

Strategic Solutions To Improve The Competence Of Education Personnel Amid Curriculum Changes

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze effective strategic solutions in improving the competence of education personnel in the face of curriculum changes. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with case studies to explore strategies to improve the competence of education personnel in facing curriculum changes. Data collection techniques include participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained by triangulating sources, methods and member checks. The focus of analysis included internal strategies, training, institutional communication, and barriers faced. This study shows that MTs Darussalam Blokagung implements various effective strategies to improve the competence of education personnel in facing curriculum changes. The role of the madrasah head as a leader of learning through transformational leadership proved important in building a sustainable learning culture. The utilization of teacher learning communities enables collaboration and experience sharing to overcome the challenges of the new curriculum. The integration of Islamic values with technology in learning strengthens students' character while supporting the development of 21st century skills. This approach results in education that is holistic and relevant to the needs of the times, creating a dynamic and sustainable learning environment.

Keywords: Competency Improvement, Curriculum Change, Education Personnel

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INTRODUCTION

The ongoing curriculum changes in the world of national education require the readiness and adaptation of all elements of the education workforce (Patandung & Panggua, 2022; Leesch & Skopek, 2025; Sprague et al., 2025) . In the midst of the latest curriculum dynamics, especially the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers and education personnel face significant challenges in understanding, implementing, and integrating new learning approaches into the teaching and learning process (Nurjanah & Mustofa, 2024; Prabowo et al., 2024) . Facts on the ground show that some education personnel still experience gaps in understanding the principles of the new curriculum, especially in terms of strengthening the Pancasila learner profile, differentiated learning, and utilizing digital technology in learning (Yip et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2025; Yousef et al., 2025) .

This directly affects the quality of education services and the achievement of expected learning objectives (Jiayuan et al., 2025; Qun, 2025) . On the other hand, demands for teacher professionalism are not only limited to mastery of material and pedagogy, but also abilities in classroom management, digital literacy, and project-based evaluation (Dahl, 2024; Prabowo et al., 2025) . This situation reflects that the

competencies of education personnel have not fully developed proportionally with changes in curriculum policy (Lee & Liu, 2025; Sun et al., 2025) .

Therefore, there is a need for strategic solutions that are not only technical but also transformative. For example, continuous training, professional development based on learning communities, and the use of digital platforms as a medium for self-development are urgent needs. Institutional support from madrasah is also very crucial in creating a climate that supports the process of improving competence consistently (Hoferichter et al., 2021; Virtanen et al., 2023; Prabowo & Ekaningsih, 2025) . This social fact illustrates that increasing the competence of education personnel is a systemic imperative in responding to curriculum changes, in order to realize madrasahs that are superior and adaptive to the demands of the times (Ramli et al., 2023) .

Previous research relevant to efforts to improve the competence of education personnel amid curriculum changes has been carried out by many researchers in the fields of education management and teacher professional development. One of them is research conducted by Afiza et al., (2024) which concluded that the competence of education personnel can be significantly improved through continuous training, collaborative workshops, and the formation of learning communities at the school level. This research emphasizes that curriculum changes without the readiness of human resources, especially teachers and education personnel, will result in implementation gaps.

Furthermore, a study by Mustofa et al., (2025) shows that regular coaching through constructive supervision and training based on teachers' real needs can strengthen their pedagogical and professional abilities. In the context of madrasah, a study by Greere, (2023) reveals that training designed internally by the educational institution itself has a more contextual and applicable impact because it is in accordance with the specific needs of the institution.

These studies show that competency improvement strategies must be designed with a sustainable, participatory, and actual needs-based approach. The approach can be adapted by considering the characteristics of pesantren-based madrasahs, which combine religious values and modern learning. Thus, this study reinforces the urgency of developing appropriate strategies to improve the competence of education personnel as part of the response to the evolving curriculum changes.

