In Muhammadiyah madrasahs, these perspectives converge in practical leadership routines setting clear expectations, modelling Islamic ethics, providing professional development, and creating participatory decision-making forums (Aly & Sufahani, 2019). These routines are expected to foster a school culture characterized by religiosity (values internalization, ethical discipline, spiritual climate) and professionalism (collaboration, continuous improvement, accountability) (Ansary, 2022). Through this culture, teachers may feel valued, engage in collegial learning, and adopt more innovative pedagogies (Berhanu, 2023). Conversely, when leadership focuses narrowly on administration and neglects cultural dimensions, teachers may experience reduced morale, limited creativity, and burnout, which can erode instructional quality.

Despite notable successes achieved by several Muhammadiyah schools (Shodiq et al., 2019), systematic challenges persist (Kultsum et al., 2022). Principals often struggle to synchronise the institution's lofty vision with day to day practices, especially when resources are constrained or when teachers are accustomed to hierarchical, directive management styles (Mu'ti & Amirrachman, 2025). Moreover, the dual expectations placed on principals to safeguard Islamic authenticity while achieving academic excellence can create role conflicts that ripple through the organisational culture. Investigating these tensions will clarify the conditions under which leadership strategies succeed or falter (Busahdiar et al., 2023).

Based on this positioning, the study advances two objectives: (i) to map the interplay between principals' leadership behaviours and key elements of school culture religiosity and professionalism; and (ii) to examine how this interplay is reflected in teachers' reported professional practices, including instructional planning, classroom engagement, and professional collaboration. The findings are expected to contribute a context-sensitive account of faith-aligned school leadership within Muhammadiyah's educational network and to inform leadership development and teacher professional development frameworks.

2. METHODS

This section describes the logical progression from research design to data analysis and validation procedures. This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to examine how madrasah principals' leadership practices shape school culture and, through it, support teacher performance in Muhammadiyah madrasahs in South Sulawesi. Three Muhammadiyah madrasahs were purposefully selected to allow for both within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons; to enhance transferability, key contextual characteristics of each location are described, including at the school level. The primary analysis utilizes each madrasah as a case study, with a focus embedded on (1) the principals' leadership routines, (2) manifestations of school culture (particularly practices oriented toward religiosity and professionalism), and (3) teachers' reported professional practices such as lesson planning, classroom engagement, innovation, and collaboration. Given the logic of a qualitative case study, findings are intended for analytical transferability rather than statistical generalization, and the study makes no causal claims or "significant effects"; rather, it reports patterns based on participants' accounts and observed practices in the contexts studied.

Participants consisted of madrasah principals, vice principals, and teachers recruited through purposive sampling to ensure role-specific insights relevant to the study objectives. The study was conducted at the Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School in Gombara, Makassar, the Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School in Punnia, Pinrang, and the KH. Ahmad Dahlan Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School in Bantaeng. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document review to triangulate perspectives and strengthen contextual understanding. Documents reviewed included school policies, professional development plans, supervision notes, meeting minutes, and other relevant program documentation.

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis using a six-stage framework to enhance clarity and replicability. The process began with familiarization through repeated readings of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents, followed by inductive initial coding across the dataset. Codes were then grouped into candidate themes related to leadership practices, cultural mechanisms, and teacher performance, and these themes were iteratively reviewed against the coded extracts and the full dataset to ensure coherence. Next, themes were defined and named to capture their central meaning and explicitly link them to the research questions, before being reported in an analytic narrative supported by representative evidence. Following within-case analysis, a cross-case synthesis was conducted to identify common patterns across cases as well as context-specific variations. To validate the qualitative findings, several reliability strategies were employed, including triangulation through interviews, observations, and documents; member checking through sharing preliminary theme summaries with selected participants; and maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions and analytic memos, supplemented by peer review where possible.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Madrasah Principal Leadership and School Culture

Based on the results of the study conducted through interviews with several informants, it was found that the role of the madrasah principal in improving teacher performance in Muhammadiyah schools is very strategic and fundamental (Nasra & Arar, 2020). The informants consisting of teachers and vice principals of madrasahs revealed that the madrasah principal holds the main responsibility for creating a positive and supportive work environment (Aquino et al., 2021). The interviewed madrasah principals also explained how they try to set an example, foster discipline, and give awards to outstanding teachers, which ultimately motivates teachers to be more committed to teaching (Ansary, 2022).

