



Strategic Management of Elementary Madrasah Principals in Improving The Quality of Education Through A Swot Analysis Approach

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Abstract : *Improving the quality of education in Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) requires strategic leadership capable of integrating institutional strengths with external environmental dynamics. However, in many educational institutions, SWOT analysis is often limited to organizational assessment and has not been optimally utilized as a strategic decision-making framework for school leaders. This study aims to examine how the principal's strategic management contributes to educational quality improvement through a SWOT-based approach at Madrasah. A qualitative case study design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that the principal implemented strategic management by integrating SWOT analysis into the stages of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the school's flagship Qur'an memorization (Tahfiz) program. The strategy was supported by qualified human resources, a distinctive religious curriculum, and visionary leadership committed to the school's vision, resulting in improved student achievement, the development of Qur'an-memorizing graduates with strong Islamic character, and increased public trust in the institution. This study implies that SWOT analysis functions not merely as an organizational assessment tool but as a strategic leadership framework that supports sustainable educational quality improvement in Islamic elementary schools.*

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education in Islamic elementary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah) has become a strategic issue that is increasingly receiving attention amidst changing societal demands and developments in national education policy (Fitriani, 2025; Kunta, 2025; Kusumawati, 2026). Madrasah principals no longer merely carry out administrative functions but are also required to be able to design adaptive strategies to improve the quality of educational services sustainably (Adzimah, 2024; Holidi, 2026). In

practice, many madrasahs still face various challenges, such as limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure, competition with other educational institutions, and changing student needs. These conditions require madrasah principals to have the ability to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a basis for formulating appropriate policies. Thus, strategic management becomes an important instrument in realizing effective, efficient, and educationally quality-oriented madrasah governance.

Social facts in the field show that the success of a madrasah is greatly influenced by the madrasah principal's ability to manage internal potential while responding appropriately to external environmental dynamics (Hikmah, 2026; Mohlas, 2025). Some madrasahs are able to improve academic and non-academic achievements through the utilization of existing resources, while others still experience difficulties due to weak strategic planning and suboptimal program evaluation (Nadhifah, 2026; Najiburohman, 2025). The SWOT analysis approach is a relevant method because it can provide a comprehensive picture of the actual conditions of the institution as a basis for decision-making. Through this analysis, madrasah principals can set more targeted program priorities, anticipate various risks, and maximize development opportunities. Therefore, the implementation of strategic management based on SWOT analysis is becoming an increasingly important need to support the improvement of the quality of education in elementary madrasahs.

Based on a review of several previous studies, the SWOT analysis approach has proven effective as a basis for developing quality improvement strategies in various educational institutions. Ibnu Rochman's research confirms that SWOT analysis is able to produce alternative strategies that are appropriate to the internal and external conditions of educational institutions. Andia Ro'isatul Vitri et al.'s research shows that SWOT-based strategic management at MTsN 3 Tulungagung places the institution in the *Strength–Opportunity (SO) quadrant*, thus supporting an aggressive strategy in improving the quality of education. Meanwhile, Eneng Garnika et al. emphasize the implementation of SWOT in quality planning in elementary schools, while Edi Sujoko develops a quality improvement strategy based on the results of a SWOT analysis at the junior high school level (Albustomi, 2025; Rahman, 2025). The similarity between these studies and this study lies in the use of SWOT analysis as an instrument for formulating strategies to improve the quality of education. As for the difference, this study specifically examines how the strategic management of elementary madrasah principals integrates SWOT analysis in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating quality policies in madrasahs, thus providing a more specific perspective on the role of strategic leadership of madrasah principals as a research novelty.

