



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Enhancing boarding madrasah quality: A framework for innovative ideas in man 2 Jombang Indonesia

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### Abstract

This research aims to develop a framework of innovative strategies to improve the quality of boarding madrasah education at MAN 2 Jombang, Indonesia. The study will delve into the current state of the institution, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Through in-depth interviews, surveys, and document analysis, the research will gather insights from madrasah heads, teachers, students, and parents. Based on these findings, a comprehensive framework of innovative ideas will be proposed, encompassing pedagogical approaches, infrastructure development, student support services, and community engagement. The ultimate goal is to equip MAN 2 Jombang with a set of practical strategies to elevate its educational standards and foster a more conducive learning environment for boarding madrasah students.

**Keywords:** Boarding Madrasah Quality; Innovative Strategies; MAN 2 Jombang

### 1. Introduction

Boarding madrasahs, or Islamic boarding schools, serve as pivotal institutions in the education and religious upbringing of numerous Indonesian Muslim students. These schools offer a comprehensive approach to education, combining academic instruction with religious teachings and a communal living experience. This holistic approach equips students not only with intellectual knowledge but also with moral and spiritual values.

Boarding madrasahs often play a crucial role in community development, particularly in rural areas. They serve as centers of Islamic learning and provide essential services to the surrounding communities. By offering educational opportunities and fostering a sense of belonging, boarding madrasahs contribute to the social and economic progress of their local regions.

Despite their significance, boarding madrasahs in Indonesia face various challenges that can impede their ability to provide high-quality education. One of the primary obstacles is inadequate funding, which can lead to insufficient facilities, equipment, and teaching materials. This lack of resources can hinder the effectiveness of the educational process and limit students' access to necessary learning tools.

Another challenge is the shortage of qualified teachers, especially in specialized subjects like science and mathematics. This deficiency can affect the quality of instruction and students' academic performance. Additionally, the curriculum used in boarding madrasahs may not be aligned with the evolving needs of students and the job market, limiting their ability to acquire relevant skills for future success.

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The well-being of students is also a critical concern in boarding madrasahs. Issues such as bullying, mental health problems, and substance abuse can negatively impact the learning environment and students' overall development. Addressing these challenges requires effective measures to promote a safe and supportive atmosphere for all students.

Furthermore, limited interaction between boarding madrasahs and the surrounding communities can hinder their ability to contribute to local development. By fostering stronger connections with the community, boarding madrasahs can leverage their resources and expertise to address local needs and promote social progress.

To overcome these challenges and improve the quality of boarding madrasah education, innovative approaches are essential. By incorporating new ideas and practices, boarding madrasahs can enhance their teaching methods, improve their facilities, and foster a more supportive learning environment. This requires a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to explore innovative strategies.

While there is a growing body of research on Islamic education in Indonesia, studies specifically focused on boarding madrasahs and their challenges are relatively limited. Existing research often highlights the need for improvements in curriculum, teacher training, and infrastructure. However, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore innovative strategies for enhancing boarding madrasah quality.

MAN 2 Jombang, as a boarding madrasah in Indonesia, is likely to face many of the challenges described above. By conducting a study of this particular institution, it is possible to gain valuable insights into the specific issues and opportunities that exist within the context of a boarding madrasah in Indonesia. Such a study can provide a foundation for developing effective strategies to improve the quality of boarding madrasah education in the country as a whole.

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## 2. Literature Review

This research focuses on various aspects of innovation in curriculum management to create excellent Islamic schools, specifically in Madrasah Aliyah and Madrasah Tsanawiyah institutions across Indonesia. Each study highlights different facets of innovation, from planning, implementation, and evaluation, to improving educational quality and competitiveness.

Brooks & Mutohar (2018) emphasizes the importance of exploring how Islamic values influence the beliefs of Muslim school leaders, particularly in the context of rising anti-Muslim sentiment in Western societies. However, there is limited research on non-Western approaches to educational leadership. To address this gap, the authors developed a conceptual framework for Islamic school leadership based on Islamic values that transcend socio-religious and contextual boundaries. The framework includes outer values and four inner domains that interact with these values. Certain beliefs may have more influence on leadership practices than others. The authors hope this framework will be tested and refined through empirical research, contributing to the study of educational leadership in non-Western contexts.

