



Principal Leadership Management In Improving Teacher Professionalism At Ar-Risalah Bogor Integrated Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the principal's leadership management in enhancing teacher professionalism at Ar-Risalah Integrated Islamic Junior High School, Bogor, for the 2023/2024 academic year. Teacher professionalism plays a critical role in determining the quality of education and student learning outcomes. As a school leader, the principal holds a vital responsibility in developing the competencies of teachers, which directly influences the overall teaching and learning environment. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing in-depth interviews with the school principal, teachers, and administrative staff to gain insights into leadership practices, supporting factors, and challenges related to teacher professional development. The findings indicate that the school principal's leadership management is instrumental in enhancing teacher professionalism through structured development programs such as in-house training, peer group discussions, and mentoring initiatives. These initiatives are tailored to address teachers' needs and support continuous professional growth. However, the implementation faces several challenges, including time constraints due to additional workloads, limited financial resources, and the mismatch between training content and teachers' actual needs. Furthermore, the success of teacher development is significantly influenced by managerial support, collaborative culture among educators, and a positive school climate. This research concludes that effective leadership management is a key factor in driving teacher professional growth, which ultimately contributes to improved educational quality. The study provides relevant insights for school leaders and educational stakeholders in Islamic educational institutions seeking to foster teacher professionalism within a values-based and integrated curriculum framework.

Keywords: Principal leadership, Teacher professionalism, Educational management

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental pillars in the development of human resources, as emphasized by Mutaqi (2020), who asserts that education provides individuals with knowledge, skills, and values necessary for contributing effectively to society. A quality education system does not only prioritize academic achievement but also focuses on character building and the cultivation of social competence to foster holistic human development (Qurtubi et al., 2023). In Indonesia, efforts to integrate religious and cultural values within the education system are apparent, particularly in Islamic integrated schools. These schools, such as SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah in Bogor, combine the national curriculum with a comprehensive Islamic education to produce intelligent, morally upright, and competent young individuals.

The importance of knowledge and its pursuit is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, as highlighted in Surah Al-'Alaq verses 1–5, which emphasize reading and learning as acts of divine command. These verses reinforce the notion that education is both a spiritual obligation and a practical necessity. This dual purpose aligns with the prophetic tradition which states: "Whoever desires this world should seek knowledge, and whoever desires the hereafter should also seek knowledge. And whoever desires both should still seek knowledge" (Hadith narrated by Ahmad).

Islamic integrated schools play a pivotal role in shaping both the character and intellectual capacity of students. These institutions aim to merge faith and reason, instilling religious values while preparing students for real-world challenges. SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor is one such institution that strives to develop not only academically proficient students but also morally grounded future leaders. As such, the professionalism of its teaching staff becomes a critical factor in realizing

this vision. Teacher professionalism entails more than subject matter expertise—it requires pedagogical competency, commitment to continuous improvement, and alignment with the institution’s ethical and spiritual objectives (Illahi, 2020).

However, challenges remain in maintaining and enhancing teacher professionalism in such institutions. Field observations at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah indicate several issues: uneven pedagogical competencies among teachers, suboptimal mastery of subject content, inconsistent curriculum implementation, and overall student performance that hovers at the standard level. These observations underscore the pressing need for a structured and strategic approach to professional development.

Effective school leadership plays an instrumental role in this regard. As Maullidina et al. (2023) explain, the principal’s leadership style directly influences the working climate, teacher motivation, and the extent of pedagogical innovation. Efendi and Sholeh (2023) also highlight that visionary school leadership is vital for setting clear goals, managing resources, and creating a school culture that values growth, collaboration, and accountability. The Qur’anic guidance in Surah Al-Imran (3:159) also reinforces the ideal of compassionate and consultative leadership, qualities that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ exemplified in both spiritual and administrative capacities. These principles are particularly relevant for Islamic educational leaders who aim to model prophetic leadership in contemporary settings.

At SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah, teacher professionalism encompasses a wide range of competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal. Observations made on September 30, 2024, revealed various hindrances such as low teacher motivation, lack of continuous training opportunities, and managerial support that has yet to reach its full potential. This research investigates how school leadership—especially the principal’s management style—can overcome these barriers and foster teacher development.

The school is renowned for its unique curricular approach, which integrates national academic standards with religious instruction. This holistic approach not only enhances academic performance but also ensures students are well-versed in Islamic teachings and values. One of the flagship programs is the Tahfidz Al-Qur’an, where students are guided to memorize the Qur’an while simultaneously excelling in their secular studies. This program necessitates that teachers themselves embody high levels of professionalism, religious commitment, and instructional excellence.

A distinctive strength of the school lies in its robust character education programs, which include moral training, discipline, and leadership development. These are not merely supplementary activities but integral parts of the learning process. Teachers are trained to use student-centered teaching methods that encourage critical and creative thinking, making lessons more engaging and relevant.

Furthermore, the school maintains a strong synergy with parents and the surrounding community. It adopts an inclusive model of education where all stakeholders are actively involved in student development. This synergy enhances the learning environment and strengthens professional collaboration among teachers. Regular communication with parents and strategic partnerships with local organizations contribute to a holistic educational ecosystem.

The principal’s role in this context is multifaceted. Beyond administrative duties, the principal serves as a mentor, visionary, and strategic planner. This role requires a deep understanding of both educational theories and Islamic leadership principles. In practice, the principal is expected to design, implement, and monitor professional development programs, including in-house training, workshops, and mentoring schemes. These initiatives must be tailored to address specific gaps in teacher performance and aligned with the school’s broader mission.

Despite the principal’s efforts, the implementation of these programs is often hindered by practical limitations such as time constraints, financial barriers, and mismatches between training content and teachers’ actual needs. Therefore, a more nuanced and dynamic model of leadership is required—one that is responsive, collaborative, and grounded in Islamic ethical frameworks.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of these leadership dynamics within an Islamic school context. Unlike conventional research that focuses solely on administrative efficiency or academic outcomes, this study integrates spiritual, moral, and pedagogical dimensions of leadership. It seeks to answer key questions: How does the principal's leadership style influence teacher development? What factors support or inhibit professional growth among teachers at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor?

The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, drawing on in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, and the principal herself. It aims to generate contextual insights that can inform policy and practice in similar institutions across Indonesia. The study is guided by a conceptual framework that draws on both Western educational leadership theories and Islamic moral philosophy, thereby offering a comprehensive lens through which to analyze the subject matter.

This research also contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic education reform. As Indonesia continues to grapple with educational inequality and quality issues, Islamic schools are increasingly seen as viable models for ethical and holistic education. However, for these schools to fulfill their potential, their leadership structures must evolve to meet contemporary challenges. This includes embracing data-driven decision-making, fostering continuous learning among staff, and cultivating a school culture that prioritizes both faith and excellence.

In summary, this study provides a timely and necessary examination of leadership management and teacher professionalism in one of Indonesia's most dynamic educational sectors. By focusing on the case of SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor, it sheds light on the complex interplay between faith-based values, pedagogical excellence, and effective school leadership. It highlights not only the challenges faced but also the innovative strategies and best practices that can be adopted to enhance educational outcomes. Through its findings, this study hopes to inform both policy and practice in Islamic educational institutions, ensuring that they continue to serve as beacons of moral and intellectual development for future generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach, which is widely used to understand complex phenomena in natural settings and to explore the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This method was chosen to facilitate a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the leadership practices of the school principal in enhancing teacher professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor. According to Pugu (2024), qualitative research is particularly suitable when the research objective is to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. In this case, the focus is on how the principal's leadership is manifested in day-to-day management practices and how it impacts teacher development and professionalism.

The setting of the research is SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor, a well-established Islamic integrated junior high school that combines general education with Islamic values and moral character development. The school serves as a unique research context due to its integrated curriculum, religious orientation, and emphasis on holistic student and teacher development. The principal, as the instructional and administrative leader, plays a critical role in shaping the professional climate of the school. The study aimed to understand the extent and nature of the principal's influence through leadership strategies and initiatives that support teacher growth.