The interview results also show that school culture plays an important role in influencing teacher motivation and performance (Almessabi, 2021). The teachers feel that a work culture that is inclusive, collaborative, and based on Islamic values greatly helps encourage them to continuously develop themselves. A strong school culture, where every teacher feels supported by management, creates a conducive environment for enhancing creativity and innovation in the learning process (Assaf & Antoun, 2024). The informants stated that the existence of a positive work culture can reduce stress levels and increase job satisfaction.

Moreover, the relationship between the leadership of the head of the madrasa and the school culture appears to be very close (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). The informants explained that a head of the madrasa who leads with a participatory and visionary approach can shape a school culture that supports effective learning. Heads of madrasas who are open to feedback and teacher initiatives and facilitate professional training and development have created a healthy work

atmosphere (Arop et al., 2020). This has contributed to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

The informants also revealed that the head of the madrasa acts as a bridge between the school and the community. Several informants mentioned that a head of the madrasa who actively engages in communication with parents and the surrounding community can build a positive image of the school and increase support for school programs. According to the informants, this is one of the factors that make teacher performance more optimal due to the trust and support from various parties. The informants confirmed that the head of the madrasa and school culture are two important interrelated elements in improving teacher performance. Good leadership and a positive school culture provide motivation and space for teachers to grow and innovate, ultimately resulting in better educational quality in Muhammadiyah schools.

3.2 The Role of the Principal as a Leader

Research on the role of the madrasah principal is highly important for both teachers and students. Generally, the principal holds responsibility as a leader in areas such as teaching, curriculum development, student administration, personnel and staff management, public relations, school planning administration, and facility management of the madrasah. In empowering the community and surrounding environment, the madrasah principal is a key figure who must pay close attention to what happens to the students within the madrasah and what is expected by the students' parents and the community regarding the institution. The principal consistently fosters and develops good collaborative relationships between the madrasah and the community to realize an effective and efficient madrasah.

This harmonious relationship fosters mutual understanding among the madrasah, parents, community, and other institutions, thereby generating enthusiasm for mutual assistance between the madrasah and the community. This occurs because each party understands the value and importance of their respective roles and establishes strong cooperation between the madrasah and various sectors in the community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the success of education in the madrasah. In realizing the vision and mission of the madrasah, particularly in improving the quality of graduates, the madrasah principal, as the leader, must understand the condition of the teaching staff, because teachers are one of the key educational elements responsible for carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Based on an interview with the principal of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Punnia Labumpung Pinrang, he explained his role as both a leader and the head of the madrasah, stating that: *"As the head of the madrasah, I hold an important role in upholding the trust and good reputation of this institution. Therefore, I strive to be a role model for both teachers and students in terms of discipline, with the goal of producing graduates with noble character (akhlaq karimah). I also pay attention to the needs of the teachers, including giving them appreciation to enhance their motivation. Insya Allah, with sincerity, the performance of all parties in this madrasah will run smoothly and receive blessings from Allah SWT."*

As the principal of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Punnia Labumpung Pinrang, he further explained his role as a leader in improving teacher performance, stating that: *"To improve teacher performance, I prioritize their welfare and professional status. We organize various activities such as workshops, training sessions, and professional development programs to enhance teachers' competencies. I believe these efforts can foster teaching enthusiasm and reduce absenteeism. Coaching is also conducted, beginning with discipline as the foundation for work effectiveness, followed by the development of teachers' professional competencies."*

This is further supported by the results of an interview with another informant, who explained the role of the madrasah principal as a leader in improving teacher performance: *"There are five points that the madrasah principal usually carries out to enhance our effectiveness as teachers: (1) setting an example of how entrusted responsibilities must be properly upheld, (2) providing motivation to the teachers in this madrasah, (3) giving recognition or rewards to teachers, (4) applying disciplinary measures to teachers who are less committed in their teaching, and (5) sending teachers to participate in activities aimed at improving quality."*

Based on interviews with Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah, there are five main activities that are the primary focus of the madrasah principal, namely: (1) fostering exemplary leadership (uswatun hasanah) by the principal, (2) enforcing discipline among all elements within the madrasah, with sanctions (punishment) for those who violate the rules, (3) appreciating teachers' achievements, including giving rewards to outstanding teachers, (4) showing concern for the welfare of the teachers, and (5) enhancing teachers' competencies.

