

Supervisory-Driven Madrasah Development: Strengthening the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesian Madrasah Aliyah

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ABSTRACT. Educational supervision is commonly regarded as a major source of instructional improvement and institutional performance. However, it is largely administrative in many educational institutions and restricts its contribution to sustainable school development. The challenge is particularly acute in implementing Indonesia's *Merdeka Curriculum*, which demands adaptable leadership, collaborative professional learning, and continual organizational improvement. The purpose of this research is to examine the role of educational supervision as a strategic tool for sustainable madrasa development in the context of curriculum reform. We used a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of educational stakeholders at MA Al Fattahiyyah. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis with madrasa principals, vice principals, teachers, and educational professionals. The data were analyzed using an interactive model by Miles et al. The findings show that educational supervision occurs through three interconnected dimensions: collaborative professional supervision, reflective conversation, and internal quality assurance. All these elements contribute to enhancing teachers' professional competence, organizational learning, curricula implementation, and institutional quality. Based on these findings, this study proposes the Strategic Collaborative Educational Supervision (SCES) framework, which conceptualizes educational supervision as an integrated governance system that connects instructional leadership, collaborative professional learning, organizational learning, and adaptive curriculum governance. The study contributes to the literature of educational leadership and Islamic educational management by extending the traditional supervision from administrative evaluation to a strategic competence for sustainable institutional development. The proposed framework provides practical guidance for madrasa leaders, educational supervisors, and policymakers to improve the quality of education and facilitate the effective implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

Keywords: *Educational Supervision; Educational Strategic Leadership; Madrasah Development; Merdeka Curriculum*

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions worldwide are operating in an increasingly complex environment shaped by globalization, rapid technological advancement, educational policy reforms, and growing public demands for accountability and quality (Sahlberg, 2023). These transformations require schools not only to improve students' academic achievement but also to develop adaptive organizational capacities to respond to continuous change while maintaining institutional

sustainability (Kools et al., 2020; Zakwan et al., 2026). Consequently, strategic management has become an essential component of educational governance because it enables educational institutions to align organizational vision, leadership, curriculum implementation, resource management, and quality assurance with changing internal and external environments. Contemporary educational leadership research emphasizes that institutional success is no longer determined solely by the existence of strategic plans, but by an institution's ability to translate strategic intentions into sustainable organizational practices that continuously improve teaching, learning, and institutional performance (Bryson et al., 2010; Fullan, 2019; Hallinger, 2011).

Within Islamic educational institutions, strategic management has a broader meaning, as institutional effectiveness must be achieved while preserving Islamic educational values and organizational identity (Khofi et al., 2025; Yugo, 2025; Nurfathina et al., 2026). Madrasas are expected to integrate academic excellence with character education, spiritual development, and community engagement, requiring leadership practices that combine managerial competence with Islamic ethical principles such as *amanah* (accountability), *ihsan* (continuous improvement), *itqan* (professional excellence), *adl* (justice), and *shura* (participatory decision-making). These values function not merely as normative ideals but also as guiding principles that shape institutional governance, organizational culture, and quality assurance systems, thereby strengthening institutional commitment and sustainable educational development (Fitri et al., 2019; Yuliana et al., 2026). Consequently, strategic management in Islamic education should be understood as a continuous organizational process integrating leadership, professional development, quality assurance, and institutional learning within an ethical framework that supports long-term educational excellence.

A critical component of strategic educational management is educational supervision. Traditional supervision has generally been associated with administrative inspection and teacher evaluation, emphasizing compliance with institutional regulations and curriculum standards. However, contemporary scholarship has fundamentally redefined supervision as a collaborative and developmental process that supports instructional improvement, professional learning, and organizational capacity building rather than bureaucratic control (Hallinger, 2011). Effective supervision facilitates systematic classroom observation, constructive feedback, mentoring, reflective dialogue, and continuous professional development, enabling teachers to critically evaluate instructional practices, strengthen pedagogical competence, and improve student learning outcomes. Furthermore, supervision contributes to organizational learning by generating evidence that informs leadership decisions, curriculum refinement, and institutional quality assurance, thereby functioning as a strategic mechanism linking educational leadership with sustainable school improvement (Hargreaves & Michael, 2018; Kools & Stoll, 2016).