The novelty of this research lies in the strategic focus on improving the competence of education personnel in pesantren-based madrasahs that have cultural characteristics and distinctive religious values. Different from previous studies that focus on public schools, this study emphasizes a contextual approach. The strategy offered integrates spirituality, institutional culture, and learning technology. This has not been widely discussed in the previous literature. This study produces a competency development model that is relevant, adaptive, and applicable to Islamic educational institutions. It has novelty both in terms of objects, approaches, and solutions offered.

Curriculum changes demand competent and adaptive education personnel. Pesantren-based madrasahs face unique challenges that have not been widely studied. Contextual strategies that are in accordance with religious values and institutional culture are needed. This research is important to formulate strategic solutions to increase competence that are relevant and applicable. The main objective of this research is to analyze effective strategic solutions in improving the competence of education personnel in the face of curriculum changes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring social and educational phenomena that occur in the field, especially in the context of the response of education personnel to ongoing curriculum changes. This research does not focus on statistical measurements, but rather on understanding the meaning, strategies, and real experiences of education personnel, madrasah heads, and other related parties in facing the challenges of implementing the new curriculum (Abdussamad & Sik, 2021; Mulyana et al., 2024) .

Data collection techniques are conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Interviews will involve key informants to obtain more in-depth data. The data obtained will be analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Roosinda et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2022) .

The research informants consisted of the madrasah head, senior teachers, administrative staff, and managers of the competency improvement program. Triangulation techniques were used to maintain data validity, both through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as rechecking the findings with informants (member check). The focus of the analysis is directed at the madrasah's internal strategy, the training model used, institutional communication patterns, and the obstacles faced in the process of improving the competence of education personnel.

Table 1 Research Informants

No.	Type of Informant	Total	Role
1	Head of Madrasah	1	Directing policies and strategies for developing the competence of education personnel.
2	Senior Teacher	4-6	Provide insight into the experiences and challenges of implementing the new curriculum.
3	Administration Staff	2-3	Provide administrative data and support policy implementation.
4	Competency Program Manager	2-3	Responsible for teacher training and capacity building programs.

This descriptive qualitative approach with case studies allows researchers to explore in depth the experiences and strategies implemented by education personnel in dealing with curriculum changes. Through interviews with relevant informants and thematic analysis, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive insight into the challenges and solutions faced in implementing the new curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Head as Leader of Learning

In facing the dynamics of increasingly complex curriculum changes, the role of the madrasah head as a *leader of learning* is one of the key factors in determining the success of improving the competence of education personnel. At MTs Darussalam Blokagung, the head of the madrasah not only acts as an administrative manager, but also as a driving force for learning transformation. The main problem that arises is how education personnel can adjust quickly and effectively to the demands of the new curriculum, especially in the aspects of planning, implementing and evaluating learning. To answer this challenge, the madrasah head develops a collaborative and communicative leadership approach, by creating a culture of learning together in the madrasah environment. This strategy is important because many teachers still have difficulties in understanding the structure of the new curriculum, and feel less confident in applying appropriate learning methods. Through in-depth interviews with the head of MTs Darussalam Blokagung, concrete evidence was obtained of the active role of the head in initiating internal discussion forums, internal workshops, and ongoing coaching for teachers and education personnel.

Based on observations at MTs Darussalam Blokagung, a number of important aspects were found that illustrate the role of the madrasah head as a leader of learning. These aspects are summarized in the following table to provide a clearer and more systematic picture.

Table 1. Aspects of Madrasah Head Leadership

NO	Aspect Findings	Description
1	Collaborative Leadership	The madrasah head encourages teachers' active involvement through discussion forums.
2	Strengthening the Culture of Learning Together	Madrasahs are used as learning spaces for teachers through regular in-house training.
3	Teacher Empowerment	Teachers are given space to discuss and innovate in dealing with the curriculum.
4	Exemplary behavior of the Madrasah Head	The madrasah head sets an example in the spirit of lifelong learning.
5	Support for Learning Transformation	The madrasah head facilitates teachers' adaptation to the new curriculum.

