



Strategic Leadership of Madrasah Principals in Improving The Competitiveness of Islamic Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the strategic leadership of madrasah principals in enhancing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions and to formulate a conceptual model of strategic leadership based on the synthesis of various previous studies. The study employed a qualitative approach with library research. Data were obtained from articles in SINTA-accredited national journals, reputable international journals, scientific books, and relevant documents on strategic leadership, Islamic education management, quality culture, and the competitiveness of educational institutions published primarily in the 2021–2026 period. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and thematic synthesis. The results indicate that the strategic leadership of madrasah principals contributes to increasing institutional competitiveness through five main dimensions: vision formulation and strategic planning, human resource development, strengthening quality culture, developing partnerships with stakeholders, and continuous evaluation and innovation. The integration of these five dimensions can improve the quality of educational services, teacher professionalism, public trust, and the sustainability of institutional development. This research produces a conceptual model of strategic leadership that integrates these five dimensions as a basis for strengthening the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. These findings are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic Education Management studies and serve as a practical reference for madrasah principals and policymakers in formulating strategies to improve the quality and competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Competitiveness, Islamic Educational Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

Developments in education in the era of globalization, the Industrial Revolution 4.0, and Society 5.0 have brought significant changes to the governance and implementation of education in various countries, including Indonesia. Advances in information technology, the digitalization of education systems, increased social mobility, and open access to various sources of knowledge have created an increasingly competitive educational environment. Educational institutions no longer function merely as places for the transfer of knowledge, but are also required to produce human resources with academic competence, 21st-century skills, strong character, and the ability to adapt to

social, economic, and technological changes. This condition has led to increasingly intense competition between educational institutions, both at the public school level and Islamic educational institutions. Madrasahs, as part of the national education system, are required to demonstrate quality, excellence, and competitiveness to remain the community's primary choice for obtaining quality educational services. In facing these conditions, madrasahs are not sufficient only to organize learning processes in accordance with national education standards, but must also be able to build competitive advantages through professional organizational governance, the development of innovative educational programs, improving the quality of human resources, strengthening character education, and providing educational services that are responsive to community needs. This competitive advantage is crucial for madrasahs to maintain their existence and enhance their reputation amidst increasingly dynamic competition. The competitiveness of an educational institution is measured not only by the academic success of its students, but also by the quality of its educational services, its achievements, its ability to produce graduates with Islamic character, community satisfaction, and its ability to build partnerships with various parties. The greater a madrasah's competitiveness, the greater the level of public trust in choosing that institution as the educational provider of choice for their children.

The success of a madrasah in building competitiveness is greatly influenced by the leadership quality of the madrasah principal, as the highest leader at the educational unit level. The madrasah principal has a strategic responsibility in determining the direction of institutional policy through the formulation of the vision, mission, and organizational goals oriented towards improving the quality of education. In addition, the madrasah principal also plays a role in developing organizational strategies, optimizing the utilization of human resources and other resources, building a culture of quality, encouraging learning innovation, improving teacher professionalism, and forging collaborations with various stakeholders, such as the madrasah committee, parents, government, the business world, universities, and the community. The madrasah principal's ability to integrate these various resources will determine the institution's ability to respond to changes in the external environment while creating sustainable excellence.

Therefore, strategic leadership is a key factor in determining the success of madrasahs in facing the challenges and opportunities of the global era. Strategic leadership not only emphasizes the leader's ability to carry out administrative functions, but also demands the ability to think visionarily, make decisions based on comprehensive analysis, manage organizational change, build commitment from all members of the madrasah, and develop innovations that can increase the institution's competitiveness. Madrasah principals who possess strategic leadership will be better able to direct the organization toward achieving long-term goals, continuously improve the quality of educational services, and build public trust in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, strengthening strategic leadership is an urgent need for every madrasah to survive, thrive, and compete healthily in the ever-changing dynamics of the world of education. (Suyatman et al. 2026). However, more specifically, many Islamic educational institutions still face various challenges in increasing their competitiveness. Many Islamic schools lack integrated strategic planning, the development of flagship programs is not oriented towards community needs, the quality of educational services is uneven, and decision-making processes remain administrative rather than strategic. On the other hand, increasing public expectations for the quality of Islamic education require madrasah principals to be able to manage organizational change, strengthen a culture of quality, develop teacher professionalism, and build a sustainable image for their institutions. These conditions indicate that increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is not only determined by the availability of infrastructure but also influenced

by the madrasah principal's ability to implement adaptive, collaborative, and future-oriented strategic leadership.(Ni'am 2026).