Striepe (2017) highlighted the limited research on the perspectives of Islamic school leaders in the broader context of faith-based educational leadership. It reports on findings from an Islamic case study, which was part of a larger investigation into how faith-based school management teams view educational leadership. Using qualitative methods such as concept mapping and semi-structured interviews, the study explored how the beliefs and values of the management team members influenced their leadership perspectives. These beliefs were deeply rooted in both their personal faith and the school's religious affiliation. The study's findings contribute to a better understanding of educational leadership by emphasizing the spiritual dimensions and the impact of personal and contextual factors on leaders' views.

The other study by Thohri (2022) identifies a leadership model for Islamic schools in the digital era, where principals must address global challenges while aligning with the character of Islamic institutions. The research focuses on the significant influence of school leaders on the continuity of school activities, noting that current demands differ from past contexts. Using a descriptive qualitative method through surveys, the study collected data via observations and interviews in five Islamic elementary schools in Ampenan Mataram District. The data analysis followed three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that leadership models in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah during the digital era embody characteristics suitable for globalization. These leadership traits include being transformative, managerial, collaborative, democratic, participatory, and upholding moral and religious values. Additionally, leadership in these schools is open to changes in science and technology, allowing the institutions to adapt to global and digital needs.

Then, Arifin et al. (2018) explored the nyantri (Islamic crash course) program as a leadership strategy used by school principals to strengthen school organizational culture. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach and multicase design, data was collected through observation, documentation, and interviews. The findings revealed three models of nyantri: 1) *Tashih* for Qur'an reading competence, 2) *Taushiyah* for leadership values, and 3) Apprenticeship for instilling Islamic character values. The program helps teachers enhance their Qur'anic competence and leadership in applying Islamic values, which in turn strengthens the school's culture and improves school achievement. Addressing these gaps could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values and leadership models can be effectively integrated into curriculum management and school improvement strategies

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### 3. Research Method

This qualitative research aimed to investigate the phenomenon of innovation management within Islamic educational institutions, with a particular focus on MAN 2 Jombang. By employing a single-site study design, the research sought to gain an in-depth understanding of how innovation management processes are applied within this specific institution. The study was designed to provide detailed insights into the methods and practices used to enhance the quality of the educational experience at MAN 2 Jombang.

The researcher played a critical role in the data collection process, serving as the primary instrument for gathering information. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the innovation management practices, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with key informants, including the school principals, vice principals, and teachers. These interviews provided valuable perspectives on the strategies and approaches used to manage innovation at the institution.

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted observations within the school environment and analyzed relevant documents. These methods were employed to triangulate the data, ensuring that the findings were robust and reliable. By using a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, the researcher was able to collect a diverse range of data that enriched the study's findings.

The data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Each technique contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the innovation management practices at MAN 2 Jombang. The in-depth interviews offered personal insights from key stakeholders, while observations provided contextual understanding, and document analysis offered additional data to support the findings.

The researcher employed a two-stage analysis approach to interpret the data. The first stage involved individual site analysis, where the researcher coded, categorized, and interpreted data from MAN 2 Jombang. This stage focused on understanding the specific innovation management practices within the institution. The second stage, cross-site analysis, compared and contrasted the findings from MAN 2 Jombang with those from another similar institution to identify commonalities and differences.

The study's findings offer a detailed analysis of innovation management practices in Islamic educational institutions, specifically focusing on how these practices are implemented at MAN 2 Jombang. The research highlights the ways in which the institution is adapting to evolving educational landscapes while striving to maintain its religious identity.

Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Islamic educational institutions manage innovation and adapt to change. The insights gained from this study are valuable for other institutions seeking to enhance their own innovation management practices and improve educational quality while preserving their core values.

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### 4. Result

#### 4.1. Generating Innovative Ideas Madrasah Heads in Improving the Quality of Islamic Boarding School-Based Madrasah in MAN 2 Jombang

The leadership at MAN 2 Jombang places a strong emphasis on fostering innovation by encouraging the generation and free flow of ideas within the organization. The head of the Madrasah and the teachers work closely to create an environment where innovative ideas are not only welcomed but actively encouraged. This collaborative approach ensures that innovation at MAN 2 Jombang is a balanced mix of technical aspects, student needs, and market demands, with a clear focus on developing unique and effective solutions that can benefit both the school and its community.

