



## Strategic Improving Academic Achievement through Strategic Management : A Case Study of Madrasah Aliyah Darussalam Parmeraan

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### Article Info

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

**Academic Achievement, Evaluation, Head of Madrasah, Implementation, Planning, Strategy Management.**

This study analyzes the strategic management carried out by the head of Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Darussalam Parmeraan in improving students' academic achievement, focusing on planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Using a qualitative case study approach, the findings reveal that strategy planning is conducted in a visionary and participatory manner based on students' potential mapping. Programs are developed to align students' talents and interests with academic and religious activities. These findings align with George R. Terry's and Bryson's theories of strategic planning that emphasize environmental analysis and collaborative design. In the implementation phase, the madrasah head demonstrates leadership through effective resource organization, teacher coordination, and academic support programs such as enrichment, remedial, and Olympiad training. This supports Fred R. David's theory on the importance of organizational structure and communication in strategy execution. Evaluation is conducted through participatory mechanisms involving performance reviews, academic supervision, and follow-up development programs. This not only serves as a control function but also fosters organizational learning. Overall, the strategic management practices of the madrasah head are proven to be effective in enhancing student academic performance and contribute to the development of leadership models in educational institutions.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role in the life of the nation and state. With education, it is hoped that the next generation of the nation will emerge with quality and the ability to make changes for the better. Education is not only a process of knowledge transfer, but also a means of character formation, potential development, and improvement of students' intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. Through a directed and sustainable education system, a nation can form superior human resources, are highly competitive, and are ready to face future global challenges. Therefore, improving the quality of education must be a priority in every national development policy. (Ichsan & Hadiyanto, 2021)

In the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society,

nation, and state. In the world of education, educational planning provides clear guidance in the implementation of education, so that the management of educational institutions can run more productively and efficiently. This concept also applies in educational institutions, including Islamic educational institutions. Unpreparedness in planning risks resulting in the failure of educational institutions in achieving their educational goals. Therefore, the importance of planning in the context of educational institutions is increasingly prominent.

The head of the madrasah as *Leader Good* must be able to strive for the development and progress of the school and be responsible for increasing accountability for the success of students and their programs. The head of the madrasah is responsible for creating a conducive learning environment, motivating teachers and staff to continuously improve their professionalism, and developing a productive and innovative work culture. In this case, the head of the madrasah also has the responsibility to increase the accountability of the success of students and the programs carried out, including through periodic evaluations and transparent reporting to all stakeholders, such as the madrasah committee, parents, and the education office. (Robbins, 2012)

Strategic management in the educational environment requires three stages, namely strategy formulation in which there is a formulation of the vision, mission and values of the organization, there is environmental scrutiny both internally and externally. The second stage is the implementation of the strategy in which there is an analysis of strategy choices and key success factors, setting goals, objectives and making strategies (policies, programs and activities). And the last stage is strategy evaluation. (Kholis, 2018).

Strategic management is a discipline that focuses on the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. This definition can be described as a dynamic process involving the analysis of the organization's internal and external environment, the determination of strategic objectives, the formulation of strategies, the implementation of those strategies, and the evaluation and control of the performance of the implemented strategies. (David, 2018)

According to David, strategic management is the art and knowledge to formulate, implement, and evaluate cross-functional strategic decisions that enable organizations to achieve their goals (David, 2018). According to Fidler, strategic management is a system that as a whole has components that are interconnected and influence each other, and move simultaneously (together) in the same direction. (Fidler, 2002) Meanwhile, Robson (2019) is more concerned with the process of making a decision (planning) and a product (a strategy) than determining/interpreting the objectives of management. According to Robson, there are many ways of thinking about the decision-making process and a product. The thought of both is often called strategic management. Strategic management is basically an organization's effort to adjust to its environment. In an effort to align the organization with its environment, strategic management takes the following steps: 1) setting the organization's mission; 2) formulate organizational philosophy; 3) set policies; 4) setting goals (organizational objects); 5) developing organizational strategies; 6) designing organizational structure; 7) provide human resources; 8) establish work procedures; 9) provide facilities and 10) activate human resources. (Kadarsih & Zamroni, 2008)