Participants in this study were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience. These included the school principal, selected teachers from various subject areas, and administrative staff. As Priadana (2021) emphasized, purposive sampling allows researchers to choose participants who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. In this context, each informant provided essential perspectives regarding the internal management of the school, professional development programs, and the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in Islamic schools.

Data collection methods used in this study comprised semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with the principal and several teachers to gain insights into leadership practices, the implementation of training programs, and perceptions of professional growth. Observations were carried out during meetings and school activities to witness leadership interactions and teacher responses in real time. According to Santos (2020), combining multiple data collection methods allows for triangulation, which increases the credibility and validity of the findings. Furthermore, institutional documents such as school training agendas, performance evaluation reports, and professional development plans were reviewed to supplement and contextualize the interview and observation data.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study applied several strategies, including member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. These techniques are considered standard procedures in qualitative research to enhance trustworthiness (Adler, 2022). The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving coding the data, identifying patterns, and interpreting the themes that emerged in relation to the research questions. The themes focused on leadership strategies, teacher perceptions, institutional support, and the effectiveness of professional development initiatives.

This qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich, descriptive data that captured the lived experiences of teachers and administrators in an Islamic educational context. It also facilitated the exploration of how leadership and professionalism intersect to influence educational outcomes and institutional culture.

RESEARCH RESULT

1. The Role of the Principal in the Development of Teacher Professionalism

The principal holds a highly strategic role in fostering teacher professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor. As the primary leader within the school environment, the principal is responsible for providing full support to teachers in fulfilling their professional duties. This support extends beyond administrative guidance and includes empowering teachers through training, supervision, and continuous mentoring. This was reflected in the informants' statements:

"The principal supports the development of teacher professionalism by routinely organizing learning groups through dissemination methods." (Tri Rizki Afriani, S. Pd, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

"Very supportive of teachers in their teaching professionalism, especially by creating training agendas such as kombel." (Hermia, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"My assessment of the principal's role in supporting the development of my professionalism as a teacher is quite good, as there is always space available for me to grow professionally." (Dewi Riesdiana Ningrum, S.Pd, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

Through this approach, the principal ensures that teachers have opportunities to enhance their competencies across various domains, including pedagogical skills, curriculum comprehension, and the integration of technology in the classroom. This aligns with previous research findings that demonstrate a positive impact of leadership on teacher professionalism, teaching and learning processes, and student performance (García-Martínez, 2018).

Additionally, the principal acts as a mentor and motivator for teachers, cultivating harmonious and supportive relationships within the workplace. In this capacity, the principal actively encourages the establishment of a collaborative school culture. Teachers are provided the space to engage in discussions, share ideas, and collaborate in developing innovative teaching strategies. As stated by the informants:

"The principal acts as a mentor for the teachers." (Encum, 2 November 2024, 7:57:27 PM)

"The principal's role is undoubtedly crucial in creating a collaborative environment among teachers. The principal inspires teachers to develop their professional competencies, offers opportunities for participation in professional development activities, fosters interpersonal

relationships, and facilitates ongoing professional growth." (Dewi Riesdiana Ningrum, S.Pd, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

"I am given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes related to professional development at school, especially during monthly meetings." (Windi Kartika, S. Pd, 11 November 2024, 12:15:31 PM)

"We, the teachers, are involved in decision-making regarding teacher professionalism development at the school." (Iis Sri Kusminah, S. Pd, 2 November 2024, 7:49:48 PM)

Through a participative leadership approach, the principal not only administratively leads but also serves as a role model in fostering teamwork and dedication to enhancing educational quality. This collaborative environment provides a strong foundation for teachers to continuously grow professionally and contribute their best in educating students.

