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# Management Training to Improve the Effectiveness of Student Development at Mahad Tahfidz Darul Falah, Selangor, Malaysia

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## **Abstract:**

This community service was carried out at Ma'had Tahfidz Darul Falah, Selangor, Malaysia, involving 15 core administrators of Ma'had using a participatory-educational approach. The community service activities were divided into three stages, namely the preparation stage and identification of needs through field observations and interviews. The implementation stage of training in the form of a three-day intensive workshop that integrated interactive lecture methods, group discussions, case studies, and simulations of organizational structure preparation and annual work programme planning as well as the evaluation and follow-up stage in the form of evaluation. The results of the community service showed improvements in the managerial awareness of administrators, a more systematic organizational structure arrangement, increased communication and coordination between administrators, and more structured and sustainable programme planning. The contribution of this community service lies in the development of Islamic education management science, especially in the context of traditional religious institutions that still rely on informal systems, by presenting a managerial training model based on local practices and a participatory approach that can be adopted by similar institutions in an effort to increase organizational effectiveness and student development.

Keywords: Management, Effectiveness of Student Guidance

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## Abstrak:

Pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini dilaksanakan di Ma'had Tahfidz Darul Falah, Selangor, Malaysia, dengan melibatkan 15 pengurus inti Ma'had menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif-edukatif. Kegiatan pengabdian dibagi ke dalam tiga tahapan yakni tahap persiapan dan identifikasi kebutuhan melalui observasi lapangan serta wawancara. Tahap pelaksanaan pelatihan dalam bentuk workshop intensif selama tiga hari vang mengintegrasikan metode ceramah interaktif, diskusi kelompok, studi kasus, dan simulasi penyusunan struktur organisasi serta perencanaan program kerja tahunan serta tahap evaluasi dan tindak lanjut berupa evaluasi. Hasil pengabdian menunjukkan adanya perbaikan dalam kesadaran manajerial pengurus, penataan struktur organisasi yang lebih sistematis, peningkatan komunikasi dan koordinasi antar pengurus, serta perencanaan program yang lebih terstruktur dan berkelanjutan. Kontribusi pengabdian ini terletak pada pengembangan ilmu manajemen pendidikan Islam, khususnya dalam konteks lembaga keagamaan tradisional yang masih mengandalkan sistem informal, dengan menyajikan model pelatihan manajerial berbasis praktik lokal dan pendekatan partisipatif yang dapat diadopsi oleh institusi serupa dalam upaya peningkatan efektivitas organisasi dan pembinaan santri.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Kepengurusan, Efektivitas Pembinaan Santri

## Introduction

Ma'had Tahfiz Al-Qur'an has a strategic role in forming a Qur'anic generation that is not only superior in terms of memorising the holy verses of the Qur'an, but also has the ability to internalise Islamic values and implement them in everyday life.¹ The existence of this institution is not only a place to learn religion, but also a place for character building, strengthening morals, and forming a strong Islamic identity. In the midst of globalisation, modernisation, and the moral crisis plaguing the younger generation, Ma'had Tahfiz acts as a bastion of authentic Islamic values.² Therefore, the managerial role in this institution becomes very important to ensure that all aspects of coaching can run in a structured, directed and sustainable manner. Professional management can create a supportive learning ecosystem, increase programme efficiency, and encourage the achievement of the institution's big vision in fostering a Qur'anic generation with integrity.

However, the reality in the field shows that not a few ma'had are still struggling with various internal problems that hinder the effectiveness of their guidance. Some of them experience a lack of clarity in the organisational structure, overlapping in the division of tasks, and weak coordination between sections which causes the implementation of the programme to be not optimal.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the absence of an adequate documentation system and the lack of evaluation of ongoing programmes have made institutional development reactive and not oriented towards continuous