Strategy management involves various components in the process. Several important components in the strategic management process begin with environmental analysis, both the internal and external environment of the organization, to evaluation and control, which then start again with environmental analysis. These steps, which are also elements of strategic management, are intertwined. Environmental analysis will be meaningless for the organization if it is not continued by formulating a strategy. Likewise, the formulation of the strategy will be meaningless if it is not implemented. The implementation will not give satisfactory results if control and evaluation are not carried out. Therefore, feedback from each stage/element of the strategic management process is important. (Hari Lubis, 2016). 1) Environmental Monitoring, 2) Strategy Formulation, 3) Strategy Implementation, 4) Strategy Level, 5) Operational Strategy, 6) Strategy Integration. By following this process and understanding its components, organizations can develop and implement effective strategies to achieve their goals

There is a lack of empirical studies on the strategic management practices of madrasah principals in the local context, particularly in areas such as North Padang Lawas Regency. There are few studies that comprehensively examine how madrasah principals develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve student academic achievement. However, the reality on the ground shows that some madrasahs face limited resources and complex geographic challenges, making the strategies implemented by madrasah principals crucial to the institution's success. The Darussalam Parmeraan Private Islamic High School (MAS) is one example of a madrasah in the region that has demonstrated significant academic achievements. Between 2022 and 2024, students at this madrasah won various competitions, both at the district and national levels, and even went on to study abroad in countries such as Egypt and Libya.

Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in the importance of identifying and analyzing the management strategies employed by madrasah principals, so that they can serve as models or references for other madrasahs,

especially those in similar areas. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic educational management science, as well as practical contributions to educational policymaking, particularly in strengthening the capacity of madrasah principals as strategic leaders. Therefore, this study aims to in-depth explore the strategic management practices of the principal of Darussalam Parmeraan Private Madrasah Aliyah in improving student academic achievement, through a qualitative case study approach. This research aims not only to enrich the academic literature but also to provide practical recommendations that can be applied in the context of Islamic educational management in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of understanding in-depth the strategic management process of madrasah principals in improving student academic achievement at MAS Darussalam Parmeraan. Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to explore phenomena contextually and comprehensively in a real-life setting (Yin, 2018). This method is relevant for depicting the complexity of educational leadership strategies within a single institution in detail. This research focuses on a single case, namely MAS Darussalam Parmeraan, a location with unique characteristics: it has succeeded in significantly improving student academic achievement in recent years. Therefore, this study is not only descriptive but also exploratory in nature to uncover the managerial strategies implemented by madrasah principals and their implications for academic achievement.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The primary informants in this study were the madrasah principal, the vice principal for curriculum, teachers, education staff, and students. Ten informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) direct experience in planning or implementing educational strategies, (2) involvement in the decision-making process or implementation of madrasah strategic policies, and (3) ability to provide relevant information regarding student academic achievement. The interviews were semi-structured, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes per informant. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis. Observations were conducted three times over a two-week period, focusing on learning activities, student activities, and the school's internal coordination processes. The documentation study included student academic achievement data, curriculum planning documents, meeting archives, and school publications. (Moleong, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques, with the following steps: (1) transcribing interview data, (2) reading and comprehensive comprehension, (3) coding the data, (4) grouping codes into categories, and (5) identifying key themes that represent the strategic meaning of the data. Data from observations and documentation were compared to strengthen the interpretation of the findings. The data processing process employed interactive analysis techniques according to (Miles and Huberman, 2018), which include the following stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several strategies were employed, namely, Source triangulation, by comparing data from various informants and supporting documents. Member checking, which involves confirming data and interpretations of interview results with informants to ensure they align with their intentions. Audit trail, which involves systematically recording the data collection and analysis process to demonstrate the research's trajectory. Peer debriefing, which involves discussing the findings with colleagues to obtain objective feedback and enrich the interpretation. With this methodological design, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive, in-depth, and valid picture of the madrasah principal's strategic management practices in improving student academic achievement at MAS Darussalam Parmeraan.

