

# The Role of Human Resources Management in Improving Teacher Innovation and Creativity in Madrasahs

Aida Rosdiana<sup>\*1</sup>, Khuzaini<sup>2</sup>, Zaky Zamrudi<sup>3</sup>, M. Zainul<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Mujtaba Mitra  
Zuana<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Islam Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari Banjarmasin

<sup>5</sup> Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim Mojokerto

e-mail correspondence: aidarosdiana2019@gmail.com

Submitted: 02-04-2024

Revised : 25-10-2024

Accepted: 25-12-2024

**ABSTRACT.** Human resources are crucial and strategic in bringing expertise, knowledge, and creativity through innovation to improve the performance of educational organizations. Teachers, as potential assets, require efforts to continuously improve their knowledge, education, skills, discipline, and mental attitude. This study aims to analyze human resource management strategies and practices that can encourage teacher innovation and creativity in madrasah. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, in which researchers try to interpret and understand events in the context experienced by the madrasah community. This qualitative research involves the collection and use of observations from various related case studies. The results showed that human resources (HR) has made a very significant contribution to encouraging innovation in madrasah. Different aspects, such as inspiring and encouraging creativity, facilitating collaboration, and supporting continuous learning and improvement, show that HR plays a crucial role in creating a work environment that supports the development of new ideas and the implementation of innovative solutions.

**Keywords:** *Management, Human Resources, Innovation, Creativity.*

 <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1391>

**How to Cite** Rosdiana, A., Khuzaini, Zamrudi, Z., Zainul, M., & Zuana, M. M. M. (2024). The Role of Human Resources Management in Improving Teacher Innovation and Creativity in Madrasahs. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 5(4), 409–420.

## INTRODUCTION

Human resources, particularly teachers, are crucial for the success of educational institutions, including madrasahs. Effective human resource management in Islamic education involves planning, recruitment, selection, orientation, performance assessment, training, and career development (Danial et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2022). However, to realize the full potential of human resources, continuous improvements in teachers' knowledge, education, skills, discipline, and mental attitude are essential (Azizi et al., 2021; Musyaffa et al., 2023). Given the rapid pace of economic development and structural changes worldwide, madrasahs face both challenges and opportunities in enhancing educational quality (Ahyar & Zumrotun, 2023; Ashari et al., 2023; Djalilah et al., 2024).

Madrasahs face increasing challenges in maintaining competitiveness and relevance in the education sector. Research suggests several strategies to enhance their competitiveness. These include conducting internal and external environmental scans, formulating clear missions and goals, and implementing and evaluating strategies (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Islamic branding is another approach, involving continuous planning, implementation, and evaluation with stakeholder

participation (Amirudin et al., 2024; Mourad & El Karanshawy, 2013). This competitiveness can be enhanced by developing new technologies, improving skills, and fostering organizational structures that support continuous growth (I. Arifin et al., 2018; Cignitas et al., 2022). While several studies have explored the role of human resources in educational success, there remains a gap in examining how targeted human resource management strategies can specifically drive innovation and creativity among madrasah teachers (Basari et al., 2023; Elmali-Karakaya, 2022; Musyaffa et al., 2023).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of human resource management (HRM) in improving educational quality in madrasahs. Effective HRM practices can enhance teacher competence, school development, and overall learning processes (Dian et al., 2023; Hariadi et al., 2024; Jannah et al., 2023; Nurochim, 2018). Research indicates that well-implemented HRM strategies contribute to satisfactory educational outcomes and internal customer satisfaction among educators (Baso et al., 2018). To meet the challenges of Society 5.0, madrasahs need to develop innovative and adaptive human resources through coherent cultural concepts aligned with institutional visions (Azizi et al., 2021; Hamzah et al., 2016; Khumaini et al., 2023). Comprehensive HR development strategies can strengthen a madrasah's commitment to creating dynamic educational environments that respond rapidly to societal changes (Gu et al., 2023; Mumtazah et al., 2023). These studies emphasize the critical role of HRM in fostering quality education in madrasahs, though they do not specifically address its impact on teacher creativity and innovation, indicating a potential area for further research.