The focus of this research is directed at improving the quality of education through the implementation of strategic management of madrasah principals based on a SWOT analysis approach as an effort to realize adaptive, effective, and sustainable institutional governance. This focus is based on the social fact that improving the quality of education in elementary madrasahs is not only determined by the availability of facilities, teaching staff, or curriculum, but also by the ability of the madrasah principal to formulate, implement, and evaluate strategies based on internal potential and external environmental dynamics. The uniqueness of this research lies in the examination of the role of the madrasah principal as the main actor who integrates the results of the SWOT analysis into strategic decision-making to improve the quality of learning, strengthen organizational culture, develop educator competencies, and increase the

competitiveness of madrasahs. This approach provides a more comprehensive perspective than previous research which generally only focuses on mapping SWOT factors or developing institutional strategies without reviewing in depth the strategic leadership of madrasah principals in mobilizing all resources towards improving the quality of education in a sustainable manner.

The uniqueness of improving the quality of education at MINU Sunan Ampel 1 Wonorejo Maron Probolinggo is evident in the ability of the madrasah principal to integrate Islamic values, organizational culture, and strategic management into every institutional development policy. Based on the conditions developing at the madrasah, each quality improvement program is not only directed at achieving academic achievement, but also at strengthening the religious character of students through the Al-Qur'an memorization program, habituation of worship, development of teacher competencies, and close partnerships with the committee and the surrounding community. All of these programs are designed based on mapping internal potential and external challenges so that decisions taken are more focused and in accordance with the needs of the madrasah. This condition indicates the assumption that improving the quality of education is not solely determined by the availability of facilities and infrastructure, but by the ability of the madrasah principal to manage all resources strategically by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the institution. Thus, MINU Sunan Ampel 1 demonstrates the characteristics of adaptive, participatory, and continuous improvement-oriented quality management, thus becoming a unique feature that distinguishes it from other madrasahs in facing the dynamics and demands for ever-growing educational quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of strategic management of madrasah principals in improving the quality of education through a SWOT analysis approach based on real conditions in the field (Bantugan, 2025; Mulyana et al., 2024; Silverman & Patterson, 2021). Meanwhile, the type of case study research is used to comprehensively examine the process of formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies carried out by madrasah principals in certain contexts so as to produce a complete picture of strategic management practices in educational institutions (Yona, 2014). The study was conducted at MINU Sunan Ampel 1 Wonorejo Maron, Probolinggo Regency, with research subjects including madrasah principals, vice-principals, teachers, education staff, madrasah committees, as well as documents related to strategic planning and improving the quality of education.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were used to obtain a factual picture of the implementation of strategic management, quality culture, and educational quality improvement activities in madrasahs. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured with the madrasah principal as the main informant and supported by the vice principal, teachers, education staff, and the madrasah committee to obtain information regarding the process of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in strategic decision making. The documentation study was conducted by reviewing the Madrasah Work Plan (RKM), Annual Work Plan (RKT), Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM), work program reports, madrasah achievement data, and other relevant documents as

supporting materials and data triangulation.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The data analysis technique uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation was carried out by selecting, grouping, and simplifying information related to the implementation of strategic management of madrasah principals based on SWOT analysis (Kholilurrohman et al., 2026). Furthermore, the data was presented in narrative, matrix, and table form to facilitate researchers in identifying patterns of relationships between findings (Putri & Damayanti, 2025). The final stage was drawing and verifying conclusions through data interpretation carried out continuously until credible research findings were obtained. To ensure the validity of the data, the study applied source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation, as well as conducting member checking with informants to ensure the conformity of the interpretation results with the actual conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of strategic management at MINU Sunan Ampel 1 is carried out systematically by integrating analysis of internal and external conditions as a basis for developing educational quality improvement programs. Although the madrasah has not yet compiled a formal SWOT analysis document in matrix form, strategic management practices have been reflected in the madrasah principal's ability to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a basis for formulating institutional policies. All policies are directed to support the madrasah's vision, namely *"Producing Al-Qur'an Memorizers who are Faithful, Devout, and High-Achieving (ManTap)."* This vision serves as a guideline for decision-making, budget allocation, development of superior programs, and human resource development.

