

Professional Development of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teachers as A Pillar of Global Islamic Education Sustainability

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Abstract

Professional development in madrasah ibtidaiyah has become a strategic necessity for improving the quality of Islamic education and shaping human resources that are adaptive to the changing times. Madrasah teachers not only serve as educators and administrative managers but also as moral and spiritual mentors who shape students' character from an early age. In the context of globalization and digitalization, mastery of pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies is crucial for madrasah to remain competitive and relevant. This study aims to examine the urgency, strategies, models, as well as the challenges and opportunities in professional development within madrasah ibtidaiyah. The research method employed is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which involves analyzing various scholarly sources such as journal articles, books, and research reports relevant to the topic of professional development among madrasah educators. The findings indicate that (1) professional development holds high urgency as a prerequisite for improving the quality of Islamic education; (2) professional development functions as a sustainability strategy for madrasah in facing global changes; (3) professional development models include thematic training, pedagogical workshops, mentoring, learning communities, certification, and external partnerships; and (4) challenges include limited resources and suboptimal learning culture, but there are also opportunities through policy support, networking, and digital technology. In conclusion, systematic, collaborative, and continuous professional development is the key to building madrasah ibtidaiyah that are adaptive, innovative, and of high quality.

Keywords: professional development, madrasah ibtidaiyah teacher competence, Islamic education, sustainability

Introduction

Islamic education in madrasah ibtidaiyah plays a strategic role in shaping the character, spirituality, and intelligence of young Muslim generations. A madrasah is not merely a place for the transfer of knowledge but also a center for nurturing moral and religious values (Taufik, 2020). Within this environment, madrasah teachers serve dual roles as educators as well as moral and spiritual mentors. This central role positions the professionalism of human resources (HR) as one of the key determinants of success in Islamic education at the elementary level.

In the context of globalization and the rapidly evolving digital era, madrasah face challenges in producing human resources with strong pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. These dynamic changes require systematic, sustainable, and contextually relevant efforts in professional development (Iqbal & Ali, 2024). Professional development is not limited to technical training but also involves strengthening a collaborative, innovative, and reflective learning culture so that teachers can become agents of change in their educational environment.

Nevertheless, the implementation of professional development in madrasah still encounters various obstacles. In practice, there are still limitations in resources, limited access to contextual training, and a weak culture of continuous learning among madrasah teachers (Sariman et al., 2021). These conditions hinder the optimal improvement of human resource quality. In fact, numerous opportunities are now available, such as government policy support, partnerships with external institutions, and the utilization of digital technology for enhancing teacher competencies.

Therefore, professional development for madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers has become an urgent need in realizing Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive, competitive, and sustainable (Jurs et al., 2023). This study aims to analyze the urgency, challenges, and opportunities of professional development in madrasah ibtidaiyah in facing the era of global change.

Methods

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the urgency, challenges, and opportunities of professional development for human resources in madrasah ibtidaiyah in facing the era of global change. The SLR approach was conducted systematically through several stages, namely: identification of topics and keywords, literature searches from indexed international and national journals, selection of relevant literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, content analysis of the selected articles, and the synthesis of thematic findings. The literature sources cover publications from 2020–2025 to provide an up-to-date overview of professional development for human resources in madrasah ibtidaiyah. The results of the analysis were then mapped to identify the urgency, strategies, models, as well as challenges and opportunities in professional development within madrasah ibtidaiyah.

Results

The Urgency of Professional Development in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

The findings indicate that professional development is an urgent need to improve the quality of learning, strengthen teachers' competencies, and address the challenges of the digital era.

Professional Development as a Strategy for the Sustainability of Islamic Education

Professional development serves as an essential strategy to maintain the relevance of Islamic education, renew teaching methods, and reinforce Islamic values within madrasah.

Models and Forms of Professional Development

Various forms of professional development include thematic training, pedagogical workshops, learning communities, mentoring, competency certification, and the utilization of digital platforms.

Challenges and Opportunities in Professional Development

The main challenges include limited resources and access to training, as well as a weak culture of continuous learning, while the opportunities involve policy support, external partnerships, and the use of digital technology.

Discussion

The Urgency of Professional Development in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Professional development in madrasah ibtidaiyah is a strategic necessity in responding to the dynamics of 21st century education. Madrasah teachers are no longer merely transmitters of knowledge but also facilitators of learning, innovators, and character builders for their students (Hulkim et al., 2024). The changing landscape of education driven by globalization, digitalization, and technological advancement requires teachers to possess strong pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. With these competencies, teachers can design learning experiences that are adaptive, creative, and relevant to students' contemporary needs. Moreover, the urgency of professional development is also driven by the increasing complexity of teachers' roles in managing engaging, interactive, and value-based learning processes.

Furthermore, professional development is not only oriented toward improving technical teaching skills but also toward strengthening teachers' capacity as agents of change. Madrasah teachers bear moral and spiritual responsibilities to instill Islamic values in every learning process. This means that teachers not only deliver subject matter but also embody and transmit values such

as morality, honesty, responsibility, and social awareness. In this context, professional development becomes essential, as teacher quality largely determines the success of Islamic education in nurturing knowledgeable and virtuous generations. Madrasah ibtidaiyah with professional teachers are better prepared to face the challenges of change with adaptability and vision (Surohmat & Firdaus, 2025).

Professional Development as A Strategy for the Sustainability of Islamic Education

Sustainable Islamic education requires learning that goes beyond knowledge transfer it must also foster students' character and spirituality. Teachers' professional development serves as the key to maintaining the relevance of Islamic values within the realities of modern life. Through a well planned development process, teachers can integrate religious values with science, technology, and social contexts, making learning more meaningful and contextual. This integration is vital to ensure that madrasah can preserve Islamic identity while preparing students to face global challenges. With strong competencies, teachers can design learning strategies that promote independent thinking, creativity, and social awareness among students (Lestari & Kurnia, 2023).

