

# The Principal's Managerial Role in Implementing the Excellent Hafidz Program at Islamic Elementary School

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**ABSTRACT.** This study examines the principal's managerial role in implementing the Hafidz Excellence Program at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis, Bringin District, Semarang Regency. The research was motivated by the need to develop an effective management model for Qur'an memorization programs that simultaneously strengthen students' character and spiritual values. The study aims to analyze how the principal carries out the four managerial functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—in managing the program to improve students' competence in Qur'an memorization and discipline. A qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, consisting of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the principal effectively performs all managerial functions by involving teachers and parents in participatory planning, structuring clear task divisions, motivating students through rewards and guidance, and ensuring program quality through systematic supervision and evaluation. This comprehensive managerial approach fosters collaboration, consistency, and accountability among stakeholders, thereby improving student performance and spiritual growth. The study implies that effective principal management integrating modern leadership principles with Islamic values can serve as a sustainable model for faith-based educational institutions seeking to enhance Qur'anic learning and character education.

**Keywords:** *Hafidz program, Islamic education, Managerial role, Principal leadership*



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## INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and rapid digital transformation, Islamic education faces a crucial challenge in shaping a Qur'anic generation that is intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and morally upright. The integration of spiritual and intellectual education is increasingly essential to counterbalance the dominance of secular and technological learning paradigms (Huda et al., 2025). Consequently, Islamic elementary schools are required to innovate through programs that nurture students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual growth simultaneously. One such innovation is the *Hafidz Excellence Program*, which aims not only to improve Qur'an memorization but also to cultivate Islamic values and strengthen students' character (Samad et al., 2023).

Previous studies have confirmed that *tahfidz* programs play a significant role in developing religious character and discipline among students. However, research also reveals several persistent challenges in implementation, such as uneven memorization ability, lack of motivation,

and minimal parental engagement at home (Rustiana et al., 2022); (Al-Adawiyah et al., 2024). These findings indicate that the program's success depends largely on effective school management—especially the principal's managerial role in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising program activities (Aslan, 2022; (Khalid et al., 2023)

Despite the growing body of research on *tahfidz* education, most studies have focused on secondary schools or Islamic boarding schools (Amirulloh & Najib, 2023); (Somantri, 2023). Limited attention has been given to *madrasah ibtidaiyah* (MI), where children's foundational character formation takes place. Furthermore, the existing literature tends to emphasize instructional or spiritual aspects rather than managerial processes. This gap highlights the need for research that explores how principals exercise managerial leadership in the context of Qur'an-based education, especially at the elementary level.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the principal's managerial role in implementing the *Hafidz Excellence Program* at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis, Bringin District, Semarang Regency. The research investigates how the principal performs core managerial functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC)—within a framework that integrates modern management principles with Islamic educational values. This perspective provides a holistic understanding of how managerial competence supports both academic and spiritual objectives in faith-based schools (Firnanda & Susilo, 2025); (Sutiana, 2025)

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) analyze the principal's managerial strategies in managing the *Hafidz Excellence Program*, (2) identify challenges and solutions in implementing the program effectively, and (3) propose a Qur'anic value-based management model applicable to other Islamic elementary schools. The unit of analysis is the principal of MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis, with supporting data from teachers, students, and parents involved in the program.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, aimed at exploring the principal's managerial role in implementing the *Hafidz Excellence Program* at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis. The qualitative method was selected because it allows an in-depth, contextual understanding of phenomena in natural settings (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). The case study design was considered the most appropriate to capture the complexity of the principal's managerial practices, as it enables detailed investigation of real-life contexts and experiences. This methodological approach is therefore both reliable and valid for producing comprehensive insights into the managerial dynamics of faith-based educational institutions.

The research was conducted at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis, located in Bringin District, Semarang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The school was purposively chosen because of its strong commitment to Qur'anic education and its consistent implementation of the *Hafidz Excellence Program* despite limited resources. The study was carried out over a six-month period, from March to August 2025, covering preparation, data collection, and validation phases.

The researcher's presence was active throughout the entire process, serving as the primary instrument who directly interacted with participants, observed the school environment, and interpreted emerging data. The main subject of this study was the school principal, while supporting informants included *tahfidz* teachers, students, and parents involved in the program. The involvement of these diverse participants ensured data triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

The data collection techniques consisted of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was used to examine how the principal performed managerial functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—in daily *Hafidz* activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, students, and parents to explore their experiences and perceptions regarding the program's management. Documentation analysis involved reviewing related school documents such as program plans,

memorization reports, curriculum integration records, and evaluation results to corroborate observational and interview data.