2. Factors Affecting the Development of Teacher Professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor

a. Teacher Training and Development

SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor demonstrates a strong commitment to the development of teacher professionalism as a foundational pillar in realizing an excellent and Islamic educational vision. One of the primary approaches involves systematically designed internal training programs that cater to the specific needs of educators. Programs such as learning communities (kombel) serve as effective platforms for teachers to exchange best practices, engage in discussions, and evaluate teaching methods.

Moreover, the utilization of platforms such as the "Program Merdeka Mengajar" (PMM) further strengthens the pedagogical and academic competencies of teachers by providing easy access to various technology-based learning resources that support the Merdeka Curriculum. This is supported by informant statements, such as:

"Frequently, and the school always supports teachers when conducting training or workshops." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

"Yes, for example, in-depth self-training through PMM during each kombel session. Every week teachers can learn something new and implement it in teaching or daily behavior." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"Sometimes it's difficult to attend seminars or events outside because they often clash with teaching responsibilities." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

In addition to internal training, the school also offers opportunities for teachers to participate in external training, such as seminars, workshops, and educational conferences. These opportunities are intended to broaden teachers' perspectives by introducing them to new insights from outside the institution, enabling them to adapt and implement the latest innovations in teaching and learning processes. Participation in such external training not only opens up avenues for collaboration with the broader educational community but also enhances teachers' motivation to pursue professional excellence.

The effectiveness of training is a core concern in the teacher development programs at SMP IT Ar-Risalah. As such, the school regularly evaluates training outcomes, considering the relevance of the content, its classroom application, and its impact on the quality of learning. As some teachers have expressed:

"Very effective. Perhaps what needs to be improved is sourcing speakers from external parties so we can gain new understandings and ideas from outside the school." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"The self-training conducted at school is sufficient. What's left is attending or joining external trainings to gain new knowledge." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:49:48 PM)

"The effectiveness of the teacher training programs has been quite good, but some programs need to be scheduled regularly to develop teachers' skills, such as in-house training, technical

guidance, and participation in subject teacher working groups (MGMP)." (W4, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

Based on these evaluations, areas for improvement are often directed at expanding the use of broader external resources, such as training that involves practitioners, academics, or both national and international educational institutions. This approach ensures that training is not only theoretically beneficial but also practical, sustainable, and aligned with the dynamics of modern education.

b. Challenges in Professional Development

The professional development of teachers often encounters challenges, one of the most prominent being time constraints. As educators, teachers are responsible not only for classroom instruction but also for various additional tasks such as administrative duties, student guidance, and extracurricular activities. These responsibilities frequently consume the time that could otherwise be allocated for self-development, such as attending training, reading up-to-date literature, or collaborating with peers on instructional strategies. The heavy workload can hinder teachers from focusing on enhancing their professional quality, both in terms of pedagogy and subject matter mastery.

"Teachers are not only busy with their primary teaching tasks but also with other responsibilities." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

"In terms of time, teachers are not only busy with their primary teaching tasks but also other duties that must be completed. However, the school provides special opportunities every weekend or every month for us to learn and participate in self-directed training through online or offline seminars." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"The issue of time — with dissemination or learning communities, we can increase our knowledge by listening to material from fellow teachers who have attended workshops." (W3, 2 November 2024, 10:25:30 PM)

To address this challenge, SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor has taken proactive steps by designing special training schedules held on weekends. These programs are structured to avoid interfering with the teachers' daily teaching routines.

"The school provides special opportunities every weekend or every month." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

"The biggest challenge is the time, and the school facilitates this through learning communities." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:57:27 PM)

With a more flexible schedule, weekend training sessions offer teachers the chance to enhance their competencies without being overwhelmed by their daily responsibilities. These training programs cover various aspects of professional development, such as the use of technology in teaching, student-centered teaching strategies, and effective evaluation methods.