Ideally, a madrasah principal should be able to carry out strategic leadership functions comprehensively by developing a clear, realistic, and future-oriented vision as the direction of the institution's development. This vision must be translated into a mission, objectives, strategic targets, and measurable work programs so that all organizational activities share the same direction in achieving sustainable educational quality. Long-term planning is a crucial instrument in anticipating changes in the internal and external environment, including developments in education policy, technological advancements, the needs of the workforce, and increasing public expectations for the quality of Islamic education services. With systematic strategic planning, a madrasah principal can establish institutional development priorities, allocate resources effectively, and exercise control over program implementation through clear performance indicators. In addition to the ability to formulate a vision and strategic planning, a madrasah principal is also required to be able to build a positive organizational culture as the primary foundation for improving the institution's quality. A strong organizational culture is reflected in religious values, integrity, professionalism, discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and a spirit of continuous improvement. These values not only guide the behavior of all madrasah members but also shape the organizational identity that distinguishes the madrasah from other educational institutions. The principal acts as a role model in internalizing this culture through participatory leadership, open communication, recognition of achievement, and ongoing development. A conducive organizational culture will create a harmonious work environment, increase the motivation of teachers and education staff, and foster a shared commitment to achieving the institution's goals.

Empowering teachers and education personnel is also an integral part of strategic leadership. Teachers are the primary resource that determines the success of the learning process and the achievement of educational quality. Therefore, madrasah principals need to provide ample opportunities for teachers to develop professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies through training, seminars, workshops, Subject Teacher Conferences (MGMP), classroom action research, and ongoing professional development programs. Furthermore, education personnel also need to be trained to provide effective, efficient, and user-oriented administrative services. Sustainable human resource empowerment will increase organizational productivity while strengthening the madrasah's ability to face various educational challenges. Madrasah principals are also expected to develop various flagship programs that become the institution's distinctive characteristics and competitive advantages. These flagship programs can include strengthening Quran memorization, research-based learning, literacy development, foreign language proficiency, character education, strengthening religious moderation, and various extracurricular activities that support the development of student potential. These programs not only improve the quality of graduates but also attract the public to choose madrasahs as educational institutions capable of providing comprehensive educational services. The existence of flagship programs designed based on student needs and current developments will strengthen the institution's positive image and increase the competitiveness of madrasahs amidst increasingly fierce competition. In addition to developing internal programs, madrasah principals need to build synergistic partnerships with various stakeholders, such as madrasah committees, parents of students, alumni, government, universities, the business world, industry, community organizations, and religious leaders. These partnerships provide various benefits, including resource support, improved teacher competency, expanded collaborative networks, joint program implementation, and increased opportunities for students to develop academic and non-academic achievements. A harmonious relationship between madrasahs and the

community will also increase public trust, thereby strengthening the legitimacy and sustainability of the development of Islamic educational institutions.

Continuous evaluation is a crucial component of strategic leadership because it enables the principal to assess the effectiveness of each implemented program. Evaluations are conducted not only on student learning outcomes but also encompass teacher performance, the quality of administrative services, the implementation of flagship programs, community satisfaction, and the achievement of institutional quality indicators. These evaluation results serve as the basis for decision-making, program improvement, and innovation development that better aligns with the organization's needs. By consistently implementing a cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up, the madrasah will have a quality control mechanism capable of sustainably maintaining the quality of educational services. Through effective strategic leadership, the madrasah is expected to develop into a learning organization that continually adapts to environmental changes, encourages innovation, and enhances the capacity of all its human resources. A learning organization is characterized by a culture of knowledge sharing, continuous learning, strong collaboration, openness to change, and the ability to reflect on every process implemented. These conditions will strengthen institutional innovation, improve the quality of learning, expand public trust, and produce graduates with academic competence, 21st-century skills, and Islamic character. In this way, madrasahs are not only able to maintain their existence amidst increasingly tight educational competition, but also develop as superior, adaptive, sustainable Islamic educational institutions, and have high competitiveness at the local, national and international levels.(Zuanda, Syaifuddin, and Sohiron 2026).

