



Improving the Quality of Madrasa Teachers through the Role of the Madrasa Education Service Section at the Ministry of Religion of Muara Enim Regency

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ABSTRACT

Ministry of Religion through the roles of madrasa education services has tried to provide services and guidance to its human resources. This is qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. Researcher focused on strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, as well as the evaluation of improving the quality of madrasa teachers at the Ministry of Religion in Muara Enim Regency in 2022. Data collection technique used observation, interviews, and documentation. It was then continued with data validity by means of triangulation technique. Once the data were collected, data analysis technique was carried out by going through three stages: data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusion. In this thesis research, four informants were involved, including one informant as the head of the madrasa education division and other three from teacher representatives in different madrasah. The results showed that: 1) the strategy of improving the quality of madrasa teachers through the roles of the madrasa education division at the Ministry of Religion of Muara Enim Regency was through training programs and workshops; 2) supporting factors included the participation of teachers in adequate coaching, getting a wider range of information, the existence of MGMP (Subject Teacher Consultations), obtaining books relevant to the lesson, and ability to improve the learning process; and 3) the evaluation system in improving the quality of madrasa teachers through the role of the madrasa education division at the Ministry of Religion of Muara Enim Regency was conducted in various ways.

Keywords

human resources; Madrasa Education Service Section; madrasa teachers; Ministry of Religion of Muara Enim Regency

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INTRODUCTION

In the ever-advancing contemporary landscape, competition among offices and institutions has intensified significantly. To thrive in this environment, high-quality human resources are an absolute necessity. Human Resources (HR) constitute a pivotal element of development across all aspects of life. The progress of any organization or institution hinges on the caliber of its HR. Likewise, a nation determines its trajectory based on the talents it possesses. Consequently, the importance of having capable, progressive, and high-quality HR cannot be overstated. When it comes to advancing educational institutions, an essential prerequisite is the presence of HR who are well-versed in the field of education. In the context of Indonesia, particularly in the endeavor to enlighten and elevate the nation, it is imperative to have proficient HR (in this case, educators) who are both competent and of high quality. This is especially crucial as these educators are entrusted with the task of teaching and nurturing the future generations of the nation ([Rahman, 2022](#); [Sidik, 2016](#); [Sulastrı et al., 2020](#)).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, formerly known as the Department of Religion (Departemen Agama abbreviated Depag in Bahasa Indonesia), is a government ministry responsible for managing religious affairs ([Chairiyah, 2021](#); [Drajat, 2018](#); [Saputra, 2021](#)). Of course, every institution or ministry possesses its own objectives, systems, and functions tailored to achieve those objectives. Within the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency, there is a specific organizational structure that encompasses units such as the administrative department, madrasah education section, Islamic religious education and affairs section, Hajj and Umrah organization section, Islamic religious affairs and Sharia guidance section, Islamic religious information, zakat, and endowment section, Christian community guidance, and Catholic community guidance. One of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in a city or regency is the development of madrasah education ([Basuki, 2022](#); [Naraspati, 2022](#)). In the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency, the madrasah education section holds the responsibility of providing guidance, counseling, and management of the information system in accordance with the technical policies set by the Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The emergence of madrasahs directly supervised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs provides a novel solution for parents seeking to enrol their children in schools deeply rooted in strong Islamic principles. These madrasahs play a vital role in disseminating Islamic knowledge throughout Indonesian society. As educational institutions dedicated to the transmission of Islamic teachings, values, religion, and knowledge, madrasahs face significant challenges, particularly in the era of globalization. Every facet of madrasah education must adapt to the changing times, including aspects like educators, curriculum, students, teaching quality, and the madrasah institution itself. The educational institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs include Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, and Madrasah Aliyah ([Alawiyah, 2014](#); [Budi, 2020](#); [Mukhlasin, 2021](#)).