The instruments used in this study included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation checklists developed based on the study's objectives. Each instrument was designed to ensure that data collection remained consistent and aligned with the research focus. The data analysis process followed the interactive model of (Miles et al., 2014), which comprises three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was performed by selecting and coding relevant information, data display was done through narrative summaries and matrices to identify emerging patterns, and verification was achieved through triangulation and participant confirmation.

To guarantee the validity and trustworthiness of findings, the study applied the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in (Armstrong, 2010): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of data sources and methods, and peer debriefing. Transferability was ensured by providing detailed contextual descriptions of the research site and participants. Dependability was maintained by systematically documenting every step of the research process, while confirmability was achieved through reflective analysis and data auditing.

Overall, this research method provided a rigorous and trustworthy foundation for understanding how the principal's managerial competence contributes to the success of the *Hafidz Excellence Program*. The methodological design—comprising contextual immersion, multiple data sources, and systematic validation—ensures that the research findings are both dependable and representative of the real conditions in the field.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The main findings of this study reveal the principal's active managerial role in ensuring the success of the *Hafidz Excellence Program* at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis, Bringin District, Semarang Regency. The results are organized into four interrelated subthemes that align with the principal's core managerial functions: planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising.

#### The Principal's Role in Program Planning

The principal demonstrated a systematic and well-structured approach to planning the *Hafidz Excellence Program*. Planning began with the formulation of clear objectives, determining memorization targets for each grade, and identifying the competencies and schedules required for program implementation. The principal involved *tahfidz* teachers and parents during the initial planning meetings to ensure alignment between school and home-based support. This collaborative planning strengthened the sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders.

Documentation showed that planning was supported by detailed timelines, activity schedules, and specific achievement indicators, which guided the program throughout the academic year. As observed in the school's *Hafidz Program Plan*, every class had a designated target for memorizing surahs, ensuring that progress could be monitored consistently. The clarity and inclusiveness of the planning process reflect effective management that establishes a strong foundation for the program's sustainability.

#### The Principal's Role in Organizing Resources

Organizing was carried out through a structured division of tasks and responsibilities among the school staff. The principal established an organizational framework that included a *Tahfidz* coordinator, *murojaah* mentors, and class teachers. Each had a specific role in facilitating daily memorization, assessing students' progress, and reporting outcomes.

Observation results indicated that the principal successfully optimized both human and material resources. Teachers were assigned according to their memorization competence, while supporting materials such as Qur'anic textbooks and memorization journals were adequately provided. The school also maintained a weekly progress report system, enabling consistent data

collection on students' memorization outcomes. This organized structure encouraged efficient communication, accountability, and cooperation among the program team members.

### **The Principal's Role in Implementing the Program**

The implementation of the *Hafidz Excellence Program* followed a disciplined and spiritual atmosphere integrated into students' daily routines. The *setoran hafalan* (memorization recitation) was conducted every morning from 07.30 to 08.15, preceded by the recitation of *Asmaul Husna* and *Dhuha* prayer. The principal consistently motivated students by giving verbal praise, prayers, and small rewards for reaching their memorization goals.

In addition, the principal provided technical assistance for students who experienced difficulties, offering extra sessions outside class hours. This individualized support proved effective in improving students' confidence and consistency in memorization. Interviews with teachers revealed that the principal also facilitated regular coordination meetings to identify obstacles and adjust teaching strategies. The combination of motivation, structured schedules, and responsive leadership contributed to a positive learning culture that fostered both spiritual and academic growth.

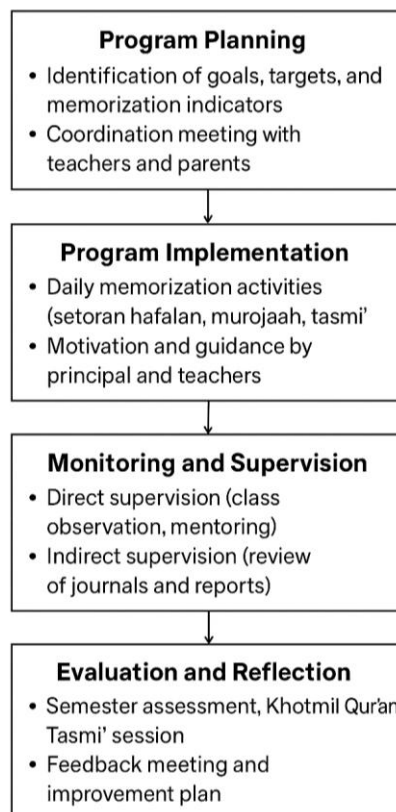


**Figure 1.** The Implementation of Hafidz Program

### **The Principal's Role in Supervision and Evaluation**

Supervision and evaluation were implemented both directly and indirectly. Direct supervision was conducted through classroom visits and observations of daily memorization activities. The principal also organized periodic meetings with teachers to discuss progress and solutions for students who had not yet met the memorization targets. Indirect supervision was achieved through reviewing the *Hafidz* journals, memorization reports, and evaluation sheets maintained by each class.