The reality on the ground shows that some madrasahs still face obstacles in optimally implementing strategic leadership. Program planning is often not based on needs analysis and organizational evaluation, teacher and stakeholder involvement in decision-making is still limited, program innovation is not sustainable, and institutional image building has not been systematically implemented. Furthermore, competition with public schools and integrated Islamic schools is increasing, requiring madrasahs to have distinct advantages through quality services, flagship programs, academic and non-academic achievements, and professional governance. These various challenges demonstrate that strengthening the strategic leadership of madrasah principals is an urgent need to increase the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Several studies over the past five years have shown that madrasah principal leadership plays a significant role in improving educational quality. Research on collaborative strategic leadership explains that strategic leadership involving collaboration between teachers, madrasah committees, and parents can strengthen organizational culture, increase community trust, and sustainably maintain educational quality.(Suyatman et al. 2026)Other research has found that strategic leadership drives change and innovation through strengthening policies, utilizing technology, and developing the quality of learning.(Setiabudi et al. 2026). Furthermore, a SWOT analysis-based study shows that the success of madrasah principals in improving student quality is influenced by their ability to develop data-based strategies, teacher development, and continuous evaluation.(Nifasri 2025)Research on institutional attractiveness also shows that strategic leadership contributes to improving the image of madrasahs through flagship programs, educational branding, communication with the community, and strengthening parental trust.(Agustina et al. 2026). In addition, research on transformative leadership confirms that madrasah principals who are able to inspire, empower teachers, and encourage innovation have an impact on improving the quality of education as well as developing the character of students.(Nuryana and Nugraha 2025)Although previous research has examined madrasah principal leadership from various perspectives, most have focused on improving educational quality, teacher performance, learning innovation,

or student quality. Research specifically integrating strategic leadership as a key instrument in building the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is still relatively limited. Furthermore, previous studies tend to emphasize internal organizational aspects, while the relationship between strategic leadership, the development of flagship programs, public trust, and institutional competitiveness has not been comprehensively analyzed. Based on this gap, this study offers a novel conceptual model of madrasah principal strategic leadership that integrates the dimensions of strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, the development of a culture of quality, innovation in flagship programs, and strengthening public trust as factors shaping the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze how the strategic leadership of madrasah principals plays a role in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions through strengthening organizational governance, quality culture, program innovation, and collaboration with various stakeholders. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic Educational Management theory, particularly regarding strategic leadership, as well as serve as practical recommendations for madrasah principals and policymakers in formulating strategies to increase the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions amidst the dynamics of educational change.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to examine in-depth the concept of strategic leadership of madrasah principals in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions based on various relevant scientific sources. The library study allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of theories, concepts, previous research findings, and current developments in the field of Islamic Educational Management, thus producing a conceptual synthesis that has a scientific contribution.(Nartin et al. 2024)The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from scientific articles published in SINTA-accredited national journals and reputable international journals discussing strategic leadership, Islamic education management, madrasa governance, quality culture, and the competitiveness of educational institutions over the past five years (2021–2026). Secondary data were obtained from scientific books, proceedings, government policy documents, laws and regulations, research reports, and various other references relevant to the research focus.(Rosmita et al. 2024).

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely identifying, collecting, reviewing, and organizing various literature related to the research theme. Source searches were conducted through scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, Crossref, Scopus, and SINTA using keywords such as strategic leadership, Islamic educational management, madrasah leadership, competitive advantage, school competitiveness, and strategic leadership of madrasah principals. Furthermore, each literature was selected based on topic suitability, publication quality, year of publication, and relevance to the research objectives. Data analysis used content analysis combined with thematic analysis techniques. The analysis stages included data reduction, grouping information based on themes, data presentation, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. The researcher first identified key concepts related to the strategic leadership of madrasah principals, then grouped the findings based on the dimensions of strategic leadership, competitiveness enhancement strategies, quality culture, institutional governance, and organizational innovation. Next, the analysis results were compared with various theories and previous research results to identify patterns and relationships

between concepts, and to formulate a conceptual synthesis as a form of research contribution.(Nartin et al. 2024).