The strategic importance of educational supervision has become increasingly evident following the implementation of Indonesia's *Merdeka Curriculum*, which represents a major shift toward learner-centered education, differentiated instruction, authentic assessment, and competency-based learning. Unlike previous curriculum models emphasizing standardized instructional procedures, the *Merdeka Curriculum* grants teachers greater professional autonomy while simultaneously requiring higher levels of instructional competence, collaboration, and pedagogical innovation. Successful implementation, therefore, depends not only on curriculum policy but also on educational institutions' capacity to develop supportive organizational cultures, adaptive leadership, and continuous professional learning. Educational supervision consequently assumes a strategic role by assisting teachers in translating curriculum principles into effective classroom practices while ensuring that institutional development remains aligned with national educational objectives.

Recent empirical studies consistently demonstrate that educational supervision contributes positively to teacher competence, instructional quality, professional motivation, and student learning outcomes. Reflective supervision supported by instructional coaching enables teachers to improve

pedagogical decision-making, strengthen professional identity, and develop innovative instructional practices responsive to students' diverse learning needs (Sembiring & Mangando, 2026). Likewise, collaborative professional learning communities supported through supervision encourage educators to exchange knowledge, solve instructional problems collectively, and cultivate organizational learning that strengthens institutional resilience (Hargreaves & Michael, 2018; Kools & Stoll, 2016). Other studies have highlighted the importance of strategic leadership, organizational collaboration, and continuous mentoring in supporting curriculum implementation and institutional effectiveness during periods of educational transformation (Harris & Jones, 2022; Purwati et al., 2025). Collectively, these studies demonstrate that supervision contributes not only to improving classroom instruction but also to strengthening institutional capacity for continuous improvement.

Despite these advances, important gaps remain within the existing literature. *First*, most studies investigate strategic management, educational supervision, instructional leadership, and curriculum implementation as relatively independent domains rather than examining their interrelationships within a comprehensive institutional development framework. *Second*, research on the Merdeka Curriculum predominantly focuses on teacher readiness, instructional adaptation, and curriculum policy implementation, with comparatively limited attention to understanding how educational supervision functions as a strategic organizational mechanism supporting sustainable curriculum reform (Nasir, 2025; Qoiriyah & Mustofa, 2025). *Third*, empirical evidence from Islamic educational institutions remains relatively scarce, particularly regarding how educational supervision integrates strategic management, organizational learning, and Islamic educational values to support institutional transformation. Consequently, current scholarship provides only a partial understanding of the strategic role of supervision in fostering sustainable madrasa development.

These limitations indicate the need for a more integrated conceptual perspective that explains educational supervision as an organizational capability rather than merely an administrative function. Drawing upon strategic management theory (Bryson et al., 2010), instructional leadership theory (Hallinger, 2011), and organizational learning theory (Kools & Stoll, 2016), this study argues that educational supervision constitutes the strategic mechanism through which institutional vision, leadership practices, professional learning, curriculum implementation, and quality assurance become interconnected. Such an integrated perspective is particularly important within madrasas, where educational reform must simultaneously strengthen institutional quality while preserving Islamic educational values and organizational identity.

Against this background, MA Al Fattahiyyah provides an appropriate context for investigating how educational supervision contributes to sustainable madrasa development. As a *pesantren*-based Islamic educational institution implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum*, the madrasa has established collaborative supervisory practices involving school leaders, teachers, and other educational personnel to support continuous professional learning and institutional quality improvement. Examining participants' lived experiences within this setting offers valuable insights into how educational supervision is translated into everyday organizational practices that support curriculum implementation and institutional development.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how educational supervision functions as a strategic mechanism for madrasa development in the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Specifically, the study investigates how supervisory practices are organized, how collaborative and reflective supervision supports teachers' professional learning, and how educational supervision contributes to institutional quality improvement and sustainable organizational development. This study makes three principal contributions. *First*, it enriches the literature on educational leadership and Islamic educational management by integrating strategic management, instructional leadership, organizational learning, and educational supervision within a unified conceptual perspective. *Second*, it proposes the Strategic Collaborative Educational Supervision (SCES) framework, which conceptualizes supervision as an integrated governance system comprising strategic instructional leadership, collaborative professional learning, reflective organizational learning, internal quality

assurance, and adaptive curriculum governance. *Third*, the study offers practical guidance for madrasa leaders, educational supervisors, and policymakers seeking to strengthen curriculum implementation, institutional resilience, and educational quality through collaborative and sustainable supervisory practices. By positioning educational supervision as a strategic organizational capability rather than merely an administrative activity, this research contributes to advancing contemporary discussions on sustainable educational leadership and institutional transformation within Islamic educational settings.