In line with this, the principal of Madrasah Aliyah at Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah, South Sulawesi, Gombara Makassar, stated: *"I instill the value of exemplary conduct in teachers, particularly in responsibility, cleanliness, discipline, honesty, and congregational prayer. Teachers must arrive earlier than students, maintain classroom cleanliness, and serve as role models in worship. Since teachers are the frontline of role modeling, student discipline and honesty begin with the example set by their teachers."*

Another approach taken by the madrasah principal as a leader in improving teacher performance is as follows: *"We improve teacher performance through regular discussions, attention to their well-being, and improvement of madrasah facilities. Good facilities such as conducive classrooms, comfortable staff rooms, a positive school culture, and support from the pesantren leadership are important factors in supporting the learning process and enhancing teachers' work motivation."*

As a teacher at the madrasah, I explained the activities carried out by the principal to improve teacher performance as follows: *"Our performance as teachers must primarily come from within ourselves, but it is also influenced by the behavior of our principal. For example, our principal consistently sets a good example for us in carrying out our duties according to our job responsibilities at the madrasah. This certainly becomes one of the foundations for us in performing our tasks effectively."* Based on interviews with educators at Madrasah Aliyah PP Darul Arqam Gombara, five main habits were identified as efforts to build the madrasah culture, namely: (1) the value of exemplary conduct, (2) discipline, (3) improvement of teacher performance, (4) enhancement of teacher welfare, and (5) improvement of facilities.

Furthermore, the principal of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng also explained his role as a leader and the practices implemented at the MA, as stated below: *"As the principal of the madrasah, I take on the role of a leader who adapts my leadership style to the situation. I lead by example in matters of discipline and politeness, including in dress. Since this madrasah is currently undergoing redevelopment, including the rebuilding of classrooms and dormitories, I frequently consult with teachers and supervisors. Their roles are highly valuable in helping me fulfill the responsibilities of leadership and managing the madrasah."*

The principal of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng also explained his role as a leader in relation to teacher performance as implemented at the MA: *"As the principal of the madrasah, I improve teacher performance by instilling a spirit of dedication as part of Muhammadiyah's charitable mission, increasing teacher stipends to support their well-being, and*

encouraging both teacher and student achievement. For me, attention and support for teachers are the key factors."

The results of interviews with the two figures indicate that the principal leadership principles at Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng are based on the following: (1) Exemplary leadership (uswatun hasanah) with an accommodative leadership model grounded in deliberation (musyawarah); (2) Fostering a spirit of service and dedication for dakwah through Muhammadiyah; (3) Enhancing teacher welfare to maintain sincerity; and (4) Improving teacher competencies. The madrasah principal is one of the most influential components in improving the quality of education. As stated in Article 12, paragraph 1 of Government Regulation No. 28 of 1990, *"The principal of the madrasah is responsible for the implementation of educational activities, madrasah administration, the development of other educational personnel, and the utilization and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure."*

Based on interviews with principals from the three Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding schools (Pondok Pesantren), several common foundational leadership principles were identified: (1) Building exemplary leadership (uswatun hasanah), (2) Instilling discipline, (3) Practicing the principles of professionalism, and (4) Enhancing human resource competencies. In addition to these core leadership principles, improvements were also made based on the specific needs and conditions of each Pondok Pesantren, such as increasing teacher welfare and improving or providing facilities and infrastructure.

3.3 The Role of the Madrasah Principal in Improving Teacher Human Resources

The madrasah principal, as the leader of the institution, is responsible for developing the quality of education. Educational quality in the madrasah can be achieved when educational implementation is carried out effectively within a conceptual framework. The effectiveness of education delivery will lead to the expected quality outcomes in line with the madrasah's vision, mission, and goals. The development of educational quality at the Madrasah Aliyah (MA) of the Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding schools is carried out through the enhancement of teacher human resources.

Teacher performance can also be reflected in how well they meet the required competencies, which include pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence (Adarkwah et al., 2021). The professional improvement of teacher performance is inseparable from the role of the madrasah principal. Based on interviews with an informant who serves as a teacher at MA Muhammadiyah Punnia, it was stated: *"As teachers in the madrasah, we are required to possess the competencies mandated by law. Most of the teachers here have fairly good competencies, but there is still a need for workshops, training, and professional development to improve and support our performance. Although such workshops and training programs already exist, the frequency needs to be increased meaning, it would be better if they were held more often."*

In relation to improving teacher performance, based on the information provided by the principal, the following explanation was given: *"To improve teacher performance, I plan to create a comfortable working environment, facilitate the learning process, build creative character, involve teachers in training programs, and provide support in carrying out their duties. Every plan is developed based on needs, predictive analysis, accountability, and involves all educational resources through collaborative discussions."*

A similar statement was made in an interview with a teacher from MA Muhammadiyah Darul Arqam Gombara regarding the principal's planning for improving teacher performance, in which

it was explained: *"As teachers, we realize there are still many aspects that need improvement in carrying out our duties. The madrasah principal provides a lot of input and has established development programs such as regular meetings, curriculum training, lesson plan (RPP) and teaching material workshops, educational seminars, and involving teachers in various competency development activities. Supervisors also assist in guiding teachers whose performance still needs improvement."*