To ensure data validity, the study employed source triangulation, comparing information from various credible scientific references to obtain valid and academically accountable data. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a critical evaluation of the quality of the literature by examining the appropriateness of the methodology, the consistency of the findings, and its relevance to the research focus. Therefore, the research findings are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategic leadership of madrasah principals in enhancing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions and contribute to the development of Islamic Educational Management science.(Rosmita et al. 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the literature review indicate that the strategic leadership of the madrasah principal is one of the main determinants in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions amidst the increasingly dynamic changes in the educational environment. Based on a synthesis of various literature published in the last five years, it was found that the success of a madrasah is no longer solely determined by the completeness of facilities and infrastructure or the amount of budget support, but is more influenced by the madrasah principal's ability to formulate strategic direction, manage organizational change, develop human resources, build a culture of quality, and strengthen institutional relationships with various stakeholders. Various studies have shown that madrasah principals who have a strategic orientation are able to create organizations that are adaptive to change, responsive to community needs, and able to maintain a competitive advantage in the competition between educational institutions. The literature review shows that strategic leadership has distinct characteristics from administrative leadership. Administrative leadership places greater emphasis on the implementation of routine organizational functions, while strategic leadership is oriented toward achieving long-term goals through the ability to understand environmental changes, develop a clear vision, establish development priorities, manage resources effectively, and build commitment from all members of the madrasa community to achieving shared goals. Therefore, madrasa principals are required not only to manage educational administration but also to be change leaders capable of guiding the organization toward sustainable excellence. Based on an analysis of various references, it was found that the first dimension of strategic leadership is the formulation of a vision and direction for institutional development. Nearly all literature confirms that a clear vision serves as the foundation for all organizational activities. Madrasa principals who are able to translate the vision into measurable work programs will more easily mobilize teachers, education staff, and students to achieve predetermined goals. This vision not only describes the ideal conditions to be achieved but also serves as a guideline for policy formulation, resource allocation, and evaluation of all educational programs.

The second dimension frequently identified in various studies is the principal's ability to develop a culture of quality. Literature reviews indicate that a culture of quality is a set of values, beliefs, and habits that encourage all members of the madrasah to continuously strive for improvement. This culture of quality is reflected in discipline, responsibility, cooperation, innovation, excellent service, and a commitment to achieving educational quality standards. The principal acts as a driving force in building this culture through exemplary behavior, effective communication, motivation, academic supervision, and regular program evaluation. With a strong culture of quality, madrasahs have the ability to improve the quality of educational services while building public trust.

The study also shows that human resource development is an integral component of strategic leadership. Various studies have concluded that the competitiveness of educational institutions is highly dependent on the quality of teachers and educational staff. Therefore, madrasah principals need to develop competency development strategies through training, workshops, Subject Teacher Conferences (MGMP), classroom action research, scientific seminars, professional mentoring, and career development programs. These efforts not only improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies but also strengthen their ability to develop learning innovations in line with developments in science and technology. In addition to human resource development, the literature synthesis indicates that strengthening innovation in flagship programs is a crucial strategy for enhancing madrasah competitiveness. These flagship programs serve as an institutional identity that distinguishes madrasahs from other educational institutions. Various literature shows that programs such as Quran memorization, bilingual learning, literacy development, character education, research classes, science and technology development, entrepreneurship, and talent- and interest-based extracurricular activities can increase community interest in choosing madrasahs as educational institutions for their children. These programs also contribute to improving student achievement at regional and national levels, thereby strengthening the institution's reputation.