At the end of each semester, the principal compiled a comprehensive report summarizing student achievements and the effectiveness of teaching strategies. The school also held *Khotmil Qur'an* and *Tasmi'* sessions as forms of summative assessment to measure the quality and accuracy of students' memorization. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the *Hafidz* monitoring system implemented at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis.



Source: Research documentation, 2025

**Figure 2** Hafidz Quran Monitoring and Evaluation Flow

The data in Figure 2 show that monitoring and evaluation were carried out cyclically from planning and implementation to reflection ensuring that program improvements were continuously made. This supervisory process not only maintained program quality but also strengthened teacher accountability and student motivation.

### **Integration of Managerial Roles and Program Impact**

Overall, the findings indicate that the principal's managerial leadership effectively supported the *Hafidz Excellence Program*. The integration of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising functions resulted in improved student performance and heightened enthusiasm for Qur'an memorization. The research also found a strong collaboration between teachers, parents, and students, forming a community of practice that promoted consistency in memorization habits both at school and at home.

The combination of managerial competence and spiritual leadership created a distinctive school culture where Qur'anic values were internalized in daily learning activities. The study concludes that the principal's managerial role not only enhances memorization outcomes but also contributes significantly to students' character development and the school's overall quality of Islamic education.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the principal's managerial role in implementing the *Hafidz Excellence Program* at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis. The findings revealed that the principal performed the four main managerial functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—effectively, thereby contributing to the success and sustainability of the Qur'an memorization program. These findings explicitly answer the research questions regarding how managerial competence influences the quality and outcomes of faith-based educational programs.

### **Managerial Planning and Strategic Alignment**

The results show that the principal's planning was systematic and participatory, involving teachers and parents to design objectives, schedules, and achievement indicators. This finding aligns with (Shobandi, 2022) and (Sutiana, 2025), who emphasize that collaborative planning enhances program ownership and ensures alignment with school goals. From the perspective of educational management theory, such planning corresponds to the *goal-oriented management model* (Hoy & Miskel, 2013), which views planning as the foundation for coordinating school activities.

The involvement of multiple stakeholders also confirms the relevance of *distributed leadership theory* (Spillane, 2017), which highlights shared decision-making as a key driver of school improvement. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on curriculum content (Rustiana et al., 2022); (Kalimatusyaro, 2024), this research contributes by demonstrating that strategic planning rooted in Islamic values and supported by community engagement can improve the sustainability of memorization programs at the elementary level.

### **Organizational Management and Resource Optimization**

In organizing the *Hafidz Excellence Program*, the principal applied a clear structural framework by delegating tasks to a *tahfidz* coordinator and class mentors. This aligns with (Alwi et al., 2023) and (Khalid et al., 2023), who argue that transparent task distribution and organizational clarity are essential for effective program management. The finding also resonates with the *human resource management model* proposed by (Bush, 2018), where leadership effectiveness depends on the ability to allocate human and material resources strategically.

This study extends (Bush, 2018) model by integrating Qur'anic ethical values—*amanah* (trustworthiness) and *musyawarah* (consultation)—into resource management, forming a spiritually driven administrative structure. The result indicates that Islamic values can strengthen, rather than substitute, modern managerial concepts, thereby contributing a contextual adaptation of management theory for Islamic schools in Indonesia.

### **Implementation and Motivational Leadership**

The implementation stage demonstrated that the principal maintained discipline and consistency in program execution while fostering intrinsic student motivation through rewards, praise, and spiritual reinforcement. These findings are consistent with transformational leadership theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006), which underscores the importance of inspiring followers through motivation and vision.

Empirically, this study supports (Al-Adawiyah et al., 2024) and (Setiawan et al., 2025), who found that affective leadership and spiritual motivation improve learning engagement in *tahfidz*-based institutions. However, the current study contributes novelty by showing how affective motivation can be systematically embedded into daily school management routines—such as fixed schedules, reflection sessions, and recognition of student achievement—forming a hybrid model of *motivational-managerial leadership* in Islamic elementary schools.