## 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### **Strategic planning of the head of Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan in improving students' academic achievement**

The strategic planning of the madrasah head in improving the academic achievement of students at Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan is a process that is not only administrative, but also visionary and collaborative. The results of interviews with the head of the madrasah show that planning starts from mapping students' potentials and needs through initial selection based on interests and talents, which is then used as the basis for placing students in appropriate academic and religious coaching programs, such as tahfidz Al-Qur'an, hadith, nahwu shorof, and other general subjects. This strategy shows that madrasah heads focus not only on academic achievement in a narrow sense, but also on the development of students' potential as a whole according to their individual characteristics.

The strategic approach taken by the principal of Darussalam Parmeraan Private Islamic Senior High School demonstrates the implementation of strategic educational planning theory, as explained by George R. Terry. Planning is a fundamental managerial process for selecting goals and determining the best means to achieve them. In this context, the principal not only formulates a vision and mission in a formal document but also translates it into concrete programs based on student potential and institutional needs. One of the flagship programs designed is an enrichment class for high-achieving students, which focuses on deepening mathematics and English material using HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)-based modules. Meanwhile, for students whose scores are still below the Minimum Competency (KKM), a structured remedial class is implemented with simplified material, an individual approach, and reflective assignments. Both programs are implemented outside of regular class hours under the direct supervision of a supervising teacher. Interviews indicate that students participating in the enrichment program consistently demonstrate improved academic scores and greater learning engagement.

Regarding teacher development, the principal initiated in-house training and collaborative workshops focused on improving teachers' pedagogical skills and digital literacy. One training deemed to have a significant impact was the "Teaching with Technology" training, which introduced teachers to platforms like Google Classroom and Canva for Education. Teachers reported that this training enriched their teaching methods and encouraged increased student participation in the learning process. Within the theoretical framework of John M. Bryson's Strategic Planning Model (2011), the planning conducted by the madrasah principal demonstrated the process of identifying the internal and external environment through a simple SWOT analysis with the curriculum team, setting realistic strategic objectives, and actively involving stakeholders in teacher deliberation forums. This demonstrated that the madrasah had implemented collaborative and participatory principles, which have been proven to increase the effectiveness of program implementation. Furthermore, the madrasah principal's leadership also reflected a transformational leadership model. He or she acted not only as a manager but also as an agent of change, inspiring the entire madrasah community. This aligns with the theory of Bass & Avolio (2016), which states that transformational leaders are able to establish an innovative work culture, develop a shared vision, and increase the intrinsic motivation of subordinates. This is evident in the way the madrasah principal fosters open communication and positions teachers as strategic partners in planning.

However, during the strategy implementation process, several challenges were encountered, such as limited madrasah budgets, initial resistance from some teachers to additional programs, and uneven student preparedness. To address these challenges, the madrasah principal employed a persuasive approach, facilitating reflective discussions among teachers, and submitting proposals for support to committees and community leaders. Furthermore, non-material incentive schemes, such as innovative teacher awards, have proven effective in encouraging active teacher participation. In terms of evaluation, the madrasah principal implemented a continuous and participatory evaluation system. Evaluations were conducted through regular meetings, classroom observations, and monitoring of student learning outcomes. Evaluation data was used as the basis for restructuring the strategy, for example, by modifying learning methods in remedial classes, which were initially overly theoretical, to more practical and project-based ones. This evaluation also involved students through feedback forms, which became a crucial foundation for improving the quality of learning services. From the theoretical perspective of Fred R. David (2018), the strategy cycle involving formulation, implementation, and evaluation demonstrates that the madrasah principal implemented strategic management in an adaptive and measurable manner, integrating the institutional vision into concrete actions that impacted student achievement.

Thus, the planning strategy implemented by madrasah principals is not only structured and systematic, but also prioritizes participation, innovation, and sustainability. This approach not only produces improved academic grades but also fosters a culture of learning and positive collaboration within the madrasah. These findings underscore the importance of the madrasah principal's role as a strategic and transformational leader in advancing the quality of Islamic education at the grassroots level.