Teachers at MAN 2 Jombang are given the freedom to contribute their ideas for innovations, which are considered just as important as those from the leadership. This openness to contributions from all staff creates a collaborative atmosphere where creative and unique ideas can emerge. Regular brainstorming sessions and open discussions among teachers often result in innovative practices that enhance the institution's operations, demonstrating the value of inclusive participation in the innovation process.

To streamline the collection and refinement of ideas, MAN 2 Jombang employs structured mechanisms such as the use of Google Forms. Teachers are encouraged to submit their innovative suggestions through these forms, providing logical and feasible reasons for their proposals. These suggestions are then reviewed and categorized by the school's development team, which ensures that all ideas are given thorough consideration. This systematic approach helps in identifying the most viable ideas that can be further developed and potentially implemented.

Once ideas have been collected and reviewed, they are discussed in leadership meetings. These meetings serve as a forum for evaluating the strategic value of the proposed innovations and determining which ideas will move forward. The leadership team, which includes the head of the Madrasah and other key decision-makers, carefully weighs the potential impact of each idea before making final decisions. This ensures that only the most promising innovations are selected for implementation, aligning with the institution's goals and priorities.

The ultimate goal of these innovations at MAN 2 Jombang is to create a distinctive identity for the Madrasah. By developing a unique "icon" that sets the institution apart, the leadership aims to strengthen its reputation within the community. At the same time, these innovations are designed to equip students with practical skills that will be valuable in their future careers. This dual focus on building the institution's brand and preparing students for success reflects the school's long-term vision and commitment to excellence.

In addition to internal innovation processes, MAN 2 Jombang actively seeks to involve the broader community in its efforts. Once innovations are selected and refined, they are presented to the community for feedback and support. This engagement with external stakeholders helps to ensure that the innovations are relevant and beneficial not only to the school but also to the local community. By involving external partners, MAN 2 Jombang can leverage additional resources and expertise to bring its innovations to life.

The process of implementing innovations at MAN 2 Jombang is carefully managed to ensure that the projects are sustainable and impactful. After gaining approval from the leadership, the selected innovations are integrated into the Madrasah's strategic plans. This includes allocating resources, assigning responsibilities, and setting timelines for execution. By embedding innovations into the institution's operational framework, the leadership ensures that they become a lasting part of the school's development.

The success of the innovation process at MAN 2 Jombang is a testament to the school's commitment to continuous improvement. By fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, the leadership has created an environment where new ideas can thrive. This not only enhances the educational experience for students but also positions MAN 2 Jombang as a forward-thinking institution that is ready to adapt to changing demands and challenges.

#### **4.2. Selecting the Innovation Portfolio of Madrasah Heads in Improving the Quality of Islamic Boarding School-Based Madrasahs in MAN 2 Jombang.**

The innovation process at MAN 2 Jombang focuses on efficiently collecting, filtering, and prioritizing ideas that align with the institution's culture, goals, and climate. This process ensures that ideas are not only evaluated based on strategic value but are also quickly filtered to maintain momentum. Leadership meetings play a crucial role in determining which ideas will be selected, with discussions involving the school leadership, the quality assurance team, and the entrepreneurial development team.

The collection of innovative ideas is carried out through Google Forms, where teachers can submit their ideas along with clear and logical justifications. These forms are reviewed and categorized by the entrepreneurial development team before being forwarded to the principal for further discussion in leadership meetings. These meetings decide which ideas will advance to the final decision-making stage by the school's foundation.

Once ideas are selected through the leadership process, they are further discussed with the foundation's leadership, particularly in the Majelis Pondok Pesantren forum. One of the selected ideas was the development of batik as a primary innovation at MAN 2 Jombang, which demonstrates the school's commitment to equipping students with entrepreneurial skills by responding to the growing market demand for batik products.