METHOD

This study employed a phenomenological approach as a form of qualitative research that seeks to explore in depth individuals' explanations and understandings of their lived experiences (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022). The phenomenological approach aims to describe the shared meanings constructed by several individuals regarding their experiences related to a particular concept or phenomenon. In this study, the researcher investigated how participants experienced educational supervision practices and how they interpreted these experiences within the madrasa context. Accordingly, knowledge was understood as socially constructed through interaction and subjective meaning-making. Human consciousness and lived experience, therefore, constitute central elements within phenomenological inquiry (Qomar, 2022). Furthermore, Bogdan and Taylor (1992) argue that human behavior should be viewed as a product of the ways individuals interpret their social world. This perspective is consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research, particularly its emphasis on an *emic* approach, which seeks to understand social realities from the viewpoint of those who directly experience them.

In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument for both data collection and analysis. The researcher directly visited the research site to conduct in-depth interviews and participant observations. Therefore, the researcher's presence and role could not be delegated to others. The researcher's academic background in educational management, particularly in educational supervision and madrasa development, provided a substantial contextual understanding throughout the research process. To minimize potential bias, the researcher engaged in continuous reflexivity through reflective field notes and consciously avoided preconceived assumptions, remaining open to participants' lived experiences throughout the study. As noted by Faisal (2003), understanding social phenomena requires deep interpretation and experiential immersion.

The research was conducted at MA Al Fattahiyyah, located in Boyolangu, Tulungagung. This madrasa was selected because it has actively implemented the *Merdeka Curriculum* and possesses a structured supervision system, making it a relevant and information-rich setting for examining supervision-based madrasa development. Primary and secondary data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with several institutional stakeholders, including the madrasa principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and teachers. A semi-structured interview format was employed to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding educational supervision practices. Participants were selected using purposive and criterion sampling to ensure inclusion of individuals with direct experience in educational supervision.

The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) individuals directly involved in the implementation of supervision, including the madrasa principal, vice principal for curriculum affairs, and teachers; (2) participants with a minimum of one year of professional experience at the madrasa; and (3) individuals actively engaged in the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The exclusion criteria included: (1) administrative staff not involved in instructional or supervisory activities; and (2) teachers with less than one year of professional experience. A total of five participants were involved in this study: one madrasa principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, two teachers, and one educational staff member.

Participant observation was conducted to examine supervisory practices directly, followed by reflective discussions to understand interactions among supervisors, teachers, and educational personnel. The documents analyzed included supervision instruments, instructional planning documents, and madrasa activity reports, which served as supporting data sources. Data collection was continued until data saturation was achieved, indicated by the absence of new information and the recurrence of consistent thematic patterns.

Indications of data saturation emerged when the themes emerging from the interviews began to recur consistently across three principal aspects. *First*, supervision is a collaborative process involving the madrasa principal, teachers, and educational personnel. *Second*, reflective dialogue is a central practice following classroom observations and throughout the implementation of educational programs. *Third*, supervision is a mechanism for ensuring the quality of educational services. The consistency of these themes across multiple participants indicated that the data had reached saturation, thereby adequately representing the collective experiences regarding educational supervision practices at MA Al Fattahiyyah.

The collected data were subsequently analyzed using the analytical framework developed by Miles et al. (2014). The stages of data analysis consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Following the analysis, the validity and trustworthiness of the data were rigorously examined. The procedures for establishing trustworthiness included tests of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through prolonged field engagement, peer debriefing, persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, and the adequacy of relevant references on supervisory practices for madrasa development during the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Transferability was assessed through cumulative validity, which refers to the degree of similarity or consistency between this study's findings and those of other studies examining related topics (Qomar, 2022). Meanwhile, dependability and confirmability were established through reflective documentation and the involvement of an independent auditor, who reviewed the entire research process to ensure the study was conducted systematically and authentically within the field setting.