This study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by providing a more nuanced understanding of how specific human resource management practices within madrasahs can be optimized to foster teacher innovation and creativity. Unlike prior research, which has often generalized HR practices across various school types, this study focuses specifically on madrasahs. The unique educational and cultural context of madrasahs offers an underexplored area in which tailored HR approaches could significantly enhance teachers' capacity for creativity and innovative teaching methods. The study will test the hypothesis that strategically designed HR practices in madrasahs—such as professional development programs, incentives for innovation, and supportive work environments—are positively correlated with increased teacher innovation and creativity.

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a case study approach, as defined by Creswell, which is particularly suited to examining the impact of digitalization on human resource practices within a specific educational context: Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam in Banjarmasin. According to (Creswell et al., 2018), a case study approach is appropriate for in-depth analysis of a bounded system, such as an organization, where researchers seek to understand the unique dynamics and complexities within that setting.

The use of a case study allows this research to capture the nuanced challenges, adjustments, and responses that the madrasah community—teachers, administrative staff, and leadership—undergoes in the face of digitalization. Over two months (August to September 2024), data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with the principal and several teachers of Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam, observations about how teachers work together during the monthly meetings or in informal settings and how teachers implement what they've learned from professional development sessions or training programs, and documentation, providing a comprehensive, contextualized view of digitalization's impact on HR practices.

Through thematic coding and analysis, recurring themes and patterns were identified to construct an understanding of how digital advancements influence human resources and contribute to fostering teacher innovation and creativity within the madrasah. This approach enables an in-

depth look at both the general impact of digitalization and the specific adaptations required within this madrasah setting.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The findings highlight the essential role of human resource management in fostering teacher innovation, creativity, and professional growth at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam, Banjarmasin. The integration of technology, such as algorithms and data analysis, into the recruitment process, has enabled the institution to identify candidates who align with its goals and Islamic educational values. In an interview, the head of the madrasah stated,

*"We believe that effective human resource management is key to driving teacher innovation and creativity. That's why we integrate technology, like algorithms and data analysis, into our recruitment process. This allows us to comprehensively evaluate candidates through online assessments that transcend physical and temporal limitations, helping us find educators who are not only academically competent but also deeply understand the Islamic values we uphold."*

This approach underscores the madrasah's commitment to enhancing teaching quality by employing inclusive and efficient methods to select teachers equipped to fulfill its educational mission. In an interview with the Principal of Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam, she emphasized the importance of teacher development in adapting to the rapid pace of technological change.

*"Our teachers are at the core of delivering quality education. To support them, we have implemented digital learning platforms that allow for flexible and convenient training options. These platforms not only cater to their busy schedules but also enable us to provide tailored training based on individual needs. Furthermore, collaboration is encouraged through knowledge-sharing programs, which help create a dynamic and innovative teaching environment grounded in Islamic values,"* she explained.

Based on the interview above, teacher development remains a central focus for madrasahs striving to stay competitive and responsive to technological advancements. Digital learning platforms provide flexible, convenient training options, accommodating the demands of teachers' busy schedules. By adopting adaptive learning models, madrasahs can personalize training to each teacher's needs, maximizing educators' potential to innovate in their teaching methods. Additionally, knowledge and skills exchange programs foster collaboration among teachers, creating a creative educational environment that aligns with Islamic values. Performance management practices have evolved to incorporate goal-oriented and real-time feedback systems, replacing traditional evaluation methods. Advanced technology enables immediate performance insights, which encourages teachers to engage proactively in their development, fostering a work environment that supports continuous improvement and high performance.

Creative thinking is recognized as essential within madrasahs, not only in teaching but also in adapting to the challenges of the educational market. Teachers are expected to integrate Islamic values into lessons, helping develop students' character in alignment with religious teachings. Initiatives like the Ministry of Religious Affairs' "*Madrasah Innovation Storytelling*" program introduce best practices and innovation across madrasahs, engaging principals, teachers, and supervisors in quality improvement efforts. Digital competency training further enables teachers to leverage technology effectively in instruction. The study also found that HR planning in madrasahs involves setting clear goals and flagship programs, identifying the needs of teachers and staff, and conducting regular supervision and performance reporting to ensure alignment with institutional objectives. Implementation efforts include providing teacher training, support for further education, and participation in professional competitions to encourage skill development.