Next, in an interview with the principal of Madrasah Muhammadiyah Darul Arqam Gombara regarding the improvement of teacher performance, he stated: *"Most teachers possess strong pedagogical competence due to their educational background, professionalism, good character, ability to serve as role models, and high social awareness. However, a small number have not yet fulfilled all of these aspects, and therefore require further development through activities such as workshops and training to enhance their performance."*

The quality of teacher resources is highly essential in the field of education, as it plays a critical role in shaping the intellectual capacity of the nation's children who will become the future generation. This aligns with the efforts of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng in improving teacher performance to produce graduates of high quality. Based on an interview with an informant, it was stated that: *"To support the development of teachers' knowledge and experience, the madrasah organizes workshops, training sessions, and coaching programs, as well as involves teachers in activities outside the madrasah. Through these activities, teachers gain new experiences that can be applied in their teaching, with the aim of improving the overall quality of MA graduates."*

The principal of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng provided further explanation regarding the improvement of teacher performance: *"At the beginning of my leadership, I saw great potential among the teachers, but the lack of training hindered their development. Therefore, I designed a development program through regular meetings, training sessions, workshops, seminars, and direct supervision to enhance teacher competencies and support the achievement of educational goals. One of the challenges we face is the lack of communication with the Muhammadiyah regional leadership in* South Sulawesi, which often results in delayed reception of activity-related information."

The results of the research indicate that during the leadership of the principal of MA Muhammadiyah, several programs had been planned and successfully implemented. These include the formulation of the principal's work program, the holding of meetings or coordination sessions with teachers, the implementation of workshops at the madrasah such as workshops on instructional media and teaching methods and classroom supervision visits conducted by the principal.

3.4 Building Madrasah Culture in Relation to Teacher Performance

Madrasah culture refers to behaviors and activities that have become habitual and embody certain values, including values of discipline, social awareness, politeness, and religiosity. The manifestation of madrasah culture takes the form of religious activities and habitual daily behaviors. These religious activities are held on various schedules weekly, annually, and even daily (Almessabi, 2021). As stated by the principal of Madrasah Muhammadiyah Punnia, who explained the madrasah culture implemented at the school he leads, based on an interview with the informant: *"Living in a madrasah environment, we emphasize Islamic values such as smiling, greetings, and greetings, which are instilled from the beginning. This is derived from the madrasah's vision and is implemented every morning when teachers greet students with a handshake and*

greeting. Through these small habits, we also monitor students' neatness and hope to instill positive morals in their behavior".

Also, the principal, in an interview, stated the following: *"This madrasah culture has been instilled since the founding of the Islamic boarding school and is aligned with the vision and mission of the madrasah under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah boarding school. We continue the traditions passed down by our predecessors and follow the guidance of the boarding school leadership as a unified whole. As an Islamic educational institution, religious activities are an integral part, such as the daily recitation of the Qur'an every morning before lessons begin, congregational Friday prayers, and monthly religious gatherings (pengajian)."*

Then, the Principal of Madrasah Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng explained the madrasah culture practiced at the MA he leads: *"The culture at this madrasah is shaped based on the capabilities of the school community, including both teachers and students, while also taking into account the expectations of the surrounding community, who directly experience the impact of education. Cultural values are designed to be easy to implement without being burdensome, and they reflect the needs and aspirations of the madrasah environment and students' parents. Once established, these cultural values are socialized throughout the entire madrasah community and then to the general public as part of the madrasah's unique identity. Examples of the implemented culture include commemorations of Islamic holidays and regular religious gatherings (pengajian) in collaboration with local majelis taklim, which are part of practicing the Prophet's Sunnah."*

From the various interviews, it can be understood that the primary process behind the formation of madrasah culture at Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding school-based madrasahs originates from the founders or leaders, and is embedded in the vision and mission of the institution. Several of the above statements are supported by interview findings, which indicate that the formation of madrasah culture begins with, or is fundamentally based on, the vision and mission set forth by the founders of the madrasah.

3.5 Inculcating Islamic Values in the Madrasah Environment

As the head of a madrasah, one of the principal's main responsibilities in improving the performance of guidance teachers is to carry out supervision and control of teacher performance (Berhanu, 2024). This includes directly observing the teaching and learning process and its implementation as planned, inquiring about student-related problems, reviewing the programs prepared by teachers, and monitoring the actual implementation of services designed by them. As stated by the principal: The madrasah principal has carried out their role in accordance with applicable regulations. However, each principal shows strengths and areas for improvement. All principals of Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah apply the same leadership concept: they act as leaders who pay attention to teacher welfare, uphold their responsibilities, serve as role models, enforce discipline, and enhance the human resources of their institutions by organizing internal and external workshops and training sessions. Likewise, all implement systems of reward and sanction, although the methods of delivery may vary.