"The biggest challenge I face is how to choose and use the right method so that learning is optimal. Discussions with subject area colleagues serve as an alternative." (W4, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

"The main challenge I face is choosing the appropriate method when facing students in class to ensure that learning is always optimal." (W4, 11 November 2024, 12:15:31 PM)

This initiative not only enhances teaching quality but also encourages teachers to remain motivated in learning and professional growth despite their demanding schedules. This approach reflects the school's commitment to creating a supportive environment for professional development

c. Collaboration and Positive School Culture

In establishing an effective and harmonious educational environment, **collaboration and a positive school culture** play a vital role. At SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor, the principal actively functions as a facilitator in fostering close cooperation among teachers.

"There are many opportunities provided. The principal is very open and responsive to teachers' decisions and actions related to professional development." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"I have been given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes related to professional development at school, as there is a discussion space available during monthly meetings." (W4, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

"We, the teachers, are involved in decision-making regarding professional development at school, such as in the implementation of learning groups." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

Through this **participatory leadership** model, the principal provides spaces and opportunities for teachers to share ideas, experiences, and teaching strategies through discussion forums, workshops, and collaborative learning groups. This facilitation not only improves teachers' professional skills but also strengthens interpersonal relationships among staff members, fostering mutual respect and a solid teamwork culture.

Moreover, **open communication** serves as a crucial foundation for cultivating a positive working atmosphere. The principal encourages honest, transparent, and two-way communication practices, where teachers feel valued for their contributions and are given the platform to express their ideas and constructive criticism. Regular meetings and informal dialogue sessions are often organized to ensure that each teacher feels heard and involved in the decision-making process.

"It is substantial because a positive work culture starts with the principal, who sets an example for peers. The principal can build a conducive working climate, thus enabling harmonious relationships among teachers." (W4, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

"Building good relationships through open communication and collaboration among teachers." (W4, 2 November 2024, 7:58:45 PM)

"The principal plays a strong and active role in creating a collaborative environment among teachers." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

"The principal plays a very active role by forming learning communities and facilitating communication among subject teachers." (W3, 2 November 2024, 10:25:30 PM)

A positive work culture is also reflected in a supportive work environment that encourages both personal and professional development for all staff. The principal strives to establish a comfortable atmosphere, free from excessive pressure, while maintaining a focus on achieving the highest standards of educational quality.

By fostering structured collaboration and open communication, SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor lays a solid foundation for continuous professional development among its teachers. This culture not only enhances teacher motivation and engagement but also contributes to the creation of an **inspiring learning environment** for students.

d. The Influence of Leadership on Teaching and Learning

The leadership of the school principal plays a **strategic role** in determining the direction and quality of learning at school. An effective principal can positively influence teaching practices by cultivating an environment that supports innovation and the integration of modern technology. The principal's encouragement of **innovative teaching approaches** is a key factor in navigating the challenges of education in the digital era.

"Yes, the principal always encourages teachers to be active, creative, and innovative in the classroom learning process." (W4, 2 November 2024, 8:49:48 PM)

"The principal has been quite supportive in terms of teaching innovation and the use of technology in the classroom." (W4, 12 November 2024, 9:47:19 PM)

"Yes, the principal offers guidance to try out innovative approaches." (W4, 2 November 2024, 10:25:59 PM)

"The principal has been quite supportive in terms of teaching innovation and the use of technology in the classroom." (W4, 11 November 2024, 12:15:31 PM)

A visionary principal does not merely advocate for the integration of technology in the classroom but also ensures that teachers have access to adequate training and resources. Through workshops, seminars, or other capacity-building programs, the principal facilitates teachers' ability to **effectively integrate technology** in teaching and learning. For instance, utilizing Learning

Management Systems (LMS) for digital classroom management or technology-based applications for collaborative learning. This support significantly enhances students' abilities to engage with content in a more interactive and meaningful way.