Figure 1. Documentation with madrasah leaders

From Figure 1, it can be seen that the monthly meeting held by the entire teaching council serves as an essential agenda to improve educational quality at the madrasah. This meeting provides a platform not only for evaluating learning outcomes but also for aligning perspectives and discussing ideas for the institution's advancement. Held at the beginning of each month, the meeting starts with a brief report on the previous month's teaching activities, followed by an open discussion where each teacher is encouraged to share insights and suggestions. A teacher serves as moderator to guide a focused and thorough discussion on each topic, and by the end of the meeting, key conclusions and actionable plans are established for practical implementation. These monthly meetings enhance educational quality and foster unity among the teachers, significantly contributing to the madrasah's ongoing development.

This is supported by the interview response from one of the senior teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam, who stated,

*"The monthly meetings are more than just a routine gathering. They are a vital opportunity for us to collaborate, reflect on our progress, and identify areas for improvement. By openly sharing ideas and challenges, we create a collective understanding and develop practical solutions together. These discussions not only help us align our teaching methods with the madrasah's goals but also strengthen the bond among teachers, fostering a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility in enhancing educational outcomes."*

The senior teacher's statement highlights the collaborative and strategic nature of the monthly meetings at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam. These gatherings are designed to go beyond administrative updates; they serve as a platform for professional dialogue and collective problem-solving. The open exchange of ideas allows teachers to contribute their unique perspectives, fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity in decision-making.

By involving all members of the teaching council, the meetings ensure that every teacher feels valued and heard, which enhances their commitment to the madrasah's mission. The structured approach—starting with activity reports, transitioning into guided discussions, and concluding with actionable plans—ensures that the meetings remain productive and goal-oriented.

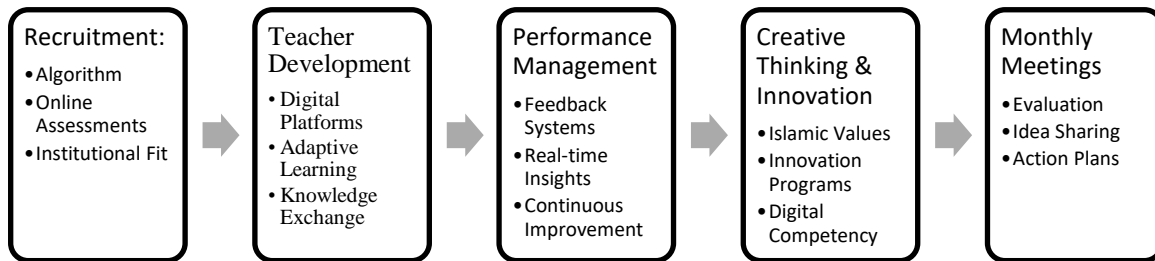


Figure 2.

Structured process for improving educational quality through a series of interconnected steps

Figure 2 illustrates a flowchart outlining the structured process for improving educational quality through a series of interconnected steps. The flowchart provides a detailed framework for the human resource management strategy implemented at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam, highlighting a structured and value-driven approach to fostering teacher development, creativity, and institutional progress.

**Recruitment:** The process begins with a highly innovative recruitment system that integrates algorithms and online assessments to ensure a precise selection of candidates. By utilizing technology, the madrasah overcomes traditional limitations of time and geography, allowing for a more inclusive pool of applicants. The recruitment process emphasizes institutional fit, ensuring that selected candidates not only possess strong teaching competencies but also align with the madrasah's mission of embedding Islamic values into education. This step ensures that new hires are well-prepared to support both academic excellence and spiritual guidance.

**Teacher Development:** After recruitment, the madrasah focuses on the continuous growth of its educators through various development programs. Digital platforms are used to deliver tailored training, while adaptive learning systems help teachers update their skills to meet modern educational demands. Knowledge exchange opportunities are facilitated to encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practices among staff. This systematic development ensures that teachers remain innovative, capable, and equipped to address the diverse needs of their students effectively.

**Performance Management:** A robust performance management system is at the core of maintaining high educational standards. Feedback systems are employed to gather regular and constructive input, enabling teachers to understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Real-time insights are used to monitor progress and adapt strategies as needed, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This ensures that teachers consistently meet performance expectations while also enhancing their professional capacities over time.