When examining the institutional culture, a common pattern across the three madrasahs is that some teachers are assigned subjects outside their academic background. Additionally, all madrasahs face limitations in facilities, with the most notable deficiencies found at MA Ereng-Ereng in Bantaeng. Based on interviews with informants regarding the role of the principal in influencing teacher performance at Muhammadiyah Madrasah Aliyahs in South Sulawesi, it is evident that the principal plays a significant role. For instance, at MA Punnia Pinrang, one informant highlighted that the principal enforces strict discipline among both teachers and

students, which contributes positively to improving teacher performance in every work unit. A principal must also adhere to guiding principles to ensure that subordinates carry out their duties effectively.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the madrasah principal contributes positively to teacher performance, underscoring the importance of principled leadership in driving performance improvement. The success of education in madrasahs is heavily determined by the effectiveness of the principal in managing available human resources an essential educational component impacting teacher performance (Alzoraiki et al., 2023). The principal is responsible for managing educational activities, madrasah administration, the development of educational personnel, and the utilization and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities (Nasra & Arar, 2020).

In carrying out day-to-day activities at the madrasah, it is evident that teacher performance is strongly influenced by the presence and capabilities of the principal in executing their roles and responsibilities. The principal formally holds a mandate of authority to fulfill leadership roles as a leader, motivator, supervisor, and manager. As widely understood, culture consists of ingrained habits that are embedded in and practiced within the work environment. It serves as a driving force in enhancing the work quality of all human resources. Thus, culture significantly influences teacher performance at the madrasahs studied (Begum & Thomas, 2020). The cultural values, internalized as legitimized attitudes among teachers, act as spontaneous motivators in the fulfillment of their duties (Al-Zoubi et al., 2023).

Our findings are largely consistent with previous research and extend it by clarifying the *mechanisms* linking leadership, culture, and teacher performance in Muhammadiyah madrasahs. Similar to studies showing that Islamic values-based leadership strengthens teacher motivation, character formation, and professional conduct (Sary et al., 2024; Sokip et al., 2019; Yusuf et al., 2024), participants in our cases described principals' role modelling, value-based discipline, and participatory routines as central to sustaining professionalism and commitment. Our results also align with evidence that faith-oriented leadership can enhance teachers' practices through programmatic support such as extracurricular enrichment and professional development (Subaidi et al., 2024) and with broader claims that visionary, value-driven leadership relates to improved teacher performance (Yaqin et al., 2021). In line with research from Indonesian Islamic boarding schools indicating nuanced leadership effects on teachers' professional practices (Kusumaputri et al., 2023), our cross-case synthesis similarly shows that leadership operates through culturally embedded routines collaboration, supervision/feedback, and recognition that teachers perceive as enabling innovation and instructional quality. Moreover, our findings support the international review emphasising the importance of contextualised Islamic-based educational leadership models (Arar et al., 2022) and reinforce the argument that leadership effectiveness depends on faith-based, regional, and cultural specificity (Suhan et al., 2017; Nasra & Arar, 2020). Where our study adds novelty is not by contradicting earlier work, but by offering a more context-sensitive explanation of how principals' practices are translated into a school culture of religiosity and professionalism that, in turn, supports teacher performance within Muhammadiyah schools in South Sulawesi (Alanoglu, 2025).

Recognizing that if something is planned as well as possible and carried out diligently, it will also produce good results. In this regard, the behavior and morals of madrasah residents, madrasah principals are required to develop the potential of teachers and good madrasah culture, namely by implementing trustworthy leadership so that they become role models for teachers and students, creating an Islamic madrasah culture that can shape the morals and character of

madrasah residents. Madrasah principals are the driving force, determining the direction of madrasah policies, which will determine how goals and education in general can be realized. Based on the research focus, problem formulation, and presentation of research results on the role of madrasah principals and madrasah culture on teacher performance, several things were discovered related to the role of madrasah principals and madrasah culture at MA Islamic Boarding Schools Muhammadiyah Darul Arqam Punnia Pinrang, Darul Arqam Gombara Makassar, and KH. Ahmad Dahlan Ereng-Ereng Bantaeng.

