

School Mentoring Management in Strengthening Teacher Professionalism in Islamic-Based Schools: Case Study at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin

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Abstract: School mentoring is an important strategy in strengthening teacher professionalism, especially in Islamic-based schools that integrate spiritual values into the educational process. This study aims to analyze the implementation of school mentoring management in an effort to improve teacher professionalism at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin. A descriptive qualitative approach was used to explore the dynamics of mentoring implementation, the managerial strategies applied, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that teacher mentoring at MIS Istiqlal still faces challenges in terms of structure, sustainability, and suitability to teacher needs. However, there are efforts to improve through the establishment of a more focused and participatory mentoring management system. Effective mentoring is supported by the leadership of the principal, a dialogical approach, and the integration of Islamic values in coaching practices. This study recommends strengthening an adaptive, reflective, and collaborative mentoring management system to support the transformation of teacher professionalism within the framework of Islamic education.

Keywords: Mentoring management, teacher professionalism, islamic education, islamic schools, MIS istiqlal

1. Introduction

Learning Teacher professionalism is the main foundation in determining the quality of the educational process and results (Riadi et al., 2022). Within the framework of the national education system, teachers are not only seen as instructors who deliver teaching materials, but as agents of change who have a strategic role in shaping the character, attitudes, and values of students. Moreover, in the context of Islamic-based schools, teachers bear a greater mandate as moral educators, spiritual leaders, and life role models who reflect Islamic values in everyday practice.

According to Khairunnisa et al. (2024) the demands for teachers to have academic qualifications, pedagogical competence, and moral and spiritual integrity are clearly regulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. However, challenges in the field show that teacher professionalism cannot be formed instantly. Continuous coaching, intensive mentoring, and strong institutional support are needed so that teachers can develop optimally. In this case, school mentoring is one of the strategic instruments in the process of strengthening teacher professionalism.

The Ministry of Education and Culture through Permendikbud Number 143 of 2014 has determined that mentoring is not merely an administrative instrument, but a participatory and reflective approach that encourages the growth of professional awareness in teachers (Hidayat et al., 2025). According to Ginting & Abdillah (2025) mentoring is directed as a dialogical space between teachers and mentors to discuss learning issues, evaluate teaching strategies, and develop innovations in the teaching and learning process. In practice, ideally, mentoring becomes a deep and meaningful coaching space, which places teachers as subjects of development, not just objects of assessment.

Unfortunately, many implementations of school mentoring are still carried out normatively and administratively. This is exacerbated by a supervision approach that tends to be top-down, minimal reflection, and not based on the real needs of teachers. As a result, mentoring activities often become mere formalities without providing real impact on the

quality of learning. This challenge is increasingly complex in Islamic-based schools, which have unique educational characteristics and visions. In institutions like this, teachers are expected not only to be academically competent, but also to be role models in terms of spirituality and morality.

One of the schools facing these challenges is Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Istiqlal Banjarmasin. The results of initial observations conducted by researchers showed that teacher mentoring practices in this school were still sporadic, unstructured, and not optimally integrated into the school's quality management system. Teachers stated that mentoring activities often did not provide space for reflection or in-depth dialogue regarding the teaching challenges they faced. The activities that took place tended to be administrative and non-contextual.

However, there are positive indications in the form of initiatives to establish a more focused mentoring management system. In several activities, a more participatory approach has begun to be applied, such as the preparation of annual mentoring work programs and the involvement of teachers in the planning process. This shows that MIS Istiqlal has the potential to develop a more effective and sustainable school mentoring management model, if managed systematically and based on values.

Teacher mentoring in the context of Islamic education must not only be technically effective, but must also reflect Islamic principles such as deliberation, *ukhuwah*, and *ta'awun*. Teachers are not just employees who must be assessed, but educators who must be fostered humanely and spiritually. Therefore, the mentoring approach needs to be designed holistically, touching on pedagogical aspects while fostering the manners, ethics, and spirituality of teachers in carrying out their duties as bearers of the educational message.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine how school mentoring management is implemented at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin in order to strengthen teacher professionalism. This study also aims to identify the strategies used, the obstacles faced, and the potential for developing a mentoring system that is relevant to the characteristics of Islamic-based schools. The results of the study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of an Islamic education management model that is oriented towards integral and sustainable teacher development.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. This approach was chosen because it is able to accommodate research needs in describing social phenomena in depth, contextually, and completely, especially in understanding the practice of school mentoring management in strengthening teacher professionalism in Islamic-based schools (Nurhayati et al., 2024). The main purpose of this approach is not to test hypotheses, but rather to reveal the meaning, interaction patterns, and processes that occur naturally in the educational environment. This is in accordance with the view of Maharani et al. (2024), who stated that a qualitative approach is very relevant to be used to examine complex social phenomena, where reality is formed through human interpretation in the context of culture and certain values.