**Creative Thinking and Innovation:** Creativity and innovation are integral to the madrasah's approach. Programs are designed to encourage teachers to integrate Islamic values into modern teaching methodologies, ensuring that spiritual and academic goals are met simultaneously. Innovation initiatives promote problem-solving and the development of new teaching techniques,

while digital competency programs equip educators to effectively use technology in the classroom. This focus on innovation supports the madrasah's broader mission of preparing students for a dynamic and technologically advanced world while staying rooted in Islamic principles.

*Monthly Meetings:* To ensure consistent alignment and progress, monthly meetings are held, providing a platform for evaluation, idea sharing, and the formulation of action plans. These meetings encourage collaboration among staff members and allow for a systematic review of goals and outcomes. Through these discussions, the madrasah identifies challenges, celebrates successes, and plans strategically for the future, creating a cohesive and goal-oriented teaching environment.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal that effective human resource management plays a critical role in fostering teacher innovation, creativity, and professional development within Madrasahs, with Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam in Banjarmasin serving as a case study. Through a comprehensive approach encompassing recruitment, development, training, and performance management, the madrasah not only addresses institutional needs but also aligns with broader objectives to incorporate Islamic values within its educational framework. By adopting digitalized recruitment methods, such as algorithm-driven candidate assessments, the madrasah can attract candidates who closely match its cultural and educational values (Nuriman et al., 2024; Rohmah et al., 2023). This data-supported recruitment process is effective in identifying and selecting educators equipped with the teaching competencies, guidance skills, and role-modeling qualities that are essential for fulfilling the madrasah's mission (Baydarus, 2022).

The role of innovation in Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies is paramount for the sustainable growth of madrasahs. By leveraging technology and innovative practices, madrasahs can enhance efficiency and effectiveness in recruitment, teacher development, and performance management. HR professionals are pivotal in inspiring and encouraging creativity within the institution, fostering a culture that nurtures innovation (Forcher et al., 2022; Fuadi et al., 2023).

The findings elucidate the integral role of creativity in both educational and business frameworks. Creativity not only enhances individual capabilities but also fosters an innovative environment conducive to learning and development. In madrasahs, the convergence of educational and business objectives necessitates a focus on creative thinking as a driver for innovation (Nurkhasanah et al., 2023). The successful implementation of creative strategies can lead to improved educational outcomes and business performance, thus ensuring the relevance and sustainability of madrasahs in a rapidly changing landscape. Effective business innovation, as highlighted by (Kardi et al., 2023; Yamin et al., 2023), requires active participation from business actors, strong leadership, and the integration of creativity with technology to meet consumer demands. As such, madrasahs must cultivate a culture of creativity and innovation, empowering educators and business practitioners to collaboratively navigate the challenges of the modern educational environment (Fr et al., 2021; Hanafi et al., 2021).

The discussion also reveals the integral role of creativity within both educational and business contexts. Creativity, as the findings suggest, is a crucial driver of innovation in madrasahs. By fostering a culture of creative thinking, madrasahs can achieve improved educational outcomes and business performance (Imaduddin, 2023; Kuzmin et al., 2022). This finding is supported by previous research, such as that by (Eberl & Drews, 2021), who emphasizes the importance of creativity in business innovation, and Cynthia et al. (2014), who highlight how creativity, coupled with technology, can lead to enhanced organizational performance (A et al., 2024; Armstrong, 2022). For madrasahs, this convergence of educational and business objectives through creative strategies is vital for ensuring their relevance and sustainability in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

Teacher development is crucial for enhancing educational quality and adapting to evolving landscapes. Professional development programs for teachers, including Islamic religious educators, focus on improving pedagogical competence, technological skills, and alignment with Islamic teachings (Sabariah et al., 2023). These programs employ various strategies such as needs analysis, collaborative learning, and IT-based training to foster continuous improvement (Keller, 2009; Mardhiah et al., 2023).