### **Supervision, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement**

Supervision was conducted through both direct classroom observations and periodic evaluations, reflecting the principles of the *control cycle model* (Robbins & Judge, 2016). These efforts correspond with the continuous improvement approach advocated by Deming (2013), emphasizing feedback loops for program enhancement. The combination of direct supervision and data-based evaluation at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis provides empirical evidence that

managerial supervision rooted in faith-based values can foster accountability, transparency, and program quality.

The finding corroborates research by (Maryatun & Zulfikasari, 2025), who highlighted that systematic evaluation mechanisms significantly influence the consistency of *tahfidz* programs. Moreover, the inclusion of external supervision from the local education office ensures objectivity and alignment with broader institutional standards, a dimension that remains underexplored in previous studies.

### **Integration of Findings and Theoretical Implications**

By integrating the four managerial functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—this study confirms the validity of the *POAC managerial framework* (Koontz & O'Donnell, 2019) while expanding it through the inclusion of spiritual values derived from Islamic teachings. The result suggests that managerial effectiveness in Islamic schools is not solely determined by administrative competence but also by the principal's spiritual leadership and moral integrity.

This integration leads to a proposed theoretical model called “Faith-Based Managerial Leadership”, which blends modern educational management principles with Islamic spirituality. The model redefines managerial leadership in religious schools as a dynamic interplay between *administrative rationality* and *spiritual accountability*. Thus, this research not only confirms existing theories but also modifies them to fit the sociocultural and religious context of Indonesian madrasahs.

### **Comparison with Previous Studies and Novel Contribution**

Compared to prior research by (Amirulloh & Najib, 2023), which focused on managerial capability at the secondary level, and (Aslan, 2022), which emphasized motivation in memorization, this study offers a broader analytical framework encompassing managerial systems, community involvement, and faith integration at the elementary level. The novelty lies in demonstrating that spiritual leadership principles can be operationalized through measurable managerial practices that enhance student outcomes.

Furthermore, the results complement international studies such as (Hallinger, 2011) on instructional leadership and (Bush, 2018) on strategic management, by contextualizing their models within Islamic educational institutions. This contributes to the global discourse on how faith-based schools can apply universal management theories while preserving religious authenticity.

### **Practical and Theoretical Contributions**

Theoretically, this study strengthens the argument that effective school management in Islamic education must incorporate the dual dimension of leadership: *managerial efficiency* and *spiritual direction*. It confirms that modern management theories—when contextualized with Islamic principles such as *ikhlas* (sincerity), *ta'dib* (moral discipline), and *amanah* (trust)—can enhance the holistic development of students. Practically, the study provides a replicable model for other Islamic elementary schools seeking to improve *tahfidz* programs through evidence-based managerial practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study conclude that the principal's managerial role is a key determinant in the success of the *Hafidz Excellence Program* at MI Raudlatul Muta'allimin Pakis. In the planning stage, the principal showed strong managerial competence by formulating clear objectives, setting memorization targets, arranging schedules, and involving both teachers and parents in the decision-making process. This participatory planning approach ensured that the program was well-coordinated and supported by all school stakeholders. In the organizing process, the principal built a systematic structure that clearly defined roles and responsibilities among the *tahfidz* coordinator, teachers, and mentors. This structure optimized human and material resources while fostering effective collaboration and accountability within the school community.



During implementation, the principal acted as both a motivator and facilitator, maintaining discipline while creating a positive and spiritual learning environment. Through motivational efforts such as praise, prayer, and rewards, the principal successfully enhanced students' enthusiasm and consistency in memorizing the Qur'an. This combination of managerial discipline and spiritual guidance strengthened students' academic and moral development. The supervision and evaluation processes were carried out in a structured and continuous manner through classroom observations, progress meetings, and reviews of *Hafidz* journals and memorization reports. The principal's ongoing monitoring and follow-up actions ensured that the program remained consistent, accountable, and responsive to students' needs.

In general, the findings emphasize that the effectiveness of the *Hafidz Excellence Program* depends on the principal's ability to integrate modern managerial principles with Islamic values. This integration forms a comprehensive model of *Faith-Based Managerial Leadership*, in which management functions such as planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising are aligned with spiritual integrity and moral accountability. The study highlights that leadership in Islamic schools must not only focus on administrative efficiency but also nurture faith-based values that shape students' character and religious commitment.

Looking ahead, the results of this research open opportunities for further studies to develop and expand the model of faith-based managerial leadership in various Islamic educational contexts. Future research can examine its application in areas such as character education, literacy development, or digital Qur'anic learning using comparative or mixed-method designs. Such studies will strengthen the theoretical framework of Islamic educational management and provide practical insights for principals and policymakers seeking to enhance the quality and sustainability of *tahfidz* programs in Islamic schools.

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