Descriptive research type is used to provide a detailed description of how the implementation of mentoring is carried out, how managerial strategies are formulated and implemented, and how it impacts the development of teacher professionalism, both technically, pedagogically, and from a spiritual and Islamic perspective. This research does not aim to make generalizations, but to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of a particular case or phenomenon that occurs in an Islamic school environment, in this case MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin.

The research location was determined purposively, that is, it was chosen intentionally based on considerations of the suitability between the research focus and the characteristics of the institution being studied. MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin was chosen because this school has implemented a teacher mentoring program as part of efforts to develop human resources for educators. However, the implementation of mentoring in this school still faces challenges in terms of sustainability, integration with the managerial system, and integration of Islamic values in its implementation. With this background, this school is a representative location to study more deeply how mentoring management is carried out in real practice, including obstacles and potential for development.

The subjects of the study consisted of the principal as the policy maker and main director of the mentoring program, teacher assistants who were tasked with carrying out direct coaching, and teachers as the objects and subjects of the mentoring process itself. The determination of informants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, namely based on considerations of experience, strategic roles, and active involvement in the mentoring process. In addition, the snowball sampling technique was also used to reach additional informants who were considered relevant and had important information related to the implementation of mentoring. The number of informants was not determined with certainty from the beginning, but was adjusted to the principle of information sufficiency (data saturation), namely the data collection process was stopped when the information obtained was considered adequate and no significant new data was found.

The data collection technique was carried out triangulatingly, by combining three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, non-participatory observation, and documentation (Tamir, 2015). In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, with open-ended questions that allowed informants to freely and reflectively explain their experiences and views related to mentoring management. This technique allows researchers to dig deeper into the meanings contained in daily practices, and obtain information that may not be revealed through documents or observations alone. Observations were carried out by directly observing the mentoring process, the atmosphere of

interaction between teachers and mentors, the communication patterns that were formed, and the work dynamics that occurred in the context of coaching. Researchers recorded phenomena that emerged naturally in the school environment, without intervening in ongoing activities (Brown, 1992). Documentation was carried out by collecting and analyzing various official school documents, such as the mentoring organizational structure, annual work programs, mentoring activity reports, teacher performance evaluations, and other supporting documents that strengthen empirical data in the field.

The collected data were analyzed using an interactive model from Miles & Saldaña (2014), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The data reduction process was carried out from the beginning of data collection by sorting, summarizing, and organizing data into thematic categories that are in accordance with the focus of the research. Reduction was carried out systematically to make it easier for researchers to identify patterns and relationships between findings. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives that were arranged logically and chronologically, to show the flow of the mentoring process, the strategies used, and the dynamics of interaction between educational actors. Drawing conclusions was carried out through a process of critical reflection and interpretation of the data that had been analyzed, by continuously cross-verifying between sources and techniques to increase the validity of the results.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study used a strategy developed by Lincoln & Guba (1985), namely through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking of informants, and intensive involvement of researchers in the field. Transferability is attempted by presenting detailed contextual descriptions, so that readers can assess the extent to which the findings of this study are relevant and can be applied to other similar contexts. Dependability is guaranteed through systematic and transparent recording of the research process, as well as regular discussions with supervisors to maintain the consistency of the research logic. Meanwhile, confirmability is achieved by including authentic and independently verifiable field evidence.

With this research method, it is hoped that a comprehensive and in-depth picture will be obtained regarding how school mentoring management can become a strategic instrument in strengthening teacher professionalism, especially in Islamic-based schools that have unique value dimensions in carrying out their educational functions.

3. Research Result

This study reveals the dynamics of the implementation of school mentoring management in strengthening teacher professionalism at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin. Based on the results of interviews, field observations, and document reviews, a number of findings were found that were relevant to the focus of the study, which can be explained as follows:

3.1 Implementation of Teacher Assistance at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin

The implementation of teacher mentoring at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin shows that the activity has been running, but has not been fully structured systematically. In the initial observation conducted on March 24, 2025, it was seen that the mentoring carried out was still a formality, with a focus on fulfilling learning administration such as RPP and teaching tools. Mentoring has not been oriented towards the actual needs of teachers in the classroom, and tends to be carried out in the form of occasional activities without a sustainable program.

Teachers who were informants stated that although they were open to guidance, they felt that the mentoring process did not provide enough space for reflective discussions or the development of contextual teaching strategies. This meant that mentoring did not touch on the deeper aspects of teacher professional development, such as pedagogical reflection, development of educator character, or strengthening of the spiritual dimension.