In its endeavor to advance educational institutions, particularly those under the purview of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry makes concerted efforts to provide the best possible services and guidance to its Human Resources (HR), with a special emphasis on madrasah educators. Training, in theory, serves as a subsystem to ensure that human resources (HR) are not rendered obsolete. The central Ministry of Religious Affairs, in conjunction with provincial branches, conducts training programs aimed at enhancing the quality of teachers. This is especially crucial as they face the challenges presented by the 4.0 industrial revolution, where most tasks and information sharing are conducted online. Such a training program was organized at the end of 2019, which saw the Ministry of Religious Affairs trained national instructor teachers. A total of 50 teachers from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) participated in the program, with the goal of elevating the quality of educators. Of these, 40 were from South Sumatra, and the remainder from Jakarta. These educators received guidance to become Trainers of Training for Sustainable Professional Development (*Trainer of Training Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan* abbreviated TOT PKB in Bahasa Indonesia) (A. Rahardi, personal communication, 6 April 2022).

According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency, the number of civil servant madrasah teachers has consistently increased from year to year. As of December 2021, there were 95 civil servant madrasah teachers distributed across various regions in the Muara Enim Regency. In terms of civil servant educators from the madrasahs included in this study, 29 were from MIN 1 Muara Enim, 32 from MTsN 1 Muara Enim, and 33 from MAN 1 Muara Enim (D. Muchtar, personal communication, 6 April 2022).

The rationale for conducting this research in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency is rooted in the significant role played by the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the district and provincial levels. This role revolves around religious affairs and religiosity, with a mandate to promote madrasahs and education in each of its subordinate regions. Examining the research site, the madrasahs under the aegis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency have exhibited excellent academic achievements. Nevertheless, the researcher has noted a certain disparity between expectations and realities. Data collected from a senior teacher at MIN 1 Muara Enim indicated that the supervisory personnel from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency have shown less focus on the development of madrasah educators teaching Islamic religious education (PAI) compared to those teaching general subjects. This curiosity has prompted the researcher to delve into understanding the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency in overseeing and nurturing educators, particularly madrasah teachers, from a distinctive perspective at the MIN, MTsN, and MAN levels.

Given the circumstances, the research is delimited in its title to maintain focus on the head of the madrasah education section and representatives from madrasahs at different educational tiers, namely: Madrasah Aliyah Negeri, Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri, and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri. Considering the above elaboration, the research is aimed at investigating how Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of

Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency improve quality of madrasah teachers in 2022.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach. Qualitative methodology is descriptive and emphasizes in-depth analysis. It aims to comprehend phenomena based on the experiences of the research subjects through natural discussions and various natural methods. In this study, the researcher utilizes a phenomenological approach. There are several types of qualitative research within the phenomenological approach. First is social phenomenology, which focuses on the social actions and experiences of groups. Second is transcendental phenomenology, emphasizing the individual experiences of one person, and the third is hermeneutic phenomenology, where the researcher interprets text within the cultural, situational, and historical context in which the phenomenon occurs (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Freebody, 2003; Sherman & Webb, 2004).

This research is conducted in four locations: 1) The Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in the Muara Enim Regency, with the complete address: Jl. Jenderal Sudirman, Muara Enim, Kecamatan Muara Enim, Kabupaten Muara Enim, Sumatera Selatan, 31311. 2) MAN 1 Muara Enim, with the complete address: Jl. Ampera No 295, Muara Enim, Kelurahan Pasar 2, Kecamatan Muara Enim, Kabupaten Muara Enim, Sumatera Selatan. 3) MTsN 1 Muara Enim, with the complete address: Jl. Bambang Utoyo Nomor 32, Kelurahan Pasar 3, Kecamatan Muara Enim, Kabupaten Muara Enim, Sumatera Selatan. 4) MIN 1 Muara Enim, with the complete address: Jl. Bambang Utoyo Nomor 32, Kelurahan Pasar 3, Kecamatan Muara Enim, Kabupaten Muara Enim, Sumatera Selatan.