The literature review also revealed that partnerships with stakeholders are one indicator of successful strategic leadership. Madrasah principals cannot optimally develop their institutions without the support of various parties, such as the madrasah committee, parents, government, universities, businesses, community organizations, and alumni. These partnerships provide benefits in the form of financial support, program development, teacher competency improvement, provision of infrastructure, and expansion of collaborative networks. The literature shows that madrasahs that are able to build sustainable collaborations have better adaptation rates to changes in the educational environment and gain higher public trust. Furthermore, the review results indicate that data-driven decision-making is one characteristic of effective strategic leadership. Madrasah principals who use evaluation results, academic data, community satisfaction data, accreditation results, and needs analysis in determining policies tend to produce more targeted decisions. Conversely, decisions based solely on experience or habit are often less able to address the new challenges facing educational institutions. Therefore, various literature emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation as a basis for developing strategic programs. Based on the overall literature analyzed, several indicators of the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions can be identified, namely, improving the quality of educational services, increasing public trust, increasing the number of new students, increasing academic and non-academic achievements, increasing teacher competence, developing learning innovations, improving the quality of institutional governance, and creating a positive image of the madrasah in the community. All of these indicators are interrelated and influenced by the quality of the madrasah principal's strategic leadership.

The results of the synthesis also show that strategic leadership has a broad impact on the sustainability of Islamic educational organizations. Madrasah principals who are able to integrate institutional vision, quality culture, human resource development, program innovation, partnerships, and continuous evaluation will more easily create learning organizations that are adaptive to change. Such organizations have the ability to continuously innovate, improve service quality, and maintain the institution's existence amidst increasingly competitive competition. Overall, the results of the literature review confirm that strategic leadership is the main foundation for increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Competitiveness is not only built through the provision of physical facilities, but also through the madrasah principal's ability to effectively manage all organizational resources, build a strong quality culture,

develop teacher competencies sustainably, expand partnership networks, and create innovations that are aligned with community needs. This literature synthesis shows that the success of madrasahs in the era of global competition is largely determined by the quality of strategic leadership that is able to integrate all organizational potential towards achieving superior and sustainable educational goals.

Discussion

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that the strategic leadership of madrasah principals is a fundamental factor in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Institutional competitiveness is no longer measured solely by the number of students or the completeness of infrastructure, but also by the institution's ability to produce quality graduates, build public trust, develop educational innovation, and maintain organizational sustainability amidst increasingly complex environmental changes. In this context, madrasah principals play a strategic role, capable of integrating institutional vision, human resource development, organizational culture, and collaboration with various stakeholders. This finding aligns with research by Moh Sulhan and Ilyas Rifa'i (2023), which explains that transformative leadership can build a madrasah's competitive advantage through three main components: the leader's personality competency, decision-making authority, and a clear vision for change. This research confirms that madrasah principals with a strategic orientation not only perform administrative functions but are also capable of acting as agents of change, guiding the organization in facing global challenges. Visionary leaders are able to identify opportunities, manage change, and mobilize all organizational resources, so that madrasahs have a superior character and are able to compete with other educational institutions. (Nuryana and Nugraha 2025).

Based on various literature, the first dimension of strategic leadership is the ability to formulate a vision and direction for institutional development. Vision is the primary foundation that serves as a guideline for formulating policies, work programs, and allocating organizational resources. A principal with a strategic vision is able to translate long-term goals into measurable operational programs so that all members of the madrasah share the same direction in achieving organizational targets. A clear vision also serves as the foundation for building a work culture that is adaptive to change and encourages the creation of sustainable educational innovation. Furthermore, research results indicate that organizational culture is a critical component in determining the success of strategic leadership. A strong organizational culture fosters commitment, discipline, collaboration, and a passion for continuous quality improvement. Research (Maryati 2025) shows that transformative leadership based on religious values can build a more professional, disciplined, collaborative work culture in madrasahs, and one that is oriented toward improving the quality of educational services. Madrasah principals who set an example, build open communication, and internalize Islamic values can create a conducive work environment so that all members of the madrasah community share a commitment to achieving the institution's goals. In addition to organizational culture, various studies also place human resource development as a key strategy in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Teachers are the primary assets that determine the quality of the learning process, so improving their competence must be a priority for madrasah principals. Research (Hayida-o 2025) shows that madrasah principals who successfully develop teacher leadership are able to increase teacher participation in decision-making, strengthen professional collaboration, and encourage learning innovation. These findings demonstrate that strategic leadership is not centralized but allows teachers to contribute to organizational development, thus creating a participatory and innovative work culture.