"Certainly. As Vice Principal of Curriculum, my main responsibility is to ensure that the curriculum implemented at this school aligns with national education policies as well as the school's vision and mission. We also strive to adapt the curriculum to the needs and developments of the times, for instance, by incorporating technology into teaching and updating instructional content to remain relevant to students' needs." (W3, Vice Principal for Curriculum, 1 November 2024, 11:35:27 AM)

"Teachers are encouraged to understand and adapt to every curriculum change, one of which is through the PMM learning group." (W4, Teacher, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

In addition, the principal's leadership plays a pivotal role in responding to shifts in educational policy, such as the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. While the curriculum offers flexibility for schools and teachers to tailor learning to student needs, its successful implementation demands **resilient and adaptive leadership**. The principal must adopt strategies such as identifying teacher training needs related to the Merdeka Curriculum, supporting the development of contextual learning modules, and conducting regular evaluations of the curriculum's implementation.

A collaborative approach, in which the principal involves teachers and other stakeholders in the planning and execution of new policies, can strengthen shared commitment toward achieving educational goals.

"Of course, the leadership of the principal is highly influential. The principal here strongly supports the development of teacher professionalism by providing various training opportunities and giving constructive feedback. The principal also consistently reminds us, the vice principals, to always encourage teachers to grow. Without full support from the principal, I believe it would be much harder to foster teacher professionalism." (W3, Vice Principal for Curriculum, 1 November 2024, 11:35:27 AM)

"The principal plays a major role in building a positive work culture in the school. The principal often organizes activities outside of regular lessons with teachers, which fosters a sense of family." (W4, Teacher, 2 November 2024, 8:25:03 PM)

Hence, the principal acts not only as a **driver of change** but also as a motivator and facilitator who ensures that the entire school community is prepared to navigate the dynamic nature of educational policy. Strong leadership directly contributes to **effective learning** and the overall improvement of educational quality.

3. Data Interpretation

Principal's Leadership Management in Developing Teacher Professionalism

This research has presented data regarding **leadership management in enhancing teacher professionalism** at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor. The researcher begins by discussing the nature of school leadership in relation to the development of teacher professionalism. Based on data obtained from informants' responses concerning the principal's role in supporting teacher professionalism, several important insights were identified regarding the principal's leadership management at the institution:

According to interview findings concerning leadership support, the informants indicated that the principal plays a **highly significant role** in the development of teacher professionalism. Several teachers mentioned that the principal actively participates in the organization of professional development programs, including in-house training, group discussions, and mentoring schemes. This demonstrates the principal's commitment to improving teacher competencies through systematic and continuous activities.

Most teachers agreed that the principal is actively involved in providing relevant training programs that cater to their instructional needs. These programs frequently include subject-based workshops, collaborative training groups, and external training opportunities aimed at enhancing

teaching skills. Teachers appreciated the variety and relevance of these programs, which were tailored to support their career development objectives.

Moreover, many teachers emphasized that the principal's **open and cooperative leadership style** plays a crucial role in establishing a school culture that promotes professionalism. The principal not only emphasizes improving teaching capabilities but also encourages **effective teamwork among teachers**. This collaborative climate positively affects teachers' motivation to continually develop themselves professionally.

The findings suggest that the principal's **management style** aligns with transformational leadership principles, focusing on motivation, support, and empowerment, which are crucial in creating a professional and innovative teaching environment. These leadership practices contribute significantly to fostering a school culture where teachers are motivated to adopt lifelong learning habits and pedagogical innovation.

4. Factors Influencing the Development of Teacher Professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor

The researcher identified several **factors** influencing the development of teacher professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor, including:

a. Time Constraints Due to Additional Workload

Teachers often face challenges in managing their time due to responsibilities beyond teaching. The additional administrative workload, student guidance tasks, and extracurricular obligations significantly reduce the time available for professional development. As a result, teachers find it difficult to focus on improving their competencies, both in pedagogical strategies and subject mastery.

The interviews revealed that while teachers are eager to engage in development opportunities, their schedules are often fully occupied with school obligations. This limitation makes it challenging to allocate sufficient time for attending training sessions, reading new educational materials, or collaborating with peers.

b. Availability and Relevance of Programs

One of the most frequently mentioned factors by teachers was the **availability of training and development programs** that match their specific needs. Many teachers expressed that the professional development activities organized by the school were highly beneficial in improving their teaching competencies. The content of these programs was considered highly relevant to their teaching practices, encompassing subject-matter expertise and pedagogical skillsets.