Additionally, professional development plays an important role in strengthening the resilience of Islamic educational institutions so that they remain relevant and competitive. When teachers possess strong professional capacity, they are able to innovate teaching methods, adopt digital technology wisely, and build collaborative learning that fosters students' critical awareness. Thus, professional development is not merely a skill improvement program but a long-term strategy to reinforce the sustainability of Islamic education (Khusnah, 2025). This aligns with the madrasah's vision as an institution that produces not only intellectually capable individuals but also those who are religious, tolerant, and globally competitive.

Models and Forms of Professional Development

Professional development for madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers can be implemented through various flexible models and approaches suited to institutional needs and student characteristics. Each model has distinct focuses, advantages, and impacts on improving teacher competencies. Selecting the appropriate model helps madrasah foster a culture of continuous learning and strengthen instructional quality.

First, thematic training focuses on specific topics relevant to teaching needs for example, technology based learning, authentic assessment, literacy and numeracy development, or integrating Islamic values into science learning (Julrissani et al., 2020). These short but intensive trainings aim to provide practical insights that can be directly applied in the classroom. Their main

advantage lies in the targeted and focused approach, though the challenge is maintaining continuity after training.

Second, pedagogical workshops emphasize practical teaching skills development (Yaschuk et al., 2021). In these workshops, teachers not only receive theoretical input but also engage in teaching simulations, micro teaching, and reflective discussions. This approach effectively enhances teachers' abilities to design, implement, and evaluate innovative learning processes. Workshops also encourage peer sharing, networking, and creative teaching practices.

Third, professional learning communities (PLCS) represent a collaborative and continuous professional development model. In PLCs, teachers meet regularly to discuss teaching practices, analyze student learning outcomes, and design improvements (Trisnawati & Abduloh, 2025). This model effectively builds a reflective and collaborative culture within the madrasah, ensuring that professional growth remains ongoing and contextually relevant.

Fourth, mentoring or professional coaching involves partnerships between senior and junior teachers. Experienced educators guide others in developing teaching strategies, classroom management, and instructional methods suitable for madrasah students (Ginting et al., 2025). This model is particularly beneficial for novice teachers, offering hands on guidance while fostering a culture of collaboration among educators.

Fifth, certification and competency enhancement programs represent formal, institutionally recognized forms of professional development. Through certification, teachers are encouraged to meet national and international competency standards (Munawir et al., 2022). Beyond enhancing professionalism, certification also serves as a motivational incentive for continuous learning and performance improvement.

Sixth, digital platforms and educational technology offer increasingly relevant models of professional development in the digital era. Teachers can participate in online training, webinars, open courses (MOOCs), and virtual learning communities to expand their knowledge and skills flexibly. This approach allows unlimited learning opportunities beyond time and space constraints, making it suitable for madrasah with limited resources (Sholeh & Efendi, 2023).

With these diverse models, madrasah can select the most suitable professional development strategies based on their specific needs. Combining multiple models synergistically can yield more optimal results, enhancing both teacher competency and the overall quality of learning in madrasah ibtidaiyah.

Challenges and Opportunities in Professional Development

Professional development for madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers faces a number of complex challenges. One major obstacle is the limitation of resources budget

constraints, inadequate facilities, and limited access to quality training (Budi et al., 2024). Many madrasah operate with restricted funding, making it difficult to allocate budgets specifically for ongoing teacher development. Another challenge is the lack of access to contextual training programs; many available trainings are general and not fully aligned with the unique characteristics of madrasah, particularly in integrating Islamic values and sustainability issues in education (Gusmana & Syamzaimar, 2025). Moreover, a weak culture of lifelong learning persists, as some teachers still view professional development as an administrative obligation rather than a genuine need for improving teaching quality.

Despite these challenges, significant opportunities exist to strengthen teachers' professional development. Government policy support through teacher competency enhancement programs, certification, and career development can be effectively utilized by madrasah (Firdaus, 2024). In addition, partnerships with external stakeholders such as universities, environmental organizations, NGOs, and educational communities provide wide spaces for collaboration in training and instructional innovation. Technological advancements also present strategic opportunities teachers can now access online training, webinars, and virtual learning communities at low or no cost. By optimizing these opportunities, madrasah can strengthen teacher capacity, making professional development less dependent on internal resources and more supported by adaptive and innovative collaborative networks (Masitoh & Purbowati, 2024).

Conclusion

Professional development in madrasah ibtdaiyah is a strategic component for strengthening the quality of Islamic education in facing the challenges of the 21st century. This effort involves enhancing teachers' competencies in pedagogical, professional, social, and personal aspects through various development models such as thematic training, pedagogical workshops, learning communities, mentoring, certification, and the use of digital platforms. Professional development also serves as an important strategy to maintain the relevance of Islamic education amid changing times by integrating spiritual values and ecological awareness into the learning process. Although challenges remain such as limited resources and an underdeveloped culture of continuous learning there are significant opportunities through policy support, partnership networks, and digital technology. With systematic and collaborative planning, madrasah can establish an adaptive, innovative, and sustainable educational ecosystem.

Suggestions

For readers, it is recommended to actively participate in professional development programs and cultivate a culture of collaborative and continuous learning. For future researchers, it is suggested to examine the effectiveness of professional development models and their impact on improving the quality of education in madrasah ibtidaiyah.

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