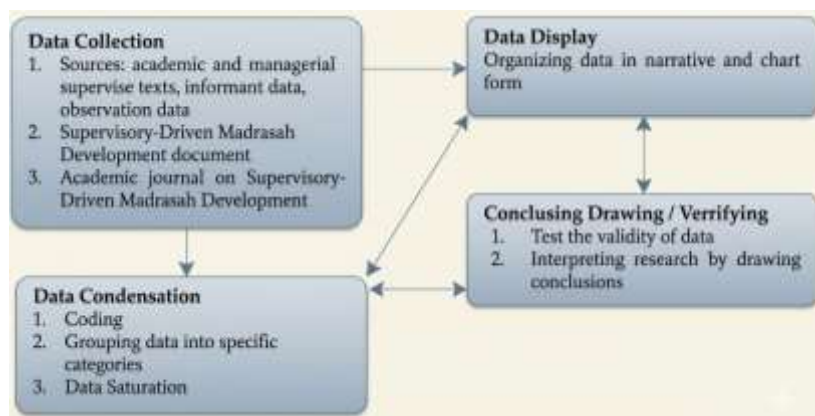


Figure 1: Data Analysis Process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Educational Supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah

Education may be understood as an integrated ecosystem designed to facilitate students' development of the competencies required to navigate personal, academic, and professional life. Within the context of implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum*, the improvement of student competencies is strongly influenced by teachers' roles as professional educators who continuously strive to enhance the quality of instruction, as well as by educational personnel who support

comprehensive management of educational programs. The optimization of the learning process, therefore, cannot be viewed solely as the individual responsibility of teachers; rather, it requires systematic institutional support through the role of the madrasa principal as an educational supervisor who guides and assists both teaching and administrative staff in developing their professional competencies. The continuous implementation of educational supervision significantly improves instructional quality and strengthens the overall quality of the madrasa institution.

In this section, the researcher presents the principal findings from interviews on supervision-based madrasa development, the processes the madrasa principal employs in conducting educational supervision, and the impact of supervision on quality improvement during the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The findings were obtained through interviews with five participants, including the madrasa principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, teachers, and educational personnel, as presented below.

Table 1: Educational Supervision for Madrasah Development

Resources	Position	Interview Results
Informant 1 (11)	Principal of Madrasa	Supervision is essential because it aims to ensure educational quality. It is intended to support the development and improvement of educational programs, including the quality of teaching and the enhancement of educators' and educational personnel's competencies.
Informant 2 (12)	Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs	We conduct supervision regularly. The principal carries out the supervision process, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, mentor teachers, and supervisors from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. My responsibility is to prepare the supervision schedule and determine which mentor teachers will be involved.
Informant 3 (13)	Teacher	Supervision is conducted through classroom visits using assessment instruments prepared by the supervision team. The supervision activities involve observing classroom learning processes and reviewing teachers' instructional documents and lesson plans.
Informant 4 (14)	Teacher	To improve the quality of transformative learning, the principal established a supervision team and subsequently followed up on its outcomes. Classroom supervision is conducted to observe whether teachers' instructional practices align with the predetermined supervision instruments.
Informant 5 (15)	Educational Personnel	Before the supervision process begins, we are informed about its procedures and expectations. We are also guided in preparing the required administrative documents and participating in workshops aimed at improving our professional competencies.

The madrasa principal serves as both an academic and managerial supervisor, maintaining a higher level of interaction with teachers and educational personnel than external supervisors, thereby occupying a strategic position in overseeing the implementation of educational supervision within the madrasa. Supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah is not conducted individually by the principal; rather, it is implemented collaboratively through the establishment of a supervision team to ensure that the supervisory process operates effectively and systematically. In addition to internal supervision, academic and managerial oversight is also carried out by supervisors from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, whose responsibilities include monitoring supervisory implementation, evaluating administrative completeness, and providing assistance and solutions to challenges encountered by the madrasa in supporting the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

As part of the madrasa development strategy based on educational supervision in supporting the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, the principal of MA Al Fattahiyyah, together with the vice principal for curriculum affairs, established a supervision team consisting of the principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and teachers with competencies in educational quality development. The formation of this supervision team was a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening the teacher development system through activities such as planning, monitoring, and

evaluating instruction, as well as supervising educational personnel involved in curriculum implementation. Supervisory planning included preparing supervision schedules, developing instruments in accordance with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's guidelines, and disseminating information on the objectives and essential principles of supervision. Supervision was implemented systematically through classroom observations and reflective discussions, emphasizing collaborative communication and a professional yet collegial atmosphere. Consequently, educational supervision functioned as a strategic instrument for improving human resource competencies and enhancing educational quality in accordance with the principles of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

The findings of this phenomenological study indicate that educational supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah extends beyond administrative monitoring and instead operates as a collaborative, reflective, and quality-oriented process of professional development. Based on a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, three major themes emerged that illustrate participants' experiences with the implementation of educational supervision within the madrasa.