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Solechan Solechan and Rheizka Aulia, "Management of the Tahfidzul Quran Programme in Shaping the Character of Students at SDIT Arruhul Jadid Jombang," *Irsyaduna: Journal of Student Studies* 3, no. 2 (17 July 2023): 206–21, https://doi.org/10.54437/irsyaduna.v3i2.1137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Moch Sya'roni Hasan and Mar'atul Azizah, "The Strategy of Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Facing the Challenges of Modernisation," *Al-Idaroh: Journal of Islamic Education Management Studies* 4, no. 1 (7 March 2020): 15–28, https://doi.org/10.54437/alidaroh.v4i1.111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Muhammad Anggung Manumanoso Prasetyo, Agus Salim Salabi, and Akhmad Muadin, "Managing Pesantren Organisational Effectiveness: An Organisational Culture Fit Model," *FENOMENA* 13, no. 01 (1 June 2021): 41–62, https://doi.org/10.21093/fj.v13i01.3245.

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improvement. In many cases, limited human resources are the dominant factor affecting the quality of ma'had management.<sup>4</sup> Administrators generally have a strong religious education background, but do not have adequate understanding in the aspects of institutional management and administration.<sup>5</sup> This competency gap, if not immediately addressed, will have an impact on the low effectiveness of the implementation of coaching programmes, as well as the weak competitiveness of the ma'had in facing the demands of changing times.

As stated by Halim, educational management is a systematic process that involves planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating in an integrated manner to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently.<sup>6</sup> In this framework, Ma'had administrators are not only required to manage technical and administrative aspects, but must also be able to carry out visionary, communicative, and inspirational leadership functions. Ma'had administrators need to set an example in moral exemplarity, be able to resolve conflicts wisely, and maintain the quality of social and spiritual interactions in the ma'had environment.<sup>7</sup> However, challenges arise when administrators do not have adequate training in leadership and organisational management. Therefore, intervention is needed in the form of training that is not only theoretical, but also applicable, contextual, and relevant to the real conditions of the institution. This training is expected to equip administrators with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to manage institutions in a more professional and results-orientated manner.

In response to this need, this community service activity is designed in the form of management training aimed at the management of Ma'had Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah in Selangor, Malaysia. This institution is a non-formal institution that specifically fosters female santri in the Qur'an tahfizul programme and Islamic personality development. Initial observations showed various challenges in the internal management system, ranging from the absence of a standardised organisational structure to the lack of a standardised work system. For this reason, this training was designed to include strengthening the basic theory of management, preparing the organisational structure, planning annual and monthly work programs, setting activity schedules, proportional division of tasks, and simulating periodic performance evaluations. This activity provides direct practice space for administrators to be able to apply management concepts to the institution's work system.

This training is expected to contribute to the improvement of professionalism and performance of the management of Ma'had Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah in Selangor,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Sunardi Sunardi and Isah Munfarida, "Qur'an-Based Pesantren: Strengthening Character Education in Facing Global Currents," *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal* 2, no. 1 (7 October 2024): 13–26, https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v2i1.1565.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Rangga Hasibuan et al., "Modern Pesantren Management in the Middle of Educational Challenges: A Literature Study," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 4, no. 2 (14 June 2024): 227–32, https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v4i2.542.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> A. Halim et al, *Pesantren Management* (Pustaka Pesantren, 2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Abdullah Muntaha and Andi Asyhari, "Kiai Leadership in Pesantren-Based School Management," *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal* 3, no. 1 (13 May 2025): 17–26, https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v3i1.1880.

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Malaysia. In addition to improving internal work patterns, this activity is expected to foster a work culture that is more collaborative, innovative, and orientated towards the quality of student development services. In the long run, this training has the potential to become a model of institutional capacity building that can be replicated in other ma'hads. The success of this programme will be an important foundation in shaping a more professional, accountable, and sustainable ma'had management system. Thus, Ma'had will not only be able to produce spiritually superior Al-Qur'an memorisers, but also act as an adaptive and progressive educational institution in responding to the challenges of the times.

# **Method of Implementation**

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This community service was carried out at Ma'had Tahfidz Darul Falah, Selangor, Malaysia using a participatory-educative approach involving 15 participants from the Ma'had management. The community service activities are divided into three stages, namely the preparation and identification of needs, training implementation, and evaluation and follow-up. The first stage began with field observations and interviews with Ma'had Tahfidz Darul Falah administrators. This activity aims to identify the current organisational structure, map the weaknesses in the management system, and explore the urgent needs faced by the management in the process of fostering students. The results of this needs identification became the basis for preparing the training design.