The technique for selecting informants involves identifying research subjects. The first informant is the key informant, individuals who possess essential information pertinent to the research. The second is additional informants, individuals used to provide information about the research background and conditions. They should have substantial experience related to the research context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Freebody, 2003; Sherman & Webb, 2004). In this study, the informants are as follows: 1) Mr. H. M. Farijal Akmal, S.Pd.I., MM, who serves as the Head of the Madrasah Education Section at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency (informant from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Muara Enim Regency). 2) Mr. Drs. Ahsanul Fikri, who teaches Islamic religious education (PAI) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Muara Enim (informant from MIN 1 Muara Enim). 3) Mrs. Semawati, S.Pd.I., who teaches fiqh at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Muara Enim (informant from MTsN 1 Muara Enim). 4) Mrs. Nurhayati, S.Pd.I., who teaches Al-Qur'an Hadith at Madrasah Negeri 1 Muara Enim (informant from MAN 1 Muara Enim).

To collect data, the researcher employs observation, interviews, and documentation. To ensure the data's authenticity, triangulation is used. In this study, the data analysis method is descriptive, using content analysis techniques. Analyzing qualitative data should be interactive and continuous, continuing until data

saturation is achieved. Following the modification of activities or steps in qualitative data analysis, the researcher undertakes three actions: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies for Improving the Quality of Madrasah Teachers

The research findings from several informants reveal that strategies for improving the quality of madrasah teachers through the role of the Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency involve providing guidance in the form of training and workshops to civil servant teachers (*pegawai negeri sipil* abbreviated PNS in Bahasa Indonesia) on a rotating basis, and these training programs are free of charge.

In the Madrasah Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency, training and workshops are strategies to strengthen the competence and professional competence in creating quality teachers. Various training programs organized by the Madrasah Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency, based on interviews with the head of the Madrasah Education Section, include curriculum development training, textbook compilation training, evaluation, and assessment training. Training and workshops are important and routine programs organized by the Madrasah Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency aimed at enhancing the quality of madrasah teachers, specifically their pedagogical and professional competence.

The implementation of training and workshops is a key strategy to enhance the quality of teachers, not only organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta or the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the South Sumatra region. The Madrasah Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Muara Enim Regency also plays a role in involving competent madrasah teachers in conducting training and workshops.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has the task of assisting the President in the implementation of the government in the religious sector. Thus, the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Muara Enim Regency is one of the working units of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the South Sumatra province, which performs its duties and functions based on the policies of the Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the South Sumatra province and relevant regulations. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 13 of 2012 regarding the Organization and Work Procedures of Vertical Institutions in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the position, main duties, and main functions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the province are as follows (Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Sumatera Selatan, 2016):

1. Position. The Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the province is a vertical institution of the Ministry of Religious Affairs under the direct authority of the Minister of Religious Affairs.

2. Main Duties. The Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the province has the duty to carry out the tasks and functions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs within the province, based on the policies of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the provisions of the laws and regulations.
3. Main Functions. In carrying out its duties, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the province performs the following functions:
 - a. Formulation and determination of the vision, mission, and technical policies in the field of religious life guidance to the community in the province.
 - b. Service, guidance, and counseling in the field of Hajj and Umrah.
 - c. Service, guidance, and coaching in the field of madrasah education, religious education, and religious matters.
 - d. Guidance for interfaith harmony.
 - e. Formulation of technical policies in the field of administrative and information management.
 - f. Coordination, planning, control, supervision, and evaluation of programs.
 - g. Implementation of relations with regional governments, relevant agencies, and community institutions in carrying out the duties of the ministry in the province.

Based on Government Regulation No. 101 of 2000 concerning Civil Servant Job Training, articles 2 and 3 state that job training is intended to ([Pemerintah Pusat Republik Indonesia, 2000](#)):

1. Improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be able to perform operational tasks based on the ethical personality of civil servants in accordance with the needs of the institution.
2. Create civil servants who can play a role as renewers and as unifying forces of the nation.
3. Strengthen the spirit and personality orientation towards caring, service, and community empowerment.
4. Create uniformity between the vision and dynamics of thinking in carrying out government tasks and development for good governance.

The importance of training and workshops as part of the Continuous Professional Development (*Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan* abbreviated PKB in Bahasa Indonesia) activities cannot be overstated. The information acquired through these training programs is highly beneficial not only for the personal development of

madrasah teachers but also for sharing knowledge with their peers. This underscores the significance of training and workshops for madrasah teachers (Apiyani et al., 2022; Haryati et al., 2021; Maiza & Nurhafizah, 2019; Rohmah, 2016; Wijiutami et al., 2020).