#### **Implementation of the madrasah head's strategy in improving the academic achievement results of students at Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan**

Strategy implementation is an important stage in strategic management that requires the involvement of all elements of the organization to execute a pre-prepared plan. In the context of Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan, the process of implementing the strategy carried out by the head of the madrasah shows a very relevant application to the theory of strategy implementation put forward by Fred R. David. According to David (2011), the implementation of the strategy includes the organization of resources, the formation of policies, the development of a supportive organizational culture, and the clear allocation of responsibilities and authority to all elements in the organization so that strategic goals can be achieved optimally.

The head of the madrasah plays a major role in ensuring that the strategy to improve students' academic achievement does not just stop at the planning stage, but is actually realized in the form of real programs and

activities. As explained in the interview, the head of the madrasah has prepared a Madrasah Strategic Plan which serves as a reference for the implementation of all educational programs, including enrichment, remedial, teacher training, and academic supervision. This is a concrete form of organizing and allocating resources, as explained by David, where all programs are systematically arranged and elaborated into operational activities that can be carried out by educators.

The deputy head of the madrasah for curriculum plays the role of the main technical implementer in translating strategies into the curriculum and learning schedule. He ensured that every activity such as Olympic coaching, material enrichment, and learning evaluation was integrated into the madrasah education calendar. Coordination carried out regularly through curriculum meetings, internal MGMP forums, and learning supervision shows that madrasahs implement a functional organizational structure, as described by David, that facilitates specialization and coordination between sections. Through this structure, teachers are given clarity on the roles, goals, and standards of achievement that they must bring into the learning process.

From the perspective of educators, teachers stated that the strategies implemented were real in daily learning activities. The existence of enrichment programs, additional tutoring, and periodic evaluation of learning outcomes shows that there is a synchronization between strategies and daily classroom activities. Teachers are encouraged to adopt varied learning approaches and utilize technology, in line with efforts to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. This reflects the efforts of madrasah heads in developing an organizational culture that supports strategy, one of the important aspects of David's theory of implementation.

Students also feel the direct impact of the implementation of the strategy, both in the form of additional tutoring, more structured learning, and the presence of a coordinated substitute teacher when the main teacher is unable to attend. This shows that communication and coordination among educators has been going well. Students admit that their enthusiasm for learning increases due to greater attention from teachers and more varied learning methods.

In David's view, the success of the implementation of the strategy also depends on the extent to which the organization is able to manage behavior change, effective communication, and leadership that supports and motivates all components of the organization and all these aspects seem to have been running in this madrasah. In addition, the success of the implementation of this strategy is also supported by internal factors such as student discipline and teacher competence, as well as external factors in the form of support from madrasah committees, parents, and policies from the Ministry of Religion.

Based on the results of the interviews and analysis above, it can be concluded that the implementation of the strategy of the head of Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan in improving students' academic achievement is carried out in a structured, comprehensive, and involving all elements of the madrasah. This strategy is implemented through the preparation of detailed work programs, active involvement of teachers, and continuous supervision and evaluation. This is in line with Fred R. David's theory which emphasizes that the successful implementation of the strategy depends on the clarity of the organizational structure, division of roles, effective communication, and the support of the organizational culture. This madrasah has been able to apply these principles, so that the designed strategy can run effectively and have a direct impact on improving students' academic achievement

#### **Evaluation of Madrasah Head's Strategy in Improving Student Achievement at Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan**

Strategy evaluation is an important phase in the strategic management cycle. According to Fred R. David (2016), strategy evaluation is a tool used to determine whether the strategy implemented by the organization has gone according to plan, and whether strategic goals have been achieved or need to be adjusted.

Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan, the evaluation process carried out by the head of the madrasah is in line with David's theory. The head of the madrasah plays the role of the main evaluator who ensures that all strategies that have been designed, especially in improving students' academic achievement, run well, relevant, and adaptive to the dynamics of madrasah needs. The head of the madrasah routinely reviews the implementation of the strategy by referring to the madrasah strategic plan document. This evaluation is not only administrative, but also substantive, where the head of the madrasah reviews whether the strategy implemented is still in line with the vision, mission, and goals of the madrasah. This activity is carried out through routine coordination meetings, learning supervision, and weekly evaluations which are unique because they are carried out in the form of a Tuesday night study forum at the teacher's house on a rotating basis, as mentioned in the interview. This activity combines academic and ukhuwah dimensions, so that the strategy remains grounded in Islamic educational values which are the foundation of madrasahs.