However, in a follow-up observation conducted on April 3, 2025, positive developments were found. Schools began to prepare a more structured mentoring work program, including setting a routine coaching schedule and starting to document the process. Teacher assistants began to play a more active role, not only as document assessors, but as discussion facilitators and teacher partners in designing more effective learning. This change in approach seems to have begun to encourage teacher enthusiasm to be more actively involved in the mentoring process.

3.2 Mentoring Management Strategy in Strengthening Teacher Professionalism

From a managerial perspective, teacher mentoring has begun to be directed into a more planned system. The principal acts as a strategy director and policy maker, while teacher mentors are officially assigned to prepare and implement coaching programs. One of the strategies implemented is to prepare an annual mentoring calendar that includes routine coaching agendas, internal training, and individual mentoring according to each teacher's teaching field.

Mentoring management also began to be directed to use a participatory approach, where teachers were given the opportunity to convey their needs, obstacles, and reflections on their teaching practices. This approach began to create a partnership relationship between teachers and mentors, not just a hierarchical relationship. Although not yet ideal, this step shows a transition from a structural-formal approach to a more dialogic and educational approach.

The principal also began to integrate Islamic values in the mentoring process, emphasizing the importance of morals, moral responsibility, and the intention of devotion in carrying out duties as a teacher. This was manifested in the opening of the mentoring activity which began with spiritual reflection and discussion about Islamic values in learning.

3.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Mentoring

The implementation of school mentoring at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin is supported by several important factors. First, there is a commitment from the head of the madrasah to make mentoring an integral part of improving the quality of education. Second, there is an awareness from some teachers of the importance of continuous coaching, which encourages them to be open to the mentoring process. Third, the Islamic approach applied in school management provides a strong value framework to support teacher coaching as a whole.

However, there are also a number of obstacles that hinder the optimization of mentoring. These obstacles include teachers' limited time due to high administrative burdens, lack of technical training for mentors, and the absence of a mentoring evaluation system that is integrated into school quality management. In addition, not all teachers have the same awareness of the urgency of mentoring, especially if the direct benefits of the activity are not yet visible to their daily teaching duties.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that teacher mentoring at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin has shifted towards a more positive direction, although it still faces challenges in terms of consistency, mentor capacity, and a comprehensive management system. With continuous improvement and support from visionary leadership, school mentoring management has the potential to become a strategic tool in building teacher professionalism that is not only pedagogically competent, but also reflects Islamic values integrally in educational practices.

4. Discussion

The research findings show that the implementation of mentoring management at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin is in the process of transition towards a more structured and reflective system. This is in line with the concept of participatory mentoring put forward by Glickman et al. (2013), which emphasizes the importance of a partnership relationship between mentors and teachers, where coaching is not only carried out in the form of one-way instructions, but through dialogue that encourages reflection, initiative, and professional growth.

In the context of Islamic schools, this kind of approach is very relevant. Islamic education is not only oriented towards cognitive aspects, but also includes moral and spiritual dimensions that are inherent in the entire learning process. Therefore, the mentoring carried out must be able to touch all aspects of teacher development, including morals, intentions of devotion, and the spiritual responsibility of an educator. This concept is reflected in the *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *tazkiyah* approaches that are the basis of Islamic education. These three aspects provide a foundation that mentoring is not enough to focus only on improving technical skills, but must also direct teachers to self-awareness, moral exemplars, and purification of the soul as part of a complete educational process.

The finding that the implementation of mentoring at MIS Istiqlal was previously still formal and administrative indicates structural challenges that have also been found in various previous studies. Hamdi et al. (2025), for example, noted that teacher mentoring is often trapped in normative activities that do not substantively touch on the professional needs of teachers. This was also observed in the early stages of this study, where mentoring was not yet based on an analysis of individual teacher needs, and had not been implemented consistently and measurably.

However, field findings also indicate a shift in approach towards a more planned and reflective model. The principal as the managerial role holder appears to be trying to design mentoring as part of the school quality development system, through the preparation of annual programs, strengthening documentation, and developing internal mentoring structures. This is in line with the theory of educational management which states that strengthening teacher professionalism must be an integral part of the human resource management system of educational institutions (Sudrajat, 2021). In other words, successful mentoring cannot be separated from the quality of school management, especially in terms of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating teacher development.

Furthermore, the findings on the integration of Islamic values in the mentoring process also strengthen the argument that the approach to teacher development in Islamic schools must be contextual and valuable. Mun'im et al. (2023) stated that in Islamic education, teachers have three dimensions of integrity that must be fostered simultaneously: knowledge, spirituality, and sociality. In practice, this can be realized through mentoring that not only focuses on the completeness of teaching tools, but also instills the meaning of devotion, exemplary behavior, and sincerity as the basic values of the teaching profession in Islam.