Supervision as a Collaborative Professional Development Process

The first finding reveals that participants perceived supervision as a mechanism for professional human resource development through a collaborative approach. The madrasa principal did not conduct supervision independently but instead formed a supervision team involving the vice principal for curriculum affairs and mentor teachers. The principal explained that supervision was intended to assist educators and educational personnel in improving quality rather than merely evaluating performance: *"Supervision here is not intended to find faults. Instead, we aim to help every staff member identify how educational programs can be improved. That is why we formed a team, so the process becomes more objective and allows us to learn from one another"* (I1). Similarly, a mentor teacher described supervision as a space for sharing professional experiences: *"When participating in the supervision team, I do not feel that I am judging colleagues. Rather, we discuss how each educational program can become more effective. We also learn from other teachers' instructional methods and from good administrative management practices"* (I3).

These findings indicate that supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah has shifted from a control-oriented model toward a collaborative supervision approach grounded in a professional learning community. Participants' experiences demonstrate that involving multiple madrasa stakeholders fosters a collective learning culture that supports the continuous development of human resource competencies. The second finding illustrates that supervisory practices at MA Al Fattahiyyah are centered on reflective dialogue between educators, educational personnel, and supervisors following observation activities. Teachers reported that post-supervision discussions provided opportunities to reflect openly on instructional practices, while educational staff also reflected upon managerial practices and institutional management. One teacher explained: *"After supervision, we usually engage in discussion sessions. The principal or supervision team provides feedback and also listens to our experiences. Therefore, it feels more like a dialogue than an evaluation"* (I4). An educational staff member further stated: *"Sometimes we believe that our management practices are already effective, but after discussion we realize that there are still strategies that can be improved in order to enhance the quality of the madrasa"* (I5).

The reflective dialogue emerging from participants' experiences demonstrates that supervision serves as a professional learning practice. The collaborative reflection process helps participants develop awareness of their own professional growth while simultaneously improving academic and managerial strategies in context. The third finding indicates that supervision was understood as a strategic instrument for ensuring educational quality, particularly in relation to curriculum implementation within the madrasa. The vice principal for curriculum affairs explained that supervision helped maintain alignment between instructional planning and classroom practice, as well as between educational program planning and its implementation. As stated by the vice

principal, "Through supervision, we can observe whether the instructional tools prepared by teachers are genuinely implemented in the classroom. From there, we can evaluate and improve the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum within the madrasa" (I2). Educational personnel also perceived supervision as contributing to managerial quality improvement: "Supervision makes us better prepared to face challenges because we know that the process will be guided and discussed collaboratively. As a result, we become more mature in preparing each educational program" (I3). These findings suggest that supervision functions as an internal quality assurance mechanism that connects curriculum policy, pedagogical practices, and the quality of educational services within the madrasa.

Madrasa Development Based on Educational Supervision

Based on the integration of the three major themes identified in this study, participants' experiences indicate that educational supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah is understood as a process of professional development operating through three principal dimensions. *First*, professional collaboration among the madrasa principal, teachers, and educational personnel. *Second*, reflective dialogue is a medium for evaluating educational programs. *Third*, institutional quality assurance in the implementation of the curriculum. These three dimensions collectively shape a shared institutional experience that strengthens human resource capacity development and enhances the overall quality of education within the madrasa. The findings further demonstrate that educational supervision functions not merely as a technical or administrative activity, but as a strategic and transformative process that supports sustainable institutional improvement in the context of the *Merdeka Curriculum* implementation. The following section presents the conceptual thematic model derived from this study's findings.