To achieve the highest possible enhancement in the quality of madrasah teachers, guidance is provided by both the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the individual madrasahs. Training and workshops, while similar in focus, differ in the number of participants and duration. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia provides training and workshops but limits the number of participants to a few representatives from each madrasah. Workshops typically have shorter durations compared to training programs. Importantly, these training and workshop programs are provided free of charge to the participants (Berdianti, 2020; Holiah, 2022; Oktaviani, 2022; Sumar & Sumar, 2019; Yuliah, 2021).

Supporting and Hindering Factors for Improving the Quality of Madrasah Teachers

In every process aimed at improving the quality of an institution, there are undoubtedly goals to be achieved. Supporting factors are necessary to identify elements that can assist in the effort to enhance the quality of madrasah teachers through the role of the Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency. Conversely, hindering factors are required to pinpoint aspects that may impede progress and serve as considerations for improvement in the endeavor to boost the quality of madrasah teachers through the role of the Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency.

Supporting factors for madrasah teachers attending professional development programs include adequate participation, access to broader information, involvement in the Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP), access to relevant teaching materials, and opportunities for instructional improvement. Supporting factors for professional development programs were also found in the results of previous research (Ansori, 2021; Desimarnis et al., 2021; Suryanto & Sutarum, 2022; Tuty, 2022; W. M. Wijaya, 2022). This shows that there is an opportunity to continue to improve the quality of the program. Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency can utilize the findings of this research and previous research to improve the quality of religious teachers.

Hindering factors for madrasah teachers attending professional development programs include internal factors related to the teachers themselves, the unequal access of teachers to training, and inadequate access to teaching aids and learning materials. Other studies have also shown various problems faced in professional development programs (Kastawi & Yuliejantiningasih, 2019; Khoirina & Gunansyah, 2018; Wahyudi et al., 2022; A. Wijaya & Sumarno, 2017; Wiji, 2022). This shows that there are problems that must be resolved so that the program being implemented can provide benefits according to the target. Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Muara Enim Regency can utilize the findings of this research and

previous research to overcome existing problems so that the program runs optimally and the quality of religious teachers can be improved.

Evaluation on Improving the Quality of Madrasah Teachers

The Ministry of Religious Affairs serves not only to improve educational institutions under its purview but also to enhance the quality of madrasah teachers. In order to improve the quality of an educational institution, whether it's a Raudhatul Athfal, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Madrasah Aliyah, or even a Higher Education institution, the Ministry of Religious Affairs provides guidance and training for educators to enhance their competencies according to their respective fields and talents. There is no effort to advance an educational institution under the Ministry of Religious Affairs without evaluation, as the quality of an educational institution also significantly influences the quality of its components, including its teachers (Asyari et al., 2020; Fattah, 2015; Hanun, 2018; Khoirina & Gunansyah, 2018; Sumartati, 2021). Speaking of evaluation means discussing the ultimate outcomes of the achievements aimed for by an institution.

Evaluation can be defined as to find out, decide the amount or value (Hornby, 2015) which means an effort to determine the worth or quantity of something. Evaluation can also be viewed as a process of determining the results achieved through various activities designed to support the attainment of a specific goal (Anderson, 2007). Furthermore, evaluation can also be considered as a process of seeking, describing, and providing information useful for decision-makers in order to determine alternative decisions (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). In summary, the researcher defines evaluation as an endeavor to assess the performance of a program or activity by gathering evidence relevant to the achievement of that program's goals. This evaluation relates to the ability to justify or assess a particular material or object. These assessments are based on self-determined criteria or established criteria.

