

## The Principal's Role in Increasing Teacher Work Motivation at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk

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### Abstract

The quality of education is greatly influenced by the learning process within educational institutions, such as schools. This study seeks to examine the principal's influence on augmenting teachers' work motivation at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk. The motivation of teachers is a vital determinant of the quality of the learning process and the attainment of educational objectives. This descriptive qualitative research employs a case study methodology, gathering data through observation, comprehensive interviews with the principal and several teachers, and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that the principal at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk assumes a substantial and diversified responsibility. This role includes: as a motivator through providing rewards, recognition, and a supportive work environment; as a supervisor by offering guidance and constructive feedback; and as a manager by ensuring the availability of facilities and clear task distribution. Effective strategies encompass open communication, professional development opportunities, and fostering a sense of ownership towards the school. The implication of this study highlights the importance of the principal's transformational leadership role in creating a positive work culture that directly contributes to the enhancement of teachers' motivation and performance.

### Keywords

Educational Leadership, Principal, Teachers' Work Motivation MIS.



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## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is greatly influenced by the learning process within educational institutions, such as schools. Furthermore, principals and educators are crucial figures who significantly influence every aspect of student learning within the school environment. Improving the quality of education or meeting national education standards will be extremely difficult without strong teacher performance and competent school leadership from the principal. "Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Chapter IX, Article 35, paragraph 1, outlines eight components of national education standards: content, process,

graduate competencies, educational personnel, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and educational assessment (Asmara, 2021). These eight components require systematic and consistent improvement to achieve substantial transformation. Therefore, the quality of the educational process in schools is crucial to achieving these eight elements of national education.

The success of educational achievement in schools depends on the principal's capacity for effective management and leadership. The principal's ability to lead and direct a school is evidenced by their leadership, which facilitates the creation of an effective and efficient learning environment. Leadership is crucial in ensuring the success of any group or organization (Pianda, 2018). Igwe and Odike reaffirm this concept, emphasizing that, as with any other institution, a school's success and failures are closely related to the quality of the principal's leadership (Gaol & Siburian, 2018). Therefore, educational institutions must be led by principals who are capable of carrying out their duties." leadership effectively.

Tan argues that the principal, in his role as an educational leader, carries out four functions: (1) overseeing the educational program, (2) designing the organization to prioritize collaborative decision-making processes among many stakeholders, (3) formulating an academic institutional vision and offering guidance, and (4) understanding and developing educators (Tan, 2018). The role of the principal is very complex. In addition to good school administration, the principal must also improve teacher performance. Susanto emphasized that improving teacher performance in education depends on the principal's ability to properly motivate teachers to improve their performance, to be dedicated and diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities (Turisia et al., 2021). Therefore, without adequate support from the principal to improve teacher efficacy, educators will not be able to adequately carry out their duties in educating, training, leading, and optimally developing the potential of each student. Therefore, to improve the quality of teacher performance, the principal's role as an educational leader must be further strengthened. Poor teacher performance indicates a lack of capacity on the part of the principal to fulfill his or her responsibilities as an educational leader. This problem affects both educators and students (Warisno, 2017).

Student potential has not been fully utilized and developed. According to data released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2015, it was shown that: "Principals in Indonesia require assistance to cultivate the competencies necessary for managing teacher induction, performance evaluations, and appraisals; overseeing, encouraging, and sanctioning teachers; disseminating information regarding teacher performance; and ensuring accountability for overall school performance." OECD data revealed that principals in Indonesia face challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities, which leads to inadequate teacher performance (Purba et al., 2021). "The preparation and development of principal leadership is crucial, as it forms the foundation for improving schools and educational systems (Ningrat et al., 2020). Furthermore, Susanto (2016) emphasized that the principal's role significantly impacts the school environment, particularly in relation to teaching staff (Susanto & Muhyadi, 2016). Additional research has highlighted

the importance of the principal's role in student learning, as it indirectly influences teacher practice by fostering better collaboration and communication throughout the educational process (Citra et al., 2022). This study aims to improve understanding of the principal's role in improving teacher effectiveness through actionable steps. This study investigates the principal's role in improving teacher effectiveness within educational institutions (schools). This study aims to investigate the importance of principal involvement in improving teacher performance.

Although various studies have addressed the principal's role in improving teacher motivation and performance, most research still focuses on public schools and general leadership approaches. This study examines the principal's strategies in building teacher work motivation in an elementary madrasah environment, specifically at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar. Cisauk is still relatively limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership styles of madrasah principals in improving teacher work motivation through a contextual approach that aligns with the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions.

## **METHODS**

This section essentially explains how the research was conducted. The main topics of this section are the type of research, time and location, target/objectives, research subjects, procedures, instruments and data analysis techniques, and other matters related to the research method. The target/objectives, research subjects, procedures, data and instruments, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques, as well as other matters related to the research method, can be described in sub-chapters with sub-headings. Sub-headings do not require annotation; they should be written in lowercase letters, starting with a capital letter, TNR-11 unbold, and left-aligned.