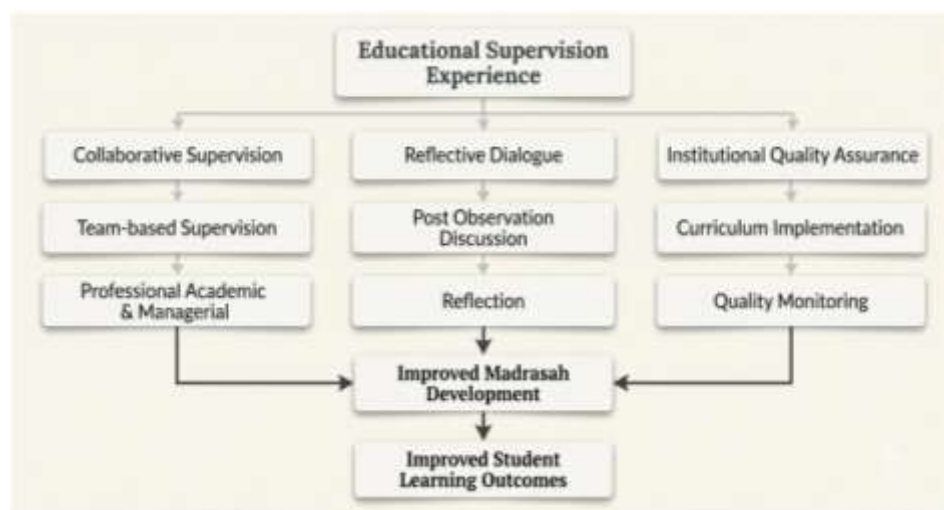


Figure 2: A Conceptual Model of Educational Supervision and Outcomes

The conceptual model derived from this study demonstrates that educational supervision functions as a comprehensive system for madrasa development through three interrelated mechanisms. *First*, professional collaboration in the implementation of supervision. *Second*, professional reflection through dialogic interaction among educators, educational personnel, and supervisors. *Third*, institutional quality assurance through the monitoring of curriculum implementation. These three mechanisms collectively improve instructional practices and enhance educational service quality within the madrasa. Participants at MA Al Fattahiyyah perceived educational supervision as a process of professional development grounded in collaborative interaction between the madrasa principal, teachers, and educational personnel. The findings indicate that supervision was not merely a form of administrative control but rather a reflective, dialogic space aimed at improving educational quality. Classroom observations followed by reflective discussions enabled teachers to critically evaluate their instructional strategies and adapt them to students' learning needs. Simultaneously, supervision served as an internal quality

assurance mechanism, ensuring the consistent implementation of the curriculum. The integration of these dimensions created a supervisory experience that not only strengthened teachers' competencies but also supported broader improvements in educational quality through the active involvement of educational personnel.

The findings further reveal that supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah made a substantial contribution to enhancing human resource quality and strengthening educational services within the madrasa. Within the supervisory process, this contribution was reflected through continuous reflection and follow-up improvement initiatives aimed at enhancing student educational services. Supervision also played a significant role in ensuring that instructional processes were systematically planned, continuously monitored, and sustainably implemented, thereby increasing the effectiveness of educational services. Throughout the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up stages, supervision provided teachers with professional guidance in managing learning processes aligned with students' needs and characteristics. Teachers' autonomy in developing instructional materials and learning strategies was optimized through collaborative, dialogic supervision, enabling learning activities to be more meaningful, adaptive, and responsive to contemporary educational challenges. Educational personnel, as integral components of institutional management, also recognized that supervision contributed to improving managerial effectiveness and efficiency. These findings suggest that supervision is oriented not merely to oversight but to the continuous improvement of educational processes and institutional services.

Ultimately, the outcomes of supervision were reflected in improvements in students' competencies, which served as the primary indicator of educational service quality within the madrasa. Systematic and sustainable supervision enabled educational programs to remain student-centered, thereby ensuring that educational services operated in accordance with established quality standards. Competency-based supervision assisted educators in strengthening both pedagogical and professional competencies, creating opportunities for collaborative discussion of instructional challenges, professional development for educational personnel, and the formulation of collective solutions involving educators, educational staff, and supervisors. Consequently, supervision emerged as a strategic foundation for madrasa development, aimed at enhancing educational service quality, strengthening educational programs, and improving student achievement at MA Al Fattahiyyah.