Furthermore, the alignment of training programs with real-world classroom challenges and curriculum changes, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, was cited as a critical success factor. Programs that allow for practical application and contextual relevance are particularly valued by teachers.

c. The Role of Principal Leadership

As a **central influencing factor**, the principal's leadership has a significant impact on teacher professionalism. Informants noted that the principal provides not only moral support but also tangible opportunities and resources for participating in high-quality training. Additionally, the principal offers constructive feedback and formal recognition of teacher achievements, which strengthens their motivation for ongoing professional growth.

This proactive support structure contributes to a conducive learning environment where teachers are empowered to innovate and refine their instructional practices.

d. Teacher Collaboration

Collaboration among teachers emerged as another key factor affecting professional development. Teachers highlighted the importance of working together and sharing teaching strategies and experiences with their peers. Activities such as group discussions, peer evaluations, and collaborative projects were identified as effective methods for enhancing professional competence.

The school encourages a **collaborative culture**, where teachers are not only allowed but also encouraged to work together to address classroom challenges, exchange feedback, and support one another's development.

e. Mentoring and Peer-Tutoring Programs

Programs involving **mentorship and peer-tutoring systems** were also considered important in the professional development process. Experienced teachers often provide guidance to less experienced colleagues, offering practical support for instructional difficulties. These mentoring relationships create a structured and supportive development path for novice teachers.

Such programs are appreciated for their sustainable and practical focus, enabling professional growth in a non-threatening, collegial environment.

f. Financial Constraints

Financial limitations were identified as a significant barrier, particularly in attending **external training** sessions, such as offline seminars or national conferences. While the school supports internal programs, budget constraints often prevent broader access to national or international capacity-building opportunities.

This financial barrier restricts teachers' exposure to broader educational innovations and prevents them from engaging with external professional networks.

g. School Culture and Work Environment

Lastly, the **school's culture and working environment** were recognized as crucial in fostering professional growth. A positive, collaborative, and respectful workplace—championed by the principal—was seen as a major enabler of teacher development. Teachers reported that an open environment, which prioritizes communication and mutual support, contributes greatly to their willingness and ability to grow professionally.

The creation of a learning-centered environment, free from excessive pressure but high in collegiality and shared responsibility, underpins the school's success in building a strong foundation for sustainable teacher professionalism.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have highlighted the central role of the school principal's leadership management in fostering the professionalism of teachers at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor. It is evident that effective leadership practices are instrumental in creating a conducive environment for continuous professional growth among educators. The discussion below synthesizes the empirical findings with relevant theoretical frameworks, offering an interpretive analysis of how leadership management shapes teacher professionalism within an integrated Islamic school context.

The research indicates that the principal's leadership at SMP IT Ar-Risalah is not merely administrative but transformational in nature. The principal acts as a motivator, mentor, and role model who prioritizes teacher development through consistent initiatives such as in-house training, collaborative learning forums, and mentoring systems. This reflects the characteristics of transformational leadership, which, according to Bass and Avolio (1994), includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The principal's active facilitation of professional learning communities (*kombel*) exemplifies these dimensions and aligns with previous research suggesting that such leadership positively correlates with improved teacher commitment and instructional quality (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Moreover, the participatory style adopted by the principal, where teachers are included in decision-making processes related to professional development, promotes a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility. This inclusive approach fosters ownership, engagement, and empowerment among teachers—key elements that underpin professional learning. The research supports Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, wherein learning is seen as a socially mediated process. Teachers at Ar-Risalah benefit from the exchange of pedagogical strategies and mutual feedback, thus reinforcing the social dimension of professional growth.