Strategic evaluation at Darussalam Parmeraan Private Islamic Senior High School is conducted systematically through a series of approaches that reflect Fred R. David's strategic evaluation principles: based on

actual data and performance indicators, not mere assumptions. The evaluation process is not solely focused on student outcomes but also encompasses teacher performance, the effectiveness of instructional media, and the overall quality of the learning process. One concrete example of the implemented policy is the implementation of scheduled classroom supervision by the principal and vice principal of curriculum, which includes direct observation of learning strategies, the use of instructional media, and teacher-student interactions. Based on the results of this supervision, a joint reflection is conducted, followed up through an internal MGMP forum to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the learning process. In terms of student academic evaluation, the madrasah implements a system of periodic tests (mid-term and final tests), daily evaluations, reflective quizzes, and skills-based project assessments. If students are found to have not met the minimum standards, they are immediately provided with remedial programs and learning assistance by the homeroom teacher and relevant subject teachers.

This program is facilitated through afternoon tutoring and supplementary learning modules. In terms of policy evaluation, madrasahs also hold monthly evaluation meetings involving the principal, teachers, the curriculum vice principal, and Islamic boarding school leaders. In these forums, qualitative data from observations and quantitative data from student achievement are analyzed triangulated. For example, if a decline in average grades in a particular subject is found, a material audit, adjustments to teaching methods, or micro-teaching training for the teacher in question are conducted. Furthermore, a participatory approach is implemented by soliciting student feedback through a reflective questionnaire at the end of each semester. Based on the questionnaire, students provide input regarding the teacher's teaching style, workload, and the effectiveness of learning methods. These results are used as a basis for developing learning strategies for the following semester to better align with student characteristics and needs.

However, implementation faces significant challenges, such as a lack of resources for external teacher training programs, high teacher workloads, and wide variations in student academic ability. Madrasah principals respond to these challenges by rotating teachers to equitably distribute the workload and by partnering with local universities to provide free training for teachers. To ensure the validity and reliability of the evaluation data, researchers employed source and method triangulation techniques, comparing the results of interviews with the madrasah principal, classroom observations, and documentation of student academic grades. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by asking teachers and students to confirm the interpretation of the findings to ensure the analysis remained objective and accountable. With this data-driven, collaborative, and reflective evaluation, the madrasah principal's strategy proved adaptive in responding to the dynamics of learning and student needs. Evaluation serves not only as a control tool but also as a means of continuous improvement, significantly contributing to improving the academic quality and professionalism of educators at the madrasah. Thus, evaluation is not only a control tool, but also a means of organizational learning to achieve comprehensive and sustainable improvement in the quality of education. The strategy of the head of the madrasah is proven to be not only well planned and implemented, but also systematically evaluated, which makes Madrasah Aliyah Private Darussalam Parmeraan on the path of increasing consistent academic achievement.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the strategic management implemented by the principal of Darussalam Parmeraan Private Islamic Senior High School to improve student academic achievement was visionary, collaborative, and systematic, encompassing three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the principal successfully integrated the vision and mission into development programs based on student interests and talents, such as Quran memorization and academic competition programs. The implementation stage demonstrated structured strategy implementation through active coordination with teachers and educational staff in learning activities, remedial classes, and teacher training. In the evaluation stage, the strategy was evaluated in a participatory manner, involving teachers and students and using tangible performance indicators such as grades, student participation in competitions, and graduate success in international university admissions. These findings directly address the research objective, which was to describe and analyze the principal's strategy in improving student academic achievement through a strategic managerial approach. The limitations of this research lie in the scope of a single case study and the limited quantitative data on longitudinally measurable academic performance improvements. Therefore, it is recommended that further research involve more madrasahs as objects, use a mixed methods approach, and analyze the impact of strategies on academic achievement statistically to strengthen the generalizability of the results.

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