Furthermore, supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah functioned as a strategic instrument integrating educational planning, implementation, and evaluation within a continuous improvement framework. Supervision was not limited to administrative monitoring; rather, it served as a reflective learning mechanism that enhanced human resource quality, strengthened the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, and supported the realization of student-centered learning. Through systematic, dialogic, and data-driven supervision, the madrasa ensured alignment among its strategic vision, the *Merdeka Curriculum*, and classroom instructional practices. The ultimate impact was reflected in the holistic development of students' competencies, encompassing academic achievement, character formation, and twenty-first-century skills aligned with Islamic values and the learner profile promoted within the curriculum framework. Therefore, educational supervision can be regarded as a central pillar of a madrasa's adaptive, high-quality, and sustainable development strategy.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that educational supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah goes beyond its traditional role as an administrative oversight tool. Rather than focusing on compliance with institutional regulations or assessing teachers through inspection procedures, supervision functions as a strategic management process that combines instructional leadership, collaborative professional learning, reflective practice, and institutional quality assurance. These findings indicate that supervision serves as an organizational foundation that enables madrasahs to continuously

align curriculum implementation, professional development, and institutional goals within the context of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Consequently, educational supervision should be understood as a flexible organizational capacity that supports continuous school improvement, rather than simply an administrative responsibility.

This interpretation aligns with the emerging consensus in the educational leadership literature that sustained school progress is more influenced by leaders' abilities to foster collaboration, organizational learning, and continuous professional development than by bureaucratic control. Hallinger (2011) states that instructional leadership has evolved from classroom supervision to developing an organizational environment that supports teachers in collaboratively improving teaching practices. Harris and Jones (2022) argue that educational leaders should act as facilitators of organizational learning, mobilizing collaborative skills to navigate increasingly complex educational environments. The current findings extend this view by indicating that supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah is a continuous cycle of improvement that includes systematic planning, classroom observation, reflective dialogue, feedback, and follow-up, thus linking leadership practices to curriculum implementation and institutional development.

A significant contribution of this study is its collaborative nature of supervision. Rather than relying solely on the authority of the madrasah principal, supervision is carried out by a team that includes the madrasah principal, vice-principal, supervising teachers, and teaching staff. Such an arrangement reflects the principles of distributed leadership, in which leadership responsibilities are shared among organizational members based on their expertise rather than centralized in a single formal leader. According to Spillane (2005), distributed leadership enhances organizational efficiency by enabling leadership to emerge from collaborative interactions among professionals. Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that distributed instructional leadership positively impacts teacher commitment, organizational resilience, and school improvement by strengthening collective responsibility for educational quality (Hallinger, 2011). The results of this study reinforce this view by demonstrating that collaborative supervision facilitates collective ownership of curriculum implementation and encourages active teacher involvement in institutional quality improvement.

Additional findings indicate that reflective dialogue serves as a fundamental mechanism through which supervision supports professional development. Participants consistently viewed post-observation discussions as opportunities to analyze teaching practices, share professional experiences, and collectively formulate improvement strategies, rather than as evaluative feedback sessions. This observation aligns with Mann et al.'s (2009) notion of reflective practitioners, who argued that professional skills develop through structured reflection on actual practice, rather than through monotonous adherence to established procedures. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Kraft et al. (2018) demonstrated that instructional development substantially improves teaching quality by encouraging educators to proactively develop professional knowledge rather than simply accepting suggestions from superiors. Consequently, the current findings confirm that reflective supervision enhances educators' pedagogical competence and professional agency.

The collaborative supervision model identified in this study also contributes to the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in madrasahs. Through classroom observation, mentoring, peer discussions, and shared reflection, teachers and educators collectively create professional knowledge that supports instructional improvement. Hargreaves and Michael (2018) argue that collaborative professionalism facilitates schools' sustainable progress by enabling educators to learn from one another through collective accountability and shared inquiry. Kools and Stoll (2016) argue that schools operating as learning organizations structurally transform individual experiences into collective knowledge that can support educational innovation. The current findings extend this argument by indicating that supervision institutionalizes collaborative learning through organized professional dialogue, thereby strengthening teacher capacity and organizational learning.