The next step involved forming a specialized team named the Entrepreneurial Development Team. This team, along with a supervising teacher and a batik trainer, will focus on implementing the batik innovation. Planning for this project included reviewing past activities and refining strategies to ensure the successful execution of the innovation.

After completing the planning phase, the team will present their plan, including the budget, to the foundation for approval. If the plan is accepted, the batik innovation will become part of the school's official strategic and operational documents, ensuring that the batik initiative becomes a significant and sustainable innovation at MAN 2 Jombang.

In its implementation, this innovation not only relies on existing batik skills but also includes advanced training to enhance the quality of the products. This training covers various aspects, from traditional batik techniques to understanding modern designs favored by the market. As a result, students not only learn technical skills but also gain an understanding of the entrepreneurial aspects needed to succeed in the batik industry.

MAN 2 Jombang also collaborates with various external parties, including local batik entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship training institutions, to support the success of this project. This collaboration aims to provide students with a broader understanding of the business world and introduce them to professional networks that can assist them in the future.

Finally, with full support from the foundation, along with the enthusiasm of the students and teachers, the batik innovation at MAN 2 Jombang is expected to become a model for other schools in developing students' entrepreneurial skills through an innovative approach that is relevant to current market needs.

#### **4.3. Implementing Innovations by Madrasah Heads in Improving the Quality of Islamic Boarding School-Based Madrasas at MAN 2 Jombang.**

The implementation of batik innovation at MAN 2 Jombang began with full support from the Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. The process was initiated by a meeting of all educational staff at the school, where the steps and processes of the innovation were explained. The innovation, which focuses on batik, was carried out in collaboration with Sutrisno, a batik artisan from Jatipelem Village, Jombang Regency, a center for batik craftsmanship.

The first activity in implementing batik innovation was a workshop aimed at equipping students with batik-making skills, including batik writing and stamping techniques. The workshop, held on September 28, 2019, was attended by selected students from grades X, XI, and XII. It served as a starting point for integrating batik into extracurricular activities, ensuring that students at MAN 2 Jombang could gain hands-on experience in batik-making under the guidance of Sutrisno.

The goal of the workshop was to provide students with foundational knowledge about batik, both in theory and practice. This would enable the school to create its own unique batik designs, which would later become a signature of MAN 2 Jombang. The collaboration with Sutrisno extended beyond the workshop, as he became the trainer for batik activities at the school.

In addition to the workshop, batik skills were further developed through extracurricular activities held every Thursday. To solidify batik as the school's icon, the students' batik designs were registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs (KEMENDAGRI) and the Department of Industry and Trade (DISPERINDAG) of Jombang Regency. One of the students, Nabila Brilian, successfully had her batik design patented, making it a registered intellectual property of MAN 2 Jombang.

The school's principal emphasized that ensuring the batik created by students became a trademark of the school required registering the designs with the appropriate authorities. After several training sessions, the students were able to produce batik with their own unique motifs, which were then patented, giving MAN 2 Jombang its distinct batik identity.

The human resources and organizational structure were fundamental to this innovation process. This included recruiting staff, designing jobs, and creating an organizational culture that supported innovation. Selected teachers acted as mentors for the students participating in the batik activities, and partnerships were formed with local batik artisans.

The final structure for the batik innovation project at MAN 2 Jombang involved key personnel such as the school principal, batik mentors, and entrepreneurship teachers. Sutrisno, the local batik entrepreneur, played a significant role

as the practical trainer. This comprehensive approach ensured that the batik innovation became an integral part of MAN 2 Jombang, from workshops to extracurricular activities, and ultimately establishing batik as a symbol of the school.

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## 5. Discussion

At MAN 2 Jombang, the leadership prioritizes fostering innovation within the Madrasah by creating a collaborative environment where new ideas are encouraged and valued. The head of the Madrasah works closely with teachers to ensure that innovative solutions address technical aspects, student needs, and market demands. This approach creates a balanced mix of creativity and practicality in enhancing both the school and community.

Teachers at MAN 2 Jombang have the freedom to contribute innovative ideas, which are considered as significant as those from the leadership. This open atmosphere allows for the emergence of creative solutions through regular brainstorming sessions and discussions, demonstrating the importance of inclusive participation in the innovation process.