In line with Fullan's (2001) educational change theory, which emphasizes the role of school leaders in facilitating learning cultures and organizational improvement, the leadership at Ar-Risalah actively supports innovation in teaching. Teachers are encouraged to integrate technology and adopt student-centered methods. The use of platforms such as the "Program Merdeka Mengajar" (PMM) signifies the principal's forward-looking stance in adapting to the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum and digital education. These efforts demonstrate the principal's capacity to act as an agent of change, helping teachers navigate the complexities of curriculum reform and pedagogical modernization.

However, the development of teacher professionalism is not without its challenges. The research findings underline structural barriers such as limited time due to administrative and extracurricular responsibilities, and financial constraints that hinder participation in external training. These constraints are consistent with the literature on teacher workload and burnout, which suggest that overburdened teachers are less likely to engage in sustained professional development (Day & Sachs, 2004). The principal's solution to schedule professional development activities on weekends or after school hours reflects a pragmatic leadership approach that balances institutional constraints with developmental goals.

Another critical insight from the research is the importance of contextual relevance and flexibility in professional development programs. Teachers reported greater satisfaction with initiatives that were aligned with their immediate instructional needs and classroom realities. This supports the principle of context-responsive leadership, where leaders tailor strategies to the specific needs of their institution and staff (Spillane et al., 2001). The positive perception of internal mentoring and peer-learning activities further highlights the value of situated learning, as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), where knowledge is co-constructed within a community of practice.

Furthermore, the presence of a supportive and collegial work environment was frequently mentioned as a factor that enhances teacher motivation and morale. A school culture characterized by mutual respect, open communication, and trust between teachers and the principal reinforces professional identity and commitment. This finding resonates with Schein's (2010) theory of organizational culture, which posits that leadership is crucial in embedding and transmitting cultural values that sustain organizational performance.

The results also shed light on the dual-role teachers play within Islamic educational settings—not only as educators but also as moral and spiritual guides. Hence, the professionalism expected from teachers at Ar-Risalah encompasses not only pedagogical and subject expertise but also moral integrity and spiritual leadership. This holistic notion of professionalism, rooted in Islamic values, reflects the integration of religious ethos with educational practice, which is unique to the Islamic school context. It suggests that leadership in such schools must address both the technical and spiritual dimensions of teacher development.

In conclusion, this discussion affirms that leadership management significantly impacts the development of teacher professionalism at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor. The principal's strategic, inclusive, and responsive leadership practices create a robust foundation for professional learning. Simultaneously, contextual challenges necessitate adaptive and innovative leadership solutions. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and ethical conduct, school leadership not only enhances teacher professionalism but also contributes to the broader mission of delivering high-quality Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the leadership management practices of the principal at SMP Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Bogor and their influence on the development of teacher professionalism. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research revealed that the principal's leadership plays a crucial role in shaping a professional and collaborative teaching culture within the school. It was found that the principal actively engages in and facilitates various professional development

initiatives such as in-house training, mentoring programs, and structured group discussions that directly support teachers' pedagogical and professional growth.

The findings underscore the application of transformational leadership principles, whereby the principal inspires and empowers teachers through vision-building, supportive engagement, and individualized consideration. By promoting a collaborative environment and involving teachers in school decision-making, the principal fosters ownership, motivation, and a sense of belonging that are essential for sustained professional development.

Despite these positive practices, the study also identified several challenges affecting teacher professionalism. Chief among them are time constraints due to additional responsibilities, limited financial resources, and the occasional mismatch between professional development programs and actual teacher needs. These obstacles illustrate the complexities school leaders must navigate in order to balance operational demands with developmental aspirations.

Furthermore, the study found that teacher professionalism in this integrated Islamic school context includes not only pedagogical competence but also moral and religious integrity. Teachers are expected to embody and impart Islamic values alongside academic content, which adds a spiritual dimension to their professional identity. Hence, leadership in such schools must be contextually sensitive and holistic, integrating educational goals with the school's religious mission.

Overall, it can be concluded that the success of teacher professionalism initiatives at SMP IT Ar-Risalah is largely contingent upon the quality of school leadership. The principal's ability to create a vision-driven, inclusive, and supportive professional culture is critical in enhancing teacher capabilities and achieving educational excellence.

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