It can be explained that each madrasah principal has carried out his role in accordance with applicable regulations, but of course from each side, strengths and weaknesses are apparent. Madrasah principals apply the same concept to teacher performance at all Muhammadiyah Madrasah Aliyah, such as the madrasah principal as a leader. All madrasah principals pay attention to teacher welfare, maintain trust, serve as role models, enforce discipline, and also carry out activities such as workshops and training, both internally and externally, in improving madrasah human resources. Likewise, all provide rewards and sanctions, but the methods of giving them differ. When viewed from a cultural perspective, it is found that the similarities between these three madrasahs lie in teachers teaching students outside their educational backgrounds. Facilities are also lacking, but the most prominent deficiency is MA Ereng-ereng Bantaeng.

Based on the results of interviews with informants regarding the role of madrasah principals in teacher performance at MA Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi. Thus, the role of the madrasah principal has a significant influence on improving teacher performance, as evidenced by interviews with teachers at each Islamic boarding school (MA), such as at MA Punnia Pinrang. The informant revealed that the madrasah principal's role in enforcing strict discipline on teachers and students positively influences the quality of teacher performance in each work unit. Furthermore, the madrasah principal must have principles that serve as guidelines for carrying out their duties so that their subordinates can perform effectively.

The results of this study demonstrate that the madrasah principal makes a positive contribution to teacher performance. This illustrates the importance of principled leadership in improving teacher performance. The success of education in madrasahs is largely determined by the madrasah principal's ability to manage the available human resources, which is one component of education that influences teacher performance. The madrasah principal is responsible for organizing educational activities, madrasah administration, developing other educational staff, and utilizing and maintaining facilities and infrastructure.

In the process of organizing activities in madrasas, it is clear that the performance of madrasa teachers is greatly influenced by the existence and ability of the madrasa principal to carry out their duties and functions. This is because the madrasa principal is given a formal mandate, in this case the madrasa principal has a mandate of authority (mandate authority) to carry out all leadership roles as a leader, motivator, supervisor, and manager. As it is understood that culture is an ingrained habit and is applied in work activities as a driver to improve the quality of work of all human resources, this culture is very influential in encouraging performance improvements for teachers at the madrasas that are the objects of this study because cultural values that have become legitimate attitudes within teachers become spontaneous drivers for teachers in carrying out their duties.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the relationship between principal leadership and school culture is consistently observed across cases as a key condition supporting teacher professionalism in Muhammadiyah schools in South Sulawesi. Empirically, the cases show that teacher professionalism is supported when principals enact concrete leadership routines, including structured professional development planning (e.g., training and workshops aligned with teachers' needs), supervision and feedback practices, participatory decision-making, and recognition of teachers' achievements. These routines were repeatedly described by participants as shaping a value-based school culture characterised by religiosity and professionalism, which in turn reinforces collaboration, motivation, commitment, and teachers' willingness to improve instructional practice.

The study makes two main scientific contributions. First, it provides a context-sensitive explanation of how faith-aligned leadership practices are translated into school-culture mechanisms (religiosity and professionalism) that support teacher performance, extending prior discussions that often report leadership–performance links without detailing the cultural pathways. Second, by synthesising evidence across multiple Muhammadiyah madrasahs, the study clarifies that leadership effects are not merely administrative but operate through cultural routines that teachers experience in daily work (e.g., collaborative norms, feedback cycles, and transparent recognition). Practically, the findings imply that Muhammadiyah school leaders should prioritise needs-based professional development cycles, institutionalise regular supervision and feedback, strengthen shared decision-making forums, and apply transparent criteria for recognition to sustain teacher professionalism in alignment with Islamic values and organisational goals.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by its multiple-case qualitative scope within a specific regional and institutional context, which supports analytical transferability rather than statistical generalisation. In addition, the findings rely on participants' accounts and observed practices within the study period, which may not capture all contextual dynamics over time. Future research could (1) expand the number of cases across different provinces to test the transferability of the identified mechanisms, (2) employ mixed-methods designs to examine how the leadership–culture pathway relates to teacher performance indicators, and (3) conduct longitudinal studies to assess how cultural routines and professionalism develop and are sustained under changing policy and organisational conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding schools of South Sulawesi (Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Punnia Pinrang Islamic Boarding School, Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar Islamic Boarding School, and KH. Ahmad Dahlan Muhammadiyah Ereng-Ereng Bantaeng Islamic Boarding School, which are the locations of this research..