Another significant finding relates to the integration of educational supervision and internal quality assurance. Unlike traditional supervision systems that focus on auditing and compliance, supervision at MA Al Fattahiyyah generates data that supports institutional planning, educator professional development, and curriculum improvement. This process reflects the principles of continuous quality improvement, in which organizational data is continually collected, analyzed, and used to drive institutional improvement. Sallis (2014) argues that educational quality should be understood as an ongoing organizational process rather than a fixed institutional outcome. Askell-Williams and Koh (2020) also emphasized that sustainable school progress depends on the institution's ability to integrate evaluation, organizational learning, and strategic planning into an integrated quality assurance system. Therefore, this study indicates that educational oversight operates most efficiently when quality assurance is understood as a collaborative learning process, rather than as administrative accountability.

The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides a crucial context for understanding these findings. Modern curriculum reform requires educational institutions not only to adhere to policy guidelines but also to build organizational capacity that supports differentiated learning, teacher autonomy, authentic assessment, and student-centered teaching. According to Fullan (2019), educational transformation is more effectively achieved through capacity building than mere regulatory compliance. As stated by the OECD (2020), educational institutions implementing curriculum reform must operate as learning organizations that can continuously adapt teaching methods through investigative collaboration and evidence-based decision-making. The findings of this study substantially support this view by indicating that supervision enables educators to collaboratively interpret curriculum principles while continuously adapting teaching practices to student learning needs. Therefore, educational supervision serves as an organizational link between curriculum policy and classroom implementation.

The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in its evidence that collaborative supervision can effectively integrate curriculum innovation with the unique identity of Islamic educational institutions. Although the majority of global literature on educational supervision has been formulated within the context of secular education, the current findings demonstrate that supervision enables madrasahs (Islamic schools) to integrate student-centered pedagogy with Islamic educational principles through ongoing professional dialogue and collective reflection. These findings contribute to the growing literature on culturally sensitive educational leadership by demonstrating that curriculum innovation and institutional identity are not at odds, but rather mutually reinforcing when supported by collaborative supervision and adaptive leadership.

Based on these findings, this study proposes the concept of Strategic Collaborative Educational Supervision (SCES) as an integrated management framework encompassing strategic instructional leadership, collaborative professional learning, reflective organizational learning, internal quality assurance, and adaptive curriculum management. Unlike conventional supervision models that emphasize teacher assessment, the SCES framework views supervision as a strategic organizational capability that enables educational institutions to generate professional knowledge, strengthen organizational learning, and maintain educational quality. This framework expands existing theories by integrating instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2011), distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005), collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & Michael, 2018), organizational learning (Kools & Stoll, 2016), and educational change (Fullan, 2019) into a sustainable and integrated model of educational governance.

As education systems increasingly face curriculum reform, technological change, and complex organizational challenges, supervision enables educational institutions to enhance professional capacity, improve teaching quality, and enhance student learning. This is achieved through integrating leadership, collaboration, reflective practice, organizational learning, curriculum implementation, and quality assurance within a continuous improvement cycle. Consequently, these findings support the idea that educational supervision should shift from an

administrative monitoring function to a strategic governance mechanism. In this way, educational institutions can remain flexible, high-quality, and future-oriented.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that educational supervision is a strategic organizational skill that goes beyond administrative monitoring to become a transformative instrument for sustained madrasa development within the framework of the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The findings demonstrate that supervision undergirds institutional development by integrating collaborative leadership, reflective professional learning, internal quality assurance, and adaptive curriculum governance into a continuous cycle of organizational learning and educational enhancement. Educational supervision enhances teachers' pedagogical competence, increases the professional capacity of educational personnel, improves the quality of teaching, and strengthens institutional effectiveness through systematic classroom observation, dialogic reflection, collaborative problem-solving, and evidence-informed follow-up actions, while maintaining the distinctive Islamic values of the madrasa. This study also adds to the literature on educational leadership by proposing the SCES framework, which conceptualizes supervision as an integrated system of strategic instructional leadership, collaborative professional learning, reflective organizational learning, internal quality assurance, and adaptive curriculum governance. This paradigm expands traditional models of supervision to place supervision as a core governance mechanism linking educational leadership, curriculum implementation, organizational learning, and quality improvement. In practice, the findings imply that educational policymakers and madrasa leaders should replace compliance-oriented administrative activity with a collaborative, developmental supervision process that encourages continual professional growth and institutional innovation. We invite future research to evaluate the suggested framework across different educational contexts using comparative, longitudinal, or mixed-methods approaches, further to explore its relevance and contribution to sustainable educational change.

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