The second stage of training implementation is carried out in the form of an intensive workshop for three days. This training involved all Mahad Tahfidz administrators and used various active learning methods such as interactive lectures, group discussions, case studies, and simulations. Interactive lectures were used to deliver theoretical key materials as well as to open a discussion space between the speaker and the participants. Group discussions were used to explore participants' experiences in dealing with organisational problems, while case studies were used to analyse the management success of other relevant institutions. Simulations were carried out in the form of exercises in preparing organisational structures and planning annual work programs. The training materials covered the basics of educational organisation management, ideal management structure, annual programme planning and periodic evaluation, as well as team communication and coordination techniques.

The third stage is evaluation and follow-up. Evaluation was conducted formatively and summatively. Formative evaluation was conducted during the training process through direct questions, feedback from participants, and assessment of the results of group discussions. Meanwhile, summative evaluation was conducted at the end of the activity by distributing questionnaires to measure the level of understanding and satisfaction of the participants and asking each division of the board to develop an action plan based on the material that had been obtained. As a form of programme sustainability, the service team also provided direct mentoring facilities for fifteen days post-training to facilitate the implementation of training results in the field.

# **Service Results and Discussion**

# **Managerial Problems in the Management of the Institution**

The results of observations and interviews conducted with the management of Mahad Tahfidz Darul Falah Malaysia revealed various managerial problems that hinder the effectiveness of santri development. The organisational structure, which has not been formally arranged and documented, has led to unclear roles and responsibilities of each administrator. This irregularity results in frequent overlapping of duties, and sometimes even some responsibilities are neglected. One administrator stated, "We don't have a clear division of tasks yet and this makes the work not well coordinated."

This is consistent with Solechan's findings that an unsystematic organisational structure will lead to inefficiencies and communication barriers, negatively affecting organisational performance. In addition, the internal communication that has been taking place is still partial and one-way, not allowing for effective feedback between administrators, which in turn leads to miscommunication and unresolved conflicts. Furthermore, the planning of coaching programmes tends to be spontaneous and reactive to immediate needs, without any long-term vision or strategy. Kristiawan explained that structured and long-term goal-orientated planning is essential to maintain continuity and achieve the expected results. The absence of written planning documents also makes it difficult for administrators to conduct systematic monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, human resource management also shows significant weaknesses. The capacity of the board in terms of administration, financial accountability and programme management is still very limited. As a result, activity and financial reports are not well documented and transparent. This situation can lead to distrust from donors and demotivate administrators. Fithriasari underlined that human resources are the main capital of the organisation that must be managed professionally to support the achievement of goals. <sup>10</sup>This condition shows the need for comprehensive improvement which includes organisational restructuring, increasing the capacity of the board, and establishing an effective communication and coordination system as the foundation of institutional management.

# Training Strategy and Implementation of Andragogy

In an effort to overcome these problems, the management training was designed with an approach that refers to Knowles' andragogy principles. <sup>11</sup> The main principle is that learning must be relevant to the participants' experience and contextual to the conditions of the institution, so that participants can immediately apply the knowledge gained practically. The training, which was attended by 15 core administrators, used interactive lectures, group discussions, case studies, and programme planning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Solechan Solechan et al., "Pesantren Organisation Management Training for the Management of Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang," *An Naf'ah: Journal of Community Service* 2, no. 1 (5 February 2024): 11–19, https://doi.org/10.54437/annafah.v2i1.1502.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Muhammad Kristiawan et al., *Education management* (Deepublish, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Luthfie Noor Fithriasari and Muhammad Yahya Ashari, "The Role of Planning in the Development of Modern Islamic Education Institutions," *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal* 1, no. 2 (2 November 2023): 84–97, https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v1i2.1312.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Sugiyanto and Lilik Wahyuni, *Adult Education (Andragogy)* (Universitas Brawijaya Press, 2020).

simulations. Group discussions and case studies provided space for participants to share their experiences while analysing the real problems they faced. The programme planning simulation invited participants to practice planning steps starting from problem identification, goal setting, and success indicators.