REFERENCES

Abu Nasra, M., & Arar, K. (2020). Leadership style and teacher performance: mediating role of occupational perception. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *34*(1), 186–202. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2019-0146

Adarkwah, M. A., Mekonen, Y. K., & Kalim, U. (2021). Teacher Professional Development as a

Catalyst for Faculty Development: The Case of a University in China. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, *9*(5), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v9i5.5139

Al-Zoubi, Z. H., Asassfeh, S. M., & Mahasneh, A. M. (2023). High School Principals' Lean Management and Its Relationship with Teachers' Performance. *International Journal of Instruction*, *16*(3), 41–52. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1633a

Al Ghifary Slamet, M. U., Abdillah, A., Fahlevi, M., Ali, R., Mufid, A., Purwanto, A., Faricha, F., & Zumaro, A. (2020). Islamic leadership model for Indonesian millennial teachers performance in pharmacy schools. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, *11*(8), 374–382. https://doi.org/10.31838/srp.2020.8.55

Alanoglu, M. (2025). Creating learning schools through learning-centered leadership: Understanding the mediating role of teacher performance. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, *53*(4), 887–906. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432231188641

AlKasasbeh, W. J., & Amawi, A. T. (2024). Elevating Physical Education Teacher Through Technology Integration. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, *18*(2), 16–26. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i02.43669

Almessabi, A. (2021). Culturally Foreign Teachers' Perceptions of School Climate and Its Relationship to Their Self-Efficacy. *SAGE Open*, *11*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211043927

Almufarreh, A., Noaman, K. M., & Saeed, M. N. (2023). Academic Teaching Quality Framework and Performance Evaluation Using Machine Learning. *Applied Sciences (Switzerland)*, *13*(5). https://doi.org/10.3390/app13053121

Altmann, A., Ebersberger, B., Mössenlechner, C., & Wieser, D. (2018). *The Disruptive Power of Online Education: Challenges, Opportunities, Responses.* The Disruptive Power of Online Education: Challenges, Opportunities, Responses. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78754-325-620181001

Aly, A., & Sufahani, S. F. (2019). The development technological research model of quality muhammadiyah schools through religious and "Kemuhammadiyahan" curriculum transformation. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, *8*(9), 1132 – 1139.

Alzoraiki, M., Ahmad, A. R., Ateeq, A. A., Naji, G. M. A., Almaamari, Q., & Beshr, B. A. H. (2023). Impact of Teachers' Commitment to the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Sustainable Teaching Performance. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *15*(5). https://doi.org/10.3390/su15054620

Anastasiou, S., & Papagianni, A. (2020). Parents', teachers' and principals' views on parental involvement in secondary education schools in Greece. *Education Sciences*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030069

Ansary, K. (2022). The Effect Of Principal Transformational Leadership On Teacher's Performance. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, *10*(2), 319–330. https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v10i2.555

Aquino, C. J. C., Afalla, B. T., & Fabelico, F. L. (2021). Managing educational institutions: School heads' leadership practices and teachers' performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, *10*(4), 1325–1338. https://doi.org/10.11591/IJERE.V10I4.21518

Arar, K., Sawalhi, R., & Yilmaz, M. (2022). The Research on Islamic-Based Educational Leadership Since 1990: An International Review of Empirical Evidence and a Future Research Agenda. *Religions*. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010042

Arop, F. O., Mbon, U. F., Ekanem, E. E., Ukpabio, G. E., Uko, E. S., & Okon, J. E. (2020). School management practices, teachers effectiveness, and students' academic performance in mathematics in secondary schools of cross river state, Nigeria. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, *8*(3), 298–309. https://doi.org/10.18488/JOURNAL.73.2020.83.298.309

Assaf, J., & Antoun, S. (2024). Impact of job satisfaction on teacher well-being and education quality. *Pedagogical Research*, *9*(3). https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/14437

Begum, T., & Thomas, K. A. (2020). The mediating influence of leadership behaviour on the relationship between organizational health and work engagement. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(3), 1062–1069. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080341

Berhanu, K. Z. (2023). Relationship between Pedagogical Leadership and Teachers' Job Performance as Mediated by Organizational Commitment. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *22*(11), 243–258. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.11.13

Berhanu, K. Z. (2024). The Mediating Role of Teachers' Attitudes toward Instructional Supervision in the Association between Instructional Supervisory Practice and Teachers' Job Performance. *Participatory Educational Research*, *11*(2), 212–229. https://doi.org/10.17275/per.24.27.11.2

Bunyamin, A., Sofian, U., Ramly, M., Semmaila, B., & Hasibuddin, M. (2024). The Influence Of Islamic Leadership, Mujahadah, And Work Motivation On The Performance Of State Madrasah Aliyah Educators In South Sulawesi; [La Influencia Del Liderazgo Islámico, Mujahadah, Y La Motivación Laboral En El Desempeño De Los Educadores Estata. *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental*, *18*(8). https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n8-090