The presence of a proactive principal in building a mentoring system is one of the key factors for success. As emphasized by Mulyasa (2012), effective Islamic education management requires visionary leadership that not only understands administrative aspects, but also has a value orientation in every policy. A madrasah principal who supports and is actively involved will be able to create a conducive working climate for the mentoring process, including in terms of building trust, facilitating training, and directing the vision of coaching in a more substantive direction.

However, challenges such as time constraints, administrative burdens of teachers, and technical capacity of mentors are still obstacles in optimizing mentoring. This shows that even though the value approach has begun to be

implemented, mentoring still requires adequate structural support and resources. Therefore, the strategy for strengthening mentoring in the future needs to integrate managerial, professional, and spiritual aspects synergistically.

By considering the overall findings, it can be concluded that the management of school mentoring at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin shows great potential as an instrument for strengthening teacher professionalism in the context of Islamic education. Mentoring that is value-based, managerially structured, and implemented with a reflective approach has the ability to form teachers who are not only pedagogically competent, but also have integrity, sincerity, and become role models in the broader educational process. The transformation of this mentoring system requires institutional commitment, continuous training, and educational leadership that is based on values and humanity.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted at MIS Istiqlal Banjarmasin, it can be concluded that school mentoring management plays a very strategic role in the process of strengthening teacher professionalism, especially in the context of Islamic-based schools. Although initially the implementation of mentoring still showed administrative, formal tendencies, and had not fully touched on substantive coaching needs, there has been significant development towards more focused, reflective, and participatory mentoring practices.

The ideal mentoring process is not only limited to fulfilling the teacher's administrative obligations, but more than that it must be a shared learning space between mentors and teachers. In this study, it was found that the interaction between teachers and mentors based on partnerships began to grow, although it was not evenly distributed throughout the implementation. Teachers began to feel the benefits of open dialogue and humane coaching, especially when mentoring was carried out with a non-judgmental, but constructive approach.

The presence of the madrasah principal as a central figure in educational management shows a major influence on the direction and quality of the implementation of mentoring. The principal who plays an active role in formulating policies, guiding the mentoring team, and instilling a spirit of coaching based on Islamic values, is able to encourage a paradigm shift in the implementation of mentoring. This strengthens the theory that the success of educational management is highly dependent on the quality of leadership that is not only administrative, but also visionary and transformative.

One of the important contributions of this study is the affirmation that teacher professionalism in the perspective of Islamic education cannot be separated from moral, spiritual, and social values. Professional teachers are not only those who are competent in teaching and managing classes, but also individuals who are able to demonstrate exemplary morals, sincerity in educating, and integrity in carrying out scientific tasks. Therefore, successful mentoring is mentoring that is able to bridge the gap between strengthening technical competence and forming the spiritual character of teachers.

However, the reality in the field shows that the implementation of mentoring still faces a number of challenges. Among them are time constraints due to the density of teachers' tasks, lack of training or technical capacity of mentors, and the lack of an evaluation system that is able to monitor teacher development continuously. In addition, passive resistance from some teachers to the coaching process is also an obstacle that needs to be considered sociologically and psychologically.

Therefore, a number of strategic steps are needed to ensure that mentoring management in Islamic-based schools can truly function as a tool for transforming teacher professionalism. First, there needs to be a strengthening of the systemic mentoring managerial design, including needs-based planning, scheduled and consistent implementation, and structured evaluation. Second, mentors must be equipped with relevant competency training, both in terms of pedagogy, educational supervision, and ethical interpersonal approaches. Mentors are not just observers, but coaches who are sensitive to the professional and spiritual development of teachers.

Third, the principal must continue to play the role of an instructional leader who does not only focus on the managerial aspect, but also actively enlivens the school culture that supports continuous professional learning. Fourth, schools need to build an incentive or recognition system for teachers who demonstrate commitment in the coaching process, so that the motivation to continue to develop can grow from within the teacher, not only because of structural demands.

Fifth, the mentoring process must always be associated with the basic values of Islamic education, such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, deliberation, and compassion. These values must be the foundation in every interaction between mentors and teachers, so that mentoring activities do not lose their spiritual meaning.

Thus, the main conclusion of this study is that school mentoring management, if designed and implemented properly, has great potential to become a strategic tool in building professional teachers who are not only intellectually superior, but also spiritually mature. In the context of Islamic-based schools, mentoring must be interpreted as a collective mandate that fosters awareness, commitment, and role models in educating generations. Therefore, valuable mentoring is not that which merely examines, but that which guides; not that which merely assesses, but that which inspires.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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