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, the *strengths* of MINU Sunan Ampel 1 lie in the availability of adequate human resources, namely fifteen teaching staff consisting of subject teachers, homeroom teachers, tahfiz teachers, and extracurricular instructors. The presence of teaching staff with a clear division of tasks provides support for the implementation of an integrated learning program between academic reinforcement and religious education. In addition, the flagship Al-Qur'an tahfiz program is the main identity of the madrasah as well as an added value in building public trust. This condition is further strengthened by various student achievements, including entering the top ten of the East Java Provincial calligraphy competition, winning the Islamic singing competition at the Probolinggo Regency level, and winning the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an at the Maron District level. These achievements demonstrate that the quality improvement strategy is not only oriented towards academic aspects, but also on developing the religious character and talents of students.

The implementation of the tahfiz program as the main strategy for improving quality is carried out through systematic stages. In the *planning stage*, the principal and the tahfiz team map the initial abilities of students through tests of their ability to read the Qur'an and the amount of memorization they have already memorized. The test results are used as a basis for grouping students into several study groups according to their ability level so that the memorization coaching process takes place more effectively.

In the *implementation stage*, the madrasah gets all students used to reading Juz 'Amma before learning activities begin as an effort to build a Qur'anic culture in the school environment. Furthermore, each student is required to submit memorization to their respective group guardians periodically once a week. The *evaluation stage* is carried out through weekly murojaah tests to ensure the quality of memorization is maintained, improve reading fluency, and minimize the possibility of loss of memorization that has been acquired by students.

Table 1: Strategic Analysis and Leading Programs of ManTap Madrasah

Strategic Aspects	Detail Components	The main purpose	Category Analysis (SWOT)	Target Achievement
Tahfidz Flagship Program	Classification of Santri	Grouping of student abilities	Strength	Hafizh Graduates
Tahfidz Flagship Program	Habituation of Juz Amma	Basic memorization planting	Strength	Islamic Character
Tahfidz Flagship Program	Memorization Deposit	Addition of memorization progress	Strength	Hafizh Graduates
Tahfidz Flagship Program	Weekly Murojaah	Maintaining the quality of memorization	Strength	Performance
Strategic Leadership	Budget Support	Financial support for the program	Strength	Public Trust
Strategic Leadership	Teacher Motivation	Increased work enthusiasm	Strength	Quality Improvement
Strategic Leadership	Monitoring	Supervision of program implementation	Strength	Islamic Character
Strategic Leadership	Evaluation	Assessment and improvement	Strength	Public Trust

On the other hand, the research also found several *weaknesses* in the strategy's implementation, namely the suboptimal cohesiveness among teachers in integrating the madrasah's vision into all learning activities. Furthermore, the competence of some teachers in translating the madrasah's vision and mission into learning innovations still requires strengthening through ongoing professional development. Meanwhile, *opportunities* for madrasahs stem from the increasing public demand for Islamic basic education oriented toward developing religious character and the ability to memorize the Quran. This situation provides significant room for madrasahs to continue developing flagship programs as a competitive advantage. *Threats* faced relate to increasing competition among Islamic educational institutions offering similar flagship programs, requiring madrasahs to continue innovating to maintain public trust.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
15 professional teachers	The competence of some teachers is not yet even
Tahfidz Program	Teacher cohesiveness needs to be improved
Non-Academic Achievements	
Opportunity	Threat
Public interest in Islamic schools is increasing	Competition between MI is getting higher
Parental support	Changes in demands for quality education

Research findings indicate that madrasah principals play a strategic leadership role, not only as administrators but also as drivers of organizational change. The principals' support for the institution's vision is demonstrated through budget allocation, facilitation of the tahfiz program, motivation for teachers, and strengthening a work culture oriented toward achieving educational quality. Consistent leadership toward this vision creates a shared commitment among teachers, so that all programs are directed toward producing graduates who are fluent in memorizing the Qur'an, possess noble character, and are able to consistently practice religious values in their daily lives.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of strategic management at MINU Sunan Ampel 1 is in line with the strategic management concept that places internal and external environmental analysis as the basis for formulating organizational policies. Although the SWOT analysis has not been formalized, the principal has implemented the substance of the approach through the process of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats before establishing priority programs. This finding reinforces the view that the effectiveness of a SWOT analysis is not only determined by the existence of a planning document, but also by the leader's ability to utilize the analysis results as a basis for strategic decision-making. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Garnika et al., who stated that the implementation of a SWOT analysis can help educational institutions develop systematic quality improvement strategies based on the actual conditions of the organization (Fawaid, 2025; Rohimah et al., 2024; Zahro, 2024). In addition, research by Andia Roisatul Vitri et al. also confirmed that a SWOT-based strategy can optimize internal strengths to take advantage of external opportunities in improving the quality of education (Fawaid, 2025; Rohimah et al., 2024; Zahro, 2024).