This research employed a descriptive qualitative methodology. This methodology was chosen to define and understand in-depth the influence of the madrasah principal on improving teacher work motivation at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk, based on empirical evidence. This study avoided statistical analysis, instead focusing on meaning, understanding, and description from the respondents' perspectives.

The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to understand in-depth the experiences, strategies, and leadership practices of madrasah principals in improving teacher work motivation based on real-world situations.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study aims to determine the role of the madrasa principal in improving teachers' work motivation at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk. The research data were obtained through an open-ended questionnaire distributed to the madrasa principal as the main respondent. Based on the results of the data analysis, several forms of the madrasa principal's role in enhancing teachers' work motivation were identified, including aspects of motivation,

leadership, organizational communication, professional development, academic supervision, and teacher performance evaluation

<b>No.</b>	<b>Findings Aspect</b>	<b>Forms of the Madrasa Principal's Role</b>	<b>Impact on Teachers</b>
1	Work motivation	Providing rewards, guidance, and exemplary behavior	Increases work enthusiasm
2	Leadership	Democratic and participatory approach	Teachers feel involved
3	Work environment	Formal and informal communication	Creates a conducive working atmosphere
4	Teacher appreciation	Outstanding teacher awards and moral appreciation	Professionalism improves
5	Challenges	Technology adaptation and age differences	Personal guidance provided
6	Professional development	KKMI activities, training, and supervision	Competence improves

### **The Role of the Madrasa Principal as a Motivator**

The findings of the study revealed that the madrasa principal implemented various strategies to improve teachers' work motivation. These strategies included building teachers' awareness regarding the importance of the quality of learning, providing appreciation for outstanding teachers, and demonstrating exemplary discipline and responsibility in carrying out professional duties. Based on the questionnaire results, the madrasa principal stated, "In my opinion, teachers need to continuously receive motivation, both in the form of appreciation and guidance, so that they remain enthusiastic in carrying out their teaching duties." This finding indicates that the madrasa principal performs the function of a motivator by encouraging teachers' enthusiasm and strengthening their commitment toward professional responsibilities. In addition to acting as a motivator, the madrasa principal also applied certain leadership patterns that were considered capable of increasing teachers' involvement in school activities.

### **The Implementation of Democratic Leadership**

The study found that the madrasa principal applied a democratic leadership approach in carrying out leadership responsibilities. This was reflected in the involvement of teachers in communication and decision-making processes, particularly during school meetings and the preparation of work programs. The madrasa principal explained, "Every decision is usually discussed together through meetings so that teachers can also provide input and feel responsible for the school programs." The involvement of teachers in the decision-making process had a positive impact on work motivation because teachers felt appreciated and were given opportunities to express their opinions and ideas.

### **Creating a Supportive Work Environment**

The research findings showed that the madrasa principal sought to create a conducive working environment through effective communication among school leaders, teachers, and educational staff. Communication was conducted both formally through meetings and informally through daily interactions. Based on the respondents' statements, it was found that, "We try to maintain communication with teachers so that the implementation of duties at school can run well and any obstacles that arise can be resolved immediately." A harmonious work environment was considered capable of increasing teachers' comfort at work and maintaining their motivation in a sustainable manner.

### **Forms of Appreciation for Teachers**

The results of the study indicated that appreciation for teachers was given through the selection of exemplary teachers, the provision of moral rewards, and certain incentives when necessary. The madrasa principal stated, "Teachers who demonstrate good performance are usually given appreciation so that it can become motivation for other teachers." This appreciation encouraged teachers to improve their professionalism and responsibility in carrying out educational duties.

### **Obstacles in Motivating Teachers**

The study also identified several obstacles in efforts to improve teachers' work motivation, particularly related to differences in age and the ability to adapt to developments in learning technology. The madrasa principal stated, "Some teachers require further assistance in keeping up with developments in educational technology." To overcome these challenges, the madrasa principal implemented a personal approach and gradual guidance in order to improve teachers' adaptability and competence in using educational technology.

### **Professional Development and Academic Supervision**

In improving teachers' competencies, the madrasa principal facilitated various professional development activities through the Madrasah Working Group (KKMI), training programs, and regular academic supervision. Supervision was conducted to ensure that the learning process was implemented in accordance with educational planning and applicable educational standards. In addition, the evaluation of teachers' motivation was carried out through monitoring attendance, participation in school activities, and the quality of students' learning outcomes. The findings showed that teachers with high work motivation tended to demonstrate better discipline, creativity, and responsibility in the learning process. Overall, the results of the study indicate that the madrasa principal has a significant role in improving teachers' work motivation through democratic leadership approaches, motivational support, the creation of a conducive work environment, academic supervision, and support for teachers' professional development. These various strategies contributed to improvements in teachers' discipline, responsibility, and the quality of the learning process.

The findings of this study indicate that the madrasa principal at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk has played an effective role in improving teachers' work motivation through an

educative, democratic, and participatory leadership approach. This finding is in line with the educational leadership theory proposed by Mulyasa (2022), which states that the success of a school principal is strongly influenced by the ability to inspire, guide, and empower teachers to achieve optimal performance. Leadership in educational institutions is not merely administrative but also transformational, where the principal acts as a motivator, facilitator, and role model for teachers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In this context, the madrasa principal demonstrated leadership characteristics that encouraged teachers to become more disciplined, responsible, and actively involved in school activities. Previous studies also revealed that leadership style significantly affects teacher motivation and organizational commitment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Northouse, 2021).