According to Saputra, adult learning transformation occurs when participants experience a paradigm shift in thinking through critical reflection on their experiences. <sup>12</sup> This can be seen in this training, where participants began to shift their mindset from being mere task implementers to managers who are able to design and manage programmes systematically. One of the participants said, "This training opened my eyes that all this time we have been running activities without clear planning. Now I understand the importance of systematisation so that the institution can grow and last long." This statement shows that the training succeeded in building managerial awareness and triggering significant mindset changes.

In addition, the training also encouraged the formation of a collaborative spirit among the administrators. In discussion and simulation sessions, participants complemented each other's ideas and developed joint solutions to various challenges faced by the institution. This dynamic strengthened the relationships between board members and created a more solid teamwork culture. The participatory learning process makes each individual feel that they have an important contribution to make, resulting in a sense of collective responsibility in running the institution's programmes. This spirit of collaboration becomes valuable social capital to strengthen the sustainability of the organisation in the future.





Figure 1. Knowles' Andragogy Training for Ma'had Administrators

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ade Saputra Saputra, Dewi wulandari Fahrezi, and Afriza Afriza, "Andragogy: Adaptation of Adult Learning in the Digitalisation Era," *AL-MIKRAJ Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities (E-ISSN 2745-4584)* 4, no. 02 (1 February 2024): 501–13, https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v4i02.4528.

In addition, the use of andragogy methods encourages increased learning motivation and active participation of participants, which in theory increases the effectiveness of learning. Participants feel involved in the learning process that is directly related to their responsibilities, so that the results of the training can be implemented immediately.

# **Training Impact on Structural and Cognitive Change**

After the training, the impact of changes to the organisational structure began to be seen. Mahad Tahfidz began to implement a more formal organisational structure with a clear and documented division of tasks. The establishment of specific divisions or areas of work, such as administration, finance, and coaching programmes, helped clarify the role of each administrator. Regular coordination meetings were started to ensure that communication was effective and administrators could exchange information about programme progress and obstacles. This change in communication pattern from top-down to dialogic and participatory strengthened team solidarity and coordination. Mahatika states that two-way communication and member participation in decision-making can significantly improve organisational performance.<sup>13</sup>

The use of simple management tools, such as activity calendars, report forms, and task checklists, began to be implemented as a medium to control programme implementation. Management tools are essential to ensure that every activity is planned and runs according to schedule, while facilitating evaluation and continuous improvement. Cognitively, the training succeeded in changing the mindset of the board from a traditional reactive mindset to a more proactive and result-orientated one. The board realised that management is not just routine administration, but a strategic process that must be managed with professionalism and careful planning. This transformation shows the success of the andragogy-based learning process that combines theory with practice.

# **Improved Operational Effectiveness of the Institution**

The implementation of the training results has a positive impact on the operational effectiveness of Mahad Tahfidz Darul Falah Selangor. The planning of the coaching programme becomes more structured and sustainable, with a clear schedule of activities and measurable indicators of success. For example, evaluation of students' memorisation progress is carried out regularly and documented, so that the results can be monitored and evaluated systematically. The utilisation of simple technology such as Google Forms for monitoring students' memorisation facilitates real-time data collection and reduces the burden of manual administration. This digital innovation is an adaptive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Anis Mahatika and Jamilus Jamilus, "Organisational Culture in Building the Independence of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools," *Isema Journal: Islamic Educational Management* 7, no. 2 (31 December 2022): 105–16, https://doi.org/10.15575/isema.v7i2.17926.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Hani Adi Wijono and A. Andri Riyadi, "Implementation of Infrastructure Management at MTs Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Seblak Jombang," *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal* 1, no. 1 (28 July 2023): 52–62, https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v1i1.1168.

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step that is in line with technological developments and the trend of digitalisation in education management.<sup>15</sup>

The management also establishes a transparent and accountable reporting system, which increases the trust of donors and other stakeholders. Solechan emphasises the importance of systematic performance measurement to support organisational accountability and continuous improvement. Furthermore, the board's involvement in the planning and evaluation process directly increases the sense of ownership of the programme, which leads to higher motivation and commitment. Herzberg's motivation theory suggests that a sense of achievement and responsibility contributes to improved performance and job satisfaction.