The findings show that the success of improving the competence of education personnel at MTs Darussalam Blokagung is strongly influenced by the collaborative, communicative and inspiring leadership of the madrasah head. By creating a culture of learning together and being a model learner, the madrasah head is able to encourage teachers to be more confident and ready to face the demands of the new curriculum on an ongoing basis.

Interpretation of the findings regarding the strengthening of the role of the Head of Madrasah as *Leader of Learning* at MTs Darussalam Blokagung shows that effective leadership is not only about managing administration, but also motivating and empowering education personnel to continue to develop. The madrasah head who acts as a driving force for learning transformation through a collaborative and communicative approach has a major impact in improving the quality of teaching (Ahmad et al., 2024) . This approach leads to the creation of a continuous learning culture, which encourages each individual to be actively involved in the learning process, either as a participant or as a driver. The success of learning transformation is highly dependent on teachers' understanding and involvement supported by adequate facilities, such as discussion forums, workshops, and continuous coaching (Gebremariam & Mulugeta, 2025) .

The theory relevant to these findings is the Transformational Leadership theory from Armiyanti et al., (2023) , which states that transformational leaders are able to inspire and motivate their followers to achieve higher goals, through empowerment, effective communication, and attention to individual needs. In the context of MTs Darussalam Blokagung, the madrasah head who acts as a *leader of learning* demonstrates the characteristics of transformational leadership by creating a learning space for teachers, not only to explore curriculum materials, but also to develop themselves as better educators. Thus, this approach not only improves teachers' technical competence, but also builds their self-confidence and enthusiasm to continue learning, which will ultimately have a positive impact on the quality of education in the madrasah.

Teacher Learning Community

Teacher Learning Community is one of the important strategies in improving the competence of education personnel at MTs Darussalam Blokagung. In the face of curriculum changes that require rapid adaptation, this approach has proven very effective as it allows teachers to share knowledge, experiences and best practices in implementing the new curriculum. Discussion forums, joint curriculum studies and experience-sharing sessions are productive means of solving problems faced by teachers during the teaching process. By collaborating in learning communities, teachers can improve their understanding of teaching materials, more innovative learning techniques and appropriate evaluation for students. In addition, this learning community also serves as a forum to strengthen relationships between teachers, creating a sense of togetherness in achieving the same goal, namely improving the quality of education at

MTs Darussalam Blokagung. In an interview with one of the senior teachers at MTs Darussalam Blokagung, he stated:

"Through this teacher learning community, we can more easily understand the new curriculum. Every week, we have open discussions and case studies. That way, we not only learn from theory, but also directly apply it in the classroom. This makes us feel more prepared and confident in teaching."

The results of these interviews show that the teachers' learning community has a significant impact on improving teachers' competencies. With this forum, teachers do not feel alone in facing the challenges of curriculum change. They feel supported by their peers and gain a deeper understanding and practical solutions to existing problems. The sustainability of this learning community is a long-term strategy that can create a culture of professionalism and improve the quality of learning at MTs Darussalam Blokagung.

Interpretation of the findings on the utilization of teacher learning communities at MTs Darussalam Blokagung shows that collaboration among teachers in learning communities has a significant impact on improving their competence and readiness to deal with curriculum changes. Through discussion forums, joint curriculum studies and experience sharing sessions, teachers not only deepen their theoretical knowledge but can also practice it directly in the classroom. This proves that learning does not only happen individually, but through collaboration and mutual support between fellow education personnel. This learning community provides a space to exchange ideas and experiences, which helps teachers overcome challenges in implementing the new curriculum and strengthens their confidence in teaching.

The theory relevant to this finding is the Social Learning theory of Rotter, (2021) , which emphasizes that learning is a social process that is strongly influenced by interactions between individuals. In this context, the teacher learning community at MTs Darussalam Blokagung creates an environment where teachers can learn from each other through social interaction, sharing experiences, and collaborating in solving problems faced in teaching. As mentioned by Rotter, through social interaction and cooperation, individuals can achieve better cognitive development, which in turn improves their ability to deal with curriculum changes. Therefore, teacher learning communities are an effective strategy to create a culture of continuous learning, improve competencies and support positive educational change in madrasahs.