The main advantage of MINU Sunan Ampel 1 lies in its success in making the Al-Qur'an memorization program a core strategy in improving the quality of education. Unlike some institutions that make memorization an extracurricular activity or additional program, MINU Sunan Ampel 1 integrates the program into the entire management cycle, from planning, implementation, to evaluation. Grouping students based on initial ability, habituation of reading Juz 'Amma before learning, weekly memorization submissions, and periodic murojaah evaluations show that quality improvement is carried out through a planned, systematic, and sustainable process. This strategy reflects the implementation of a complete management function so that the quality improvement process does not occur incidentally, but becomes an organizational culture.

The research findings also show that the leadership of the madrasah principal is the most crucial factor in determining the success of the strategy's implementation. Full support for funding, provision of facilities, teacher empowerment, and consistency in maintaining the vision's direction ensure that all members of the madrasah share a shared orientation in developing flagship programs (Khosi'in et al., 2024; Mokhtar et al., 2024; Thohir, 2024). This reinforces the theory of strategic leadership, which states that the success of an educational organization is largely determined by the leader's ability to mobilize all resources toward achieving shared goals (Abas & Kholidah, 2025; Dewi et al., 2025; Rusdiah, 2024; Setiawan & Rizal, 2024; Wagner, 2025). However, the study also identified obstacles in the form of suboptimal teacher cohesion and diverse

competencies in implementing the madrasah's vision. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity through training, professional learning communities, and academic supervision is a crucial strategy for more consistent implementation of the vision.

The novelty of this research lies in the finding that SWOT analysis does not stop as an instrument for mapping organizational conditions, but transforms into a vision-based strategic leadership mechanism. The madrasah principal utilizes the results of the identification of internal and external factors to direct all management functions of planning, implementation, evaluation, teacher development, and resource allocation into one main goal, namely producing graduates who have memorized the Qur'an, are fluent in reading, have faith, are pious, have achievements, and are consistent in practicing Islamic values. This implementation model expands previous studies that generally only discuss SWOT as an organizational analysis tool, into a SWOT-based strategic leadership model oriented towards the sustainable development of a madrasah quality culture.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of strategic management by the madrasah principal at MINU Sunan Ampel 1 was carried out through a SWOT analysis approach integrated into all stages of management, including planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the program. Planning begins with identifying student abilities through Al-Qur'an reading and memorization tests as the basis for grouping the tahfiz program. The implementation of the strategy is realized through the habit of reading Juz 'Ammah, regular memorization deposits, and weekly murojaah evaluations to maintain the quality of memorization. The implementation of this strategy is supported by the leadership of the madrasah principal who is oriented towards the *ManTap vision*, the availability of adequate human resources, the flagship tahfiz program, and a strong religious culture, although obstacles are still encountered in the form of suboptimal cohesiveness and competence of some teachers in implementing the madrasah vision.

This study concludes that the SWOT analysis approach not only functions as an instrument to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization, but also becomes the basis for the strategic leadership of madrasah principals in directing all resources towards continuously improving the quality of education. The implementation of this strategy has an impact on increasing student achievement, the formation of graduates who have memorized the Qur'an with fluent recitation, have a religious character, and the growth of public trust in madrasahs. Thus, this study provides a conceptual contribution in the form of a strategic leadership model based on SWOT analysis that integrates the institution's vision, management of superior programs, empowerment of human resources, and a culture of quality as a whole in realizing the improvement of the quality of education in elementary madrasahs.

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