# **Implications for Institutional Resilience and Sustainability**

The internal management improvements that occurred after the training helped strengthen the resilience of the organisation in the face of internal and external dynamics. For example, board changes that previously often caused vacancies and confusion can now be better managed with SOPs, a documented organisational structure, and an annual work plan. This change also opens up opportunities for the development of strategic partnerships with donor agencies, government, and communities. With a transparent and accountable management system, Mahad is able to build a positive reputation that encourages increased resource support and cooperation.

Hasan emphasised that organisational resilience depends on the ability to adapt and innovate continuously.<sup>17</sup> Mahad, which has begun to implement a formal and participatory management system, shows readiness to adapt to environmental changes and evolving challenges. Thus, management transformation in Mahad not only improves short-term effectiveness, but also strengthens the foundation of the institution's long-term sustainability, which is very important for the continuity of santri development and the institution's contribution to the development of religious education.

Table 1. Comparison of Managerial Conditions Before and After Training

Managerial Aspects	Before Training	After Training
Organisation Structure		Formal structure with clear division of labour and job description

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Zaenal Abidin, "Educational Management of Pesantren in Digital Era 4.0," *Journal of Islamic Education* 17, no. 2 (31 December 2020): 203–16, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2020.172-07.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Solechan Solechan et al., "Pesantren Organisational Management Training for the Management of Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang," *An Naf'ah: Journal of Community Service* 2, no. 1 (5 February 2024): 11–19, https://doi.org/10.54437/annafah.v2i1.1502.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Moch Sya'roni Hasan and Mar'atul Azizah, "The Strategy of Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Facing the Challenges of Modernisation," *Al-Idaroh: Journal of Islamic Education Management Studies* 4, no. 1 (7 March 2020): 15–28, https://doi.org/10.54437/alidaroh.v4i1.111.

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Programme Planning	Unorganised, reactive, undocumented	Annual and monthly work programmes developed with indicators and deadlines
Communication & Coordination Patterns	Sporadic, unscheduled, undocumented	Regular meetings, two-way communication, minutes and activity reports
Evaluation & Documentation	Almost not done systematically	Periodic evaluation and digital/manual documentation of activities have begun to be implemented.
Management Mindset	As technical executor, passive in decision making	Result-oriented, active in strategy development and evaluation
Santri Development System	Not integrated between academics and morals	Integrated coaching and evaluation schedule, based on student development indicators
Attitude towards change	Resistant to structural change	More open, able to accept criticism and suggestions, and initiative in improvement

#### Conclusion

The management training conducted at Mahad Tahfidz Darul Falah, Selangor, Malaysia, addresses managerial issues that have been a major obstacle in the effectiveness of student development. Field findings show that the institution faces various challenges, such as the irregularity of the organisational structure, unsystematic program planning, suboptimal communication and coordination, and unprofessional human resource management. Training with a contextual and relevant andragogy approach was able to build the managerial awareness of administrators and change the mindset from administrative executors to managers who are oriented towards results and structured processes. After the training, there were improvements in organisational structure, internal communication, and the application of simple management tools that support operational effectiveness. The increased capacity of the board has an impact on the planning, implementation and evaluation of coaching programmes that are more measurable and sustainable. In addition, transparency and accountability in the management of the institution are increasingly maintained, thereby increasing stakeholder trust and institutional resilience in the face of changes and challenges.

This service has limitations, including the scope of training that only covers core administrators so that it has not reached all members of the organisation as a whole. In

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addition, the limited training time limits the depth of material and optimal application. Organisational culture factors and change resistance are also challenges that need further attention so that management changes can be sustainable. This service makes an important contribution to the development of Islamic education management science, especially in the context of traditional religious institutions that still use informal systems. By integrating modern management theory and andragogy principles, this research enriches the literature on strategies to improve organisational effectiveness based on local values and practices. The results of this service can also serve as a model for similar institutions in implementing effective managerial training to improve the performance and sustainability of religious education institutions.

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