Busahdiar, Karimah, U., & Tamin, S. (2023). Total Quality Management (TQM) and Basic Education: Its Application to Islamic Education in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *20*(2), 215–232. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8015

Hamami, T. (2021). Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Education: Two Main Pillars of National Education in Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *18*(2), 307 – 330. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2021.182-06

Idris, M. (2023). The Role of Character Development in Islamic Religious Education: An Islamic Values-Based Approach at One of the MAN Schools in South Sulawesi. *West Science Interdisciplinary Studies*. https://doi.org/10.58812/wsis.v1i08.187

Kultsum, U., Zada, K., Defianty, M., & Roup, M. (2022). Women School Leadership: The Catalytic Style in Developing Guidance and School Members' Well-Being in Facing Global Pandemic. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, *5*(2), 119 – 134. https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v5i2.2711

Kusumaputri, E. S., Muslimah, H. L., & Hayati, E. I. (2023). The case study of Islamic-education leadership model: What we can learn from the dynamics of principals' leadership in Indonesian excellence Islamic boarding-schools. *Jurnal Psikologi, 50*(1), 18. https://doi.org/10.22146/jpsi.78892

Lateh, A., Thongsuk, J., Machae, D., Masae, A., Lateh, A., Khongpheng, N., & Pooteh, R. (2024). Proposed Management Model and Policies Inspired by PMDG Administration for Private Islamic Schools in the Deep South of Thailand. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, *22*(2), 6873 – 6883. https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00519

Mu'ti, A., & Amirrachman, A. (2025). Local Wisdom-Based Multicultural Education: Muhammadiyah Experience. *Intellectual Discourse*, *33*, 183–200. https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v33i1.2241

Nasution, N. A., & Marpaung, S. F. (2023). Strategi kepala madrasah dalam optimalisasi sarana prasarana di Madrasah Aliyah. Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 4(2), 317-329. https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i2.426

Sary, F. P., Farihin, A., Tamam, B., Prasetio, A., & Rahmatika, A. F. (2024). The influence of leadership on factors related to teachers in Islamic boarding schools. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, *8*(5), 26 – 39. https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i5.1628

Shodiq, S. F., Syamsudin, Madjid, A., & Rijalulalam, N. A. (2019). Towards better management of private education in Indonesia: Lessons learned from Muhammadiyah schools. *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*, *7*(2), 146 – 155. https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.7215

Sokip, Akhyak, & Sulistyorini. (2019). Incurring Islamic values in character education for the secondary schools in Indonesia. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *7*(3), 58 – 72.

Subaidi, S., Arsyad, J., & Kisworo, A. Y. (2024). Empowering Islamic Values: The Role of Madrasah

Head Leadership in Extracurricular Enrichment. *Al-Tanzim Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*. https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v8i2.8268

Suhan, S. Z. D., Thahir, L. bin M., & bin Mohammad, A. M. (2017). The practice of spiritual leadership of islam principal madrassas aliyah country and the relationship with culture madrassas. *Advanced Science Letters*, *23*(9), 8966 – 8970. https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2017.10005

Sulistyorini, Junaris, I., Syafi'i, A., & Mu'awanah, E. (2022). Strategic Policy to Improve Professional Madrasah-Based Management Practices. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, *13*(3), 282 – 301. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/222930/

Suwandi, Tjahjadi, B., & Shukla, J. (2020). Strategy and performance: The mediating role of performance management system at Muhammadiyah high schools in East Java Indonesia. *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems*, *12*(6 Special Issue), 166 – 178. https://doi.org/10.5373/JARDCS/V12SP6/SP20201021

Wekke, I. S., Arif, B., Zubair, A., & Wardi, M. (2019). The Role Of Muhammadiyah Institution Towards Muslim Minority In West Papua. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, *7*(1), 21 – 42. https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v7i1.311

Yaqin, H., Hartati, Z., Salabi, A., Bahri, S., & Mizani, H. (2021). Influence of Image-building, Financial Stability and Curriculum development on Education Management with Moderating effect of Educational Leadership: An Islamic Perspective. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *2021*(94), 422 – 443. https://doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2021.94.19

Yusuf, M. I., Maimun, A., Basri, & As'ad, M. (2024). Transformational Leadership of KH. Yusuf Hasyim in Preserving Traditional Islamic Education at Pesantren Tebuireng. *Munaddhomah*, *5*(4), 383 – 394. https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1430

Zakariyah, Z. (2024). Improving madrasah competitiveness Through excellent Islamic education development strategies. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *7*(1), 140-155. https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4541