Training is part of human resource development. Training is a process to prepare school personnel (teachers) to carry out a short-term job. Training needs to be given to teachers because teachers have not mastered a new school curriculum material to be taught later (Basri & Abdullah, 2024; Musrifah & Shah, 2024). Therefore, teachers need to be given training so that they can master the expected subject matter. Some of the things that are the basis for the need for training to be given to teachers include: training is carried out because there are teachers who have just graduated from a certain level of education and have no experience.

The monthly meetings, as illustrated in Figure 1, further reinforce the madrasah's commitment to quality improvement. These meetings provide a structured forum for evaluating learning outcomes, discussing challenges, and collaboratively developing actionable solutions. By conducting these meetings regularly, the madrasah not only fosters open communication but also strengthens teamwork and unity among the teaching staff.

Figure 2 which explains the flowchart Structured process for improving educational quality through a series of interconnected steps illustrates a structured process for improving educational quality, which can be applied at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam in Banjarmasin. The process starts with Recruitment, which focuses on selecting the right candidates through algorithms, online assessments, and institutional fit (Lee & Yang, 2011; Riza et al., 2024). This approach ensures that the selected teachers have the qualities and competencies that match the needs of the madrasah. After that, the next stage is Teacher Development, which aims to improve the skills and knowledge of educators by utilizing digital platforms, adaptive learning, and knowledge exchange between teachers. This is important to ensure that teachers have a deeper understanding and can teach with more effective methods.

Next, the process shifts to Performance Management, where feedback systems, real-time insights, and a culture of continuous improvement are put in place to monitor the progress of teachers' performance continuously. This step is important so that the quality of teaching continues to improve over time. The next stage, Creative Thinking & Innovation, focuses on integrating Islamic values, implementing innovation programs, and strengthening digital competencies (S. Arifin et al., 2023; Sitompul et al., 2023). With this approach, the madrasah not only develops academic skills, but also ensures that the education provided is in line with deep religious values, and prepares students to adapt to technological developments (Bunari et al., 2024).

The whole process will be evaluated through Monthly Meetings, where progress evaluation, idea sharing, and follow-up planning are conducted regularly. Through these meetings, each party involved can collaborate to formulate the next steps that will ensure the cycle of education quality improvement continues to take place effectively. This approach is expected to bring positive changes in the effort to create quality education at Madrasah Aliyah Siti Mariam in Banjarmasin.

## **CONCLUSION**

One of the most surprising findings of this research was the extent to which HR practices in madrasahs significantly impact not only recruitment and development but also the overall climate of innovation within educational institutions. While HR's role in traditional administrative functions is well-established, this study revealed that HR's proactive involvement in fostering creativity, facilitating collaboration, and providing ongoing support for testing new ideas directly

contributes to a continuous cycle of innovation. This insight was only realized through in-depth interviews and data collection, highlighting the substantial untapped potential of HR in driving madrasah growth and adaptability.

This research confirms previous findings about the importance of HR's strategic role in promoting organizational innovation. However, it challenges conventional views by demonstrating that HR's influence extends beyond mere administrative tasks to become a key player in the creative and innovative processes within madrasahs. While earlier studies have emphasized HR's traditional role, this study contributes a fresh perspective by highlighting the significance of HR in facilitating continuous learning, collaboration, and implementation of innovative solutions. Additionally, the study introduces the concept of HR as a strategic partner in the educational and business operations of madrasahs, underscoring its role in aligning human capital with broader institutional goals. The findings also suggest that madrasahs can achieve greater sustainability and success by creating a culture that fosters innovation through HR practices.

This study has several limitations. The sample size is relatively small, focusing on a limited number of madrasahs, which may not fully represent the broader landscape of educational institutions. Additionally, the research was conducted in a specific geographical location and did not consider variations across different regions or cultural contexts, which may yield different results. The study also did not explore the impact of HR practices at various educational levels (e.g., elementary, middle, or higher education), which may limit its generalizability. Furthermore, the research was conducted within a single gender and age demographic, potentially restricting the diversity of perspectives. The methodological approach, while insightful, was qualitative and based on interviews and case studies, which may not capture the broader quantitative impacts of HR strategies. To address these limitations, future research could expand the sample size, explore different contexts, include a more diverse demographic, and utilize mixed methods for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding. A more extensive study could provide a richer perspective, offering valuable insights for the development of more targeted policies and strategies.

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