To efficiently collect and refine ideas, MAN 2 Jombang uses Google Forms where teachers submit their suggestions with logical justifications. These ideas are reviewed and categorized by the development team, ensuring thorough consideration of all proposals. This systematic approach helps in identifying the most viable ideas for further development and implementation.

Collected ideas are discussed in leadership meetings, where the strategic value of each proposal is evaluated. The leadership team, including key decision-makers, carefully assesses the potential impact of ideas to ensure alignment with the institution's goals. This rigorous evaluation process helps in selecting the most promising innovations.

The primary goal of innovations at MAN 2 Jombang is to create a distinctive identity for the Madrasah. By developing a unique "icon," the leadership aims to enhance the institution's reputation and equip students with practical skills for their future careers. This dual focus reflects the school's commitment to excellence and long-term vision.

MAN 2 Jombang actively involves the broader community in its innovation efforts. Once ideas are refined, they are presented to the community for feedback and support. This engagement ensures that innovations are relevant and beneficial to both the school and the local community, leveraging external resources and expertise.

The implementation of innovations at MAN 2 Jombang is carefully managed to ensure sustainability and impact. Approved innovations are integrated into the Madrasah's strategic plans, with allocated resources, assigned responsibilities, and set timelines for execution. This integration ensures that innovations become a lasting part of the school's development.

The success of the innovation process at MAN 2 Jombang highlights the school's commitment to continuous improvement. By fostering a culture of collaboration and creativity, the leadership has created an environment where new ideas thrive, enhancing the educational experience and positioning the school as a forward-thinking institution.

The innovation process at MAN 2 Jombang includes collecting, filtering, and prioritizing ideas. One notable innovation was the development of batik, which aimed to equip students with entrepreneurial skills. This idea was selected and refined through leadership discussions and involved forming a specialized Entrepreneurial Development Team for implementation.

The batik innovation at MAN 2 Jombang began with a workshop led by local batik artisan Sutrisno, where students learned batik-making skills. This initiative, including extracurricular activities and patenting students' designs, was supported by the school's leadership and local partners. The comprehensive approach ensured that batik became a symbol of the school, demonstrating successful implementation of the innovation.

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## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive approach employed by Madrasah heads, as exemplified by MAN 2 Jombang, effectively enhances educational quality through a structured process of generating, selecting, and implementing innovative ideas. By positioning innovations as a core element of the Madrasah's identity and embedding practical skills into the student curriculum, these leaders foster an environment where creativity and real-world application thrive. This strategic focus

not only helps in shaping a unique educational experience but also ensures that students are well-equipped with essential skills for their future endeavors.

The rigorous selection process further ensures that only the most impactful ideas are pursued. By evaluating the track record of alumni and aligning proposals with the institution's strategic goals, Madrasah leaders are able to filter and prioritize innovations that will deliver the greatest benefit. This careful consideration and alignment with institutional objectives help in maintaining momentum and ensuring that the selected innovations are both feasible and relevant.

Implementing these innovations through well-organized workshops, extracurricular activities, and strategic partnerships significantly enriches the educational experience. By collaborating with external parties, securing patents, and establishing platforms to promote student achievements, Madrasahs can successfully integrate new ideas into their operational framework. This not only enhances the institution's educational mission but also strengthens its role within the community, demonstrating how a holistic approach to innovation can lead to sustained improvement and meaningful impact.

### *Suggestions*

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, the following recommendations are proposed, particularly for the relevant stakeholders:

- For MAN 2 Jombang

To further enhance the quality of the Madrasah, it is recommended that both institutions fully utilize their available resources, including both human and non-human resources, in implementing the formulated innovations. Maximizing these resources can lead to more effective and impactful improvements.

- For other educational institutions

It is advisable to continually improve the quality of Madrasahs by consistently innovating, exploring new breakthroughs, and developing new innovations. Such efforts will help ensure ongoing enhancement in the quality of education provided.

- For future researchers

The findings of this study can serve as a valuable reference for conducting more in-depth research on similar topics. Future studies can build upon these insights to explore the focus area further and contribute to the broader understanding of Madrasah quality improvement

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### **Compliance with ethical standards**

#### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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