Integration of Islamic Values and Technology

The integration of Islamic values and technology in learning is one of the important strategies in improving the competence of education personnel at MTs Darussalam Blokagung. In the face of

curriculum changes, especially with a curriculum that emphasizes technology-based learning and 21st century competencies, there needs to be a balance between technological innovation and the preservation of traditional values that characterize pesantren. At MTs Darussalam Blokagung, teaching not only focuses on technical skills in the curriculum, but also instills Islamic values in every aspect of learning. This strategy is carried out by utilizing learning technology that supports the application of Islamic values, such as through application-based learning media, learning videos that reflect religious teachings, and content development that integrates both. This aims to ensure that the adaptation process to the new curriculum remains relevant to the identity of the pesantren institution, making it easier for education personnel to accept.

Along with the development of a curriculum that emphasizes technology and 21st century skills, MTs Darussalam Blokagung strives to not only adopt technology in learning, but also ensure that Islamic values remain well integrated. In the face of these changes, the madrasah head and educators play an important role in linking technological innovation with the preservation of religious values. This strategy aims to ensure that learning remains relevant to the identity of the pesantren, as well as preparing students with good technical skills and Islamic character. The following are indicators that illustrate the important role of integrating technology and Islamic values in learning. The following figure will illustrate the main indicators of the findings.



Figure 1; Indicators of Findings in Pesantren Education

The findings show that the integration of technology and Islamic values in learning at MTs Darussalam Blokagung has a significant positive impact on the development of teacher and student competencies. The use of learning technology, such as digital applications and learning videos, combined with Islamic teachings in every teaching step, forms students who are not only academically smart, but also have Islamic characters. This approach allows for easier adaptation to curriculum changes, while maintaining the relevance of pesantren identity in every educational process.

The interpretation of the findings regarding the integration of Islamic values and technology in learning at MTs Darussalam Blokagung shows that success in dealing with technology-based curriculum changes depends not only on the mastery of technology itself, but also on the ability to maintain and integrate traditional values that characterize Islamic educational institutions. By combining innovative learning technologies with Islamic teachings, education personnel are not only able to develop technical skills that are relevant to the demands of the times, but also maintain the relevance of pesantren identity in the educational process. Through the use of digital applications and video-based media that contain Islamic teachings, teachers at MTs Darussalam Blokagung ensure that technology is not only a tool in learning, but also a means to build students' Islamic character.

The theory relevant to this finding is the theory of Constructivism from Rachmad, (2025) , which emphasizes the importance of social and cultural context in the learning process. In this case, the integration of Islamic values with learning technology creates a learning environment that not only emphasizes cognitive aspects, but also moral and social. Rachmad argues that knowledge is built through interaction with the social and cultural environment, which in this context includes religious values applied in learning technology. In this way, learning focuses not only on academic outcomes, but also on character building in accordance with religious teachings, ensuring that students develop holistically.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this discussion shows that to deal with the dynamics of increasingly complex curriculum changes, MTs Darussalam Blokagung applies various effective strategies in improving the competence of education personnel. Strengthening the role of the madrasah head as a *leader of learning* through a transformational leadership approach has proven to be very effective in building a sustainable learning culture. The madrasah head does not only function as an administrative manager, but also as the main driver in improving the quality of learning by encouraging collaboration and communication between education personnel. In addition, the use of teacher learning communities is key in creating a collaborative space to share knowledge, experiences and practical solutions to the challenges of the new curriculum. Through discussion forums, joint curriculum studies and experience-sharing sessions, teachers feel more prepared and confident in implementing the new curriculum. Equally important, the integration of Islamic values with technology in learning shows that technology is not only a tool in the learning process, but also a means to strengthen students' Islamic character. Thus, an approach that combines inclusive leadership, collaboration in learning communities, and the integration of religious values with technology not only ensures successful adaptation to curriculum changes, but also contributes to the formation of a more holistic education that is relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

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