There are some objectives of education and training (*Pendidikan dan Latihan* abbreviated *Diklat* in Bahasa Indonesia) as follows (Siregar, 2018; Sofyandi, 2008; Yasin et al., 2021):

1. Through education and training, the duration used by employees to acquire skills will be shorter, allowing them to quickly adapt to the tasks at hand.
2. Education and training aim to improve employee job performance when facing their tasks.
3. Education and training are expected to shape the attitudes and behaviors of employees in their work. It emphasizes increasing employee participation, cooperation among employees, and loyalty to the organization.
4. Education and training help resolve day-to-day operational issues in the organization, such as reducing workplace accidents, decreasing absenteeism, lowering labor turnover, and more.

Based on Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 10, Paragraph 1 states that teacher competencies encompass: pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence acquired through professional education. The quality standard for a teacher or instructor is someone who has the necessary educational qualifications for teaching and possesses competence in their respective fields. In this context, madrasah teachers are not limited to merely delivering subject matter or course materials but are also expected to include Islamic aspects in the curriculum, integrate subjects with Islam, and instill good moral values in their students. Therefore, evaluation is required to enhance teacher quality and achieve the four competency criteria for teachers: pedagogical competence, social competence, personality competence, and professional competence (Andina, 2019; Mulyani, 2017; Nur & Fatonah, 2022; Sunhaji, 2018).

The results of this study show that teacher development in madrasah involves various types of evaluation. This includes evaluations managed by the madrasah head and madrasah supervisors. The evaluation system is designed to aid self-improvement, broaden knowledge, and assist teachers during the teaching process. It provides instructional aids for teaching and evaluates the use of teaching materials, which enables madrasah teachers to utilize available resources effectively. Post-training evaluations aim to ensure that all teachers become high-quality and competent educators. Evaluations by supervisors are analyzed, and any problematic areas are addressed through training and subsequent evaluations. In cases where post-training performance remains subpar, continuous improvement measures are necessary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings discussed in the previous chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn. The strategy for enhancing the quality of madrasah teachers through the role of the Education Section at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Muara Enim Regency in 2022 involves conducting training programs (diklat) and workshops for civil servant madrasah teachers in a rotating manner, with no cost to the participants. Supporting factors include sufficient participation of teachers in the training, access to extensive information, the presence of the Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP), access to relevant educational materials, and the ability to enhance the teaching process. Conversely, inhibiting factors consist of internal factors within teachers themselves, unequal access to training, and insufficient facilitation of teaching aids (educational media). The evaluation system incorporates various approaches. It is managed by the madrasah heads and madrasah supervisors. The evaluation process aims to foster self-improvement, enhance knowledge, and empower teachers throughout the teaching process. It provides instructional aids during teaching and evaluates the use of educational materials. This evaluation seeks to equip madrasah teachers to make effective use of available teaching media in the future.

This study has some limitations as follows: 1) generalizability: This study's concentration on a particular region, namely Muara Enim Regency, is one of its drawbacks. The results might not be completely transferable to other regions with varied educational environments, resource availability, or cultural characteristics; 2) data collection techniques: Although this study used a variety of data collection techniques, such as document analysis and interviewing, it's crucial to recognize that these techniques may have certain drawbacks. Interview responses may be biased, and document analysis depends on the reliability and accessibility of the documents; 3) sampling bias: The study's sample concentrated on a select group of important informants, including school administrators and teachers who had received specialized training. This might have an unbalanced selection and not accurately reflect the entire population of madrasah teachers; and 4) temporal restrictions: Because the study was completed in 2022, it is possible that the techniques and circumstances mentioned will change throughout time. Due to changes in legislation or the educational system, what works one year may not work the next.

Some suggestions for additional research can be formulated as follows: 1) Future studies can compare methods used in other nations or regions to raise the standard of teaching. Investigating the efficacy of various strategies in various situations may yield insightful results; 2) Studies over time: To overcome the study's temporal constraint, longitudinal research over a number of years could be used to evaluate the long-term effects of teacher quality enhancement techniques; 3) Teacher viewpoints: Although this study concentrated on administrative and programmatic elements, other research may examine instructors' viewpoints. A more complete understanding of their needs and experiences would give insight into how effective the techniques are; 4) Research the impact of resource allocation on the caliber of instruction provided in madrasahs. To find opportunities for improvement, evaluate the relationship between money, infrastructure, and teacher preparation.

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