The first finding relates to exemplary behavior and work discipline demonstrated by the madrasa principal. Teachers positively evaluated the principal's discipline, responsibility, and consistency in carrying out educational duties. This reflects the social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1986), which explains that individuals tend to imitate behaviors demonstrated by influential figures in their environment. In educational organizations, principals who demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and commitment indirectly shape teachers' work culture and attitudes. This finding is consistent with research by Robbins and Judge (2019), who emphasized that leadership by example contributes significantly to employee motivation and organizational behavior. The principal's exemplary conduct therefore becomes an important factor in building teachers' work ethic and professional awareness.

The second finding concerns academic supervision conducted regularly by the madrasa principal. The principal guided teachers in preparing lesson plans, implementing evaluations, and improving learning strategies. This finding supports the educational supervision theory proposed by Sahertian (2019), which states that supervision aims to improve teachers' instructional competencies through continuous guidance and evaluation. Academic supervision not only functions as a monitoring mechanism but also as a professional assistance process that helps teachers solve instructional problems (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2018). Effective supervision creates opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and continuously improve instructional quality. Research by Sergiovanni (2015) also emphasized that supervision based on collaboration and professional dialogue positively influences teachers' pedagogical competence and classroom performance.

Furthermore, the study found that the madrasa principal implemented both verbal and nonverbal motivational strategies, including praise, appreciation, moral encouragement, and involving teachers in certain responsibilities. This finding can be analyzed using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which explains that motivation is influenced not only by financial rewards but also by intrinsic factors such as recognition, achievement, and appreciation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Teachers who receive recognition from school leaders tend to feel valued and psychologically supported, which ultimately strengthens their enthusiasm for work. This result is supported by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000), which

emphasizes that individuals are more motivated when their psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are fulfilled. By involving teachers in school responsibilities and decision-making processes, the principal strengthened teachers' sense of ownership and commitment toward the institution.

In terms of interpersonal relationships, the madrasa principal was considered successful in creating a harmonious work environment through effective organizational communication and collaboration. Communication between school leaders, teachers, and educational staff was conducted formally and informally, creating an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect. According to organizational communication theory, effective communication plays a vital role in strengthening teamwork, reducing conflict, and increasing job satisfaction (Luthans, 2011). A conducive work environment enables teachers to feel comfortable, appreciated, and emotionally connected to the school institution. This finding aligns with research conducted by Hoy and Miskel (2013), which found that positive school climate and collaborative leadership significantly contribute to teacher motivation and educational effectiveness. Democratic leadership also encourages teachers to actively participate in organizational activities because they feel their opinions are respected and valued.

The implementation of democratic and participatory leadership in this study further reflects transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders motivate subordinates not only through authority but also through shared vision, trust, and emotional influence. Teachers become more motivated when they perceive the principal as supportive, approachable, and appreciative of their contributions. Research by Yukl (2020) demonstrated that participatory leadership positively affects employee engagement, creativity, and professional commitment. In educational institutions, participatory leadership helps establish a collaborative culture where teachers are encouraged to contribute ideas and innovations for school improvement.

Another important finding is that teacher motivation was influenced not only by material incentives but also by social recognition and psychological support from the principal. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory explains that individuals seek esteem, appreciation, and self-actualization after basic needs are fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). Teachers who receive appreciation and support from school leaders tend to develop stronger self-confidence and professional dedication. This finding confirms previous studies indicating that nonfinancial motivation has a significant effect on teacher performance and job satisfaction (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2019). Therefore, school principals should not focus solely on administrative responsibilities but also on emotional and psychological support for teachers.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that the madrasa principal at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk has effectively improved teachers' work motivation through adaptive, democratic, and human resource-oriented leadership practices. The combination of exemplary behavior, academic supervision, motivational strategies, interpersonal communication, and professional guidance contributed positively to teachers' discipline,

professionalism, and instructional quality. Nevertheless, continuous professional development programs and sustainable training remain necessary to ensure that teachers can adapt to educational changes and technological developments. Continuous improvement is essential in modern educational institutions because teacher competence and motivation must continuously evolve in response to the demands of 21st-century education (Fullan, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the madrasa principal at MIS Mathla'ul Anwar Cisauk plays an important role in improving teachers' work motivation through adaptive, democratic, and participatory leadership. The principal acts not only as an administrator but also as a motivator, supervisor, facilitator, and role model in creating a positive work culture. Strategies such as providing rewards, strengthening communication, involving teachers in decision-making, and conducting academic supervision contributed to improving teachers' discipline, professionalism, and teaching quality. The study also found that a supportive and collaborative work environment increased teachers' sense of belonging and commitment to the institution. In addition, professional development programs, training, KKMI activities, and regular supervision helped improve teachers' competencies. However, challenges such as age differences and adaptation to educational technology require more personal and continuous guidance. Overall, the findings indicate that effective madrasa leadership significantly influences teachers' motivation and contributes to improving the quality of education.

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