The synthesis also shows that madrasa competitiveness is built through a learning organization. This concept places continuous learning as an organizational culture, enabling all members of the madrasa community to continuously improve their professional capacity. Research published in the Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education explains that learning organization leadership encourages madrasas to have a measurable vision, a commitment to continuous learning, a collaborative culture, openness to change, and organizational innovation. This combination results in an educational business strategy that can improve service quality, attract community interest, and strengthen the madrasa's competitive advantage. Recent literature also shows that collaboration with stakeholders is a crucial characteristic of strategic leadership. Madrasa principals cannot improve educational quality alone but require support from teachers, education staff, madrasa committees, parents, alumni, the government, universities, and the community. Research (Marlina and Ritonga 2026) shows that collaborative strategic leadership that integrates Islamic governance and distributed leadership can improve the quality of education through the active involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making, program implementation, and institutional evaluation. This collaboration strengthens accountability, transparency, and public trust in madrasas. In addition to collaboration, the literature review indicates that madrasah principals need to implement strategic management in every stage of institutional development. This strategy includes analyzing the internal and external environment, identifying organizational strengths and weaknesses, exploiting opportunities, and managing various challenges. Research (May God bless you 2025) on the application of SWOT analysis in madrasas shows that success in increasing competitiveness is determined by the madrasa principal's ability to leverage internal strengths to respond to external opportunities. Systematic strategic management enables institutions to develop sustainably and maintain their position amidst increasingly competitive educational landscape.

The synthesis of various studies shows that the strategic leadership of madrasah principals is actually an integrative process. Madrasah principals are not only tasked with formulating policies, but also building a culture of quality, developing teacher professionalism, strengthening partnerships, managing change, and creating innovations relevant to community needs. The competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is the result of the synergy of all these components and cannot be achieved by improving only one aspect of the organization. Based on the entire literature analyzed, this study offers a conceptual model of strategic leadership of madrasah principals consisting of five main dimensions, namely: (1) strategic vision and planning, (2) human resource development, (3) strengthening a culture of quality, (4) collaboration with stakeholders, and (5) continuous evaluation and innovation. These five dimensions are interconnected and simultaneously shape the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. This model complements previous studies that generally only discuss one or two dimensions of leadership, whereas this study integrates all dimensions into a comprehensive conceptual framework.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the view that strategic leadership is a relevant approach in the development of Islamic Education Management because it is able to connect aspects of leadership, organizational governance, quality culture, and the institution's competitive advantage. Practically, these findings imply that madrasah principals need to develop adaptive, collaborative, and visionary leadership competencies to be able to respond to changes in the educational environment while simultaneously improving the quality of Islamic education services sustainably. Thus, strategic leadership is not only a managerial instrument but also a key asset in building excellence and sustainability in Islamic educational institutions in an era of global competition.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the strategic leadership of madrasah principals plays a very important role in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Strategic leadership is not only oriented towards the implementation of administrative functions, but also emphasizes the ability of madrasah principals to formulate long-term visions, manage change, optimize resources, build a culture of quality, develop teacher competencies, and strengthen collaboration with various stakeholders. The integration of these various aspects is the main foundation in creating Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive, innovative, and able to compete amidst the dynamics of educational development. The results of the synthesis of various studies show that the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is influenced by five main dimensions of strategic leadership, namely (1) a clear vision and strategic planning, (2) sustainable human resource development, (3) strengthening the organizational quality culture, (4) effective partnerships with stakeholders, and (5) continuous evaluation and innovation. These five dimensions are interrelated and form a madrasah management system that is oriented towards improving the quality of educational services, student achievement, teacher professionalism, and increasing public trust in Islamic educational institutions. This study also produces a conceptual synthesis that the success of madrasah principals in increasing institutional competitiveness is not only determined by managerial abilities, but also by strategic leadership capacity in integrating all organizational potential into sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, madrasah principals need to develop visionary, adaptive, collaborative, and innovative leadership to be able to respond to changes in the educational environment while creating added value for the institutions they lead. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of Islamic Education Management by developing a conceptual model of strategic leadership that integrates five main dimensions as a basis for increasing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for madrasah principals, educational managers, madrasah supervisors, and policy makers in formulating institutional development strategies that are more effective, sustainable, and oriented towards improving quality. Further research is recommended to test this conceptual model through field research with qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches so that the relationship between variables can be empirically proven and provide a broader contribution to the development of Islamic Education Management science.

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