



# TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM IN ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

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## Abstract :

*Teachers have a strategic role as agents of change in Islamic education, by strengthening the character and spiritual values of students. This research aims to examine the role of teachers as agents of change in Islamic schools, as well as analyze the concept of human resource management (HRM) in Islamic education. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method, which aims to analyze various relevant literature sources. The main focus of this research is to identify strategies for developing teacher professionalism, challenges faced, and solutions in strengthening teacher human resources to improve the quality of education in Islamic schools. The problems raised are the low quality of teacher professionalism and the suboptimal management of human resources. The result of this research is that teachers have a strategic role in shaping superior generations through innovative, interactive and globally oriented learning. HR management in Islamic education must include strategic, professional, and spiritually valuable management. The development of teacher professionalism needs to be done through increasing competence, adaptation to change, and the quality of education in accordance with the demands of the 21st century. Strengthening teacher human resources in Islamic schools requires a sustainable strategy based on competence and Islamic values, in order to create a generation that is not only smart, but also has integrity.*

**Keywords :** HR Management, Teacher Professionalism, Islamic School

## INTRODUCTION

Educators play a very important role in determining the direction and quality of education, especially in Islamic educational institutions that not only focus on academic achievement, but also emphasize character building and instilling spiritual values to students. In the context of globalization and technological advances that continue to develop, teachers are required to transform, not only as conveyors of knowledge, but also as agents of change that encourage the creation of innovation and positive transformation in the school environment and society. Teacher professionalism is a major factor in optimizing this role.

The professional level of an educator has a significant contribution in helping students develop optimally to achieve their life goals. Professional teachers are able to carry out their duties, guide students, and instill noble morals. This professionalism includes the value, quality, and expertise in the field of education inherent in the teaching profession. However, there are still many challenges in realizing teachers who meet professional standards. Therefore, developing professionalism through certification programs is an urgent need to improve quality and provide official legality in teaching



practices. (Qadri et al., 2025)

In Islamic education, human resource management must be based on Islamic values such as justice, honesty and responsibility so that teachers not only develop professionally but also maintain religious principles in carrying out their duties. Human resource management includes the process of planning, organizational structure, direction, and supervision related to recruitment, competency improvement, performance evaluation, and motivation of teachers to achieve the goals of educational institutions. In the global era with rapid technological development, Islamic educational institutions face challenges in teaching science while instilling religious and moral values. Therefore, teacher professionalism is a major factor in the success of education, so good HR management is very important to support this. (Hartati & Zulkarnain, 2024)

Based on the results of previous research, it can generally be concluded that optimal human resource management is able to encourage the improvement of the performance of teachers and education personnel, which in turn has a positive impact on the quality of education obtained by students. Educators who have superior quality play an important role in encouraging the improvement of teachers' professional performance. Factors such as education, training, motivation, managerial skills and a conducive work environment affect the effectiveness and quality of teachers' teaching. Therefore, investing in teacher development is essential to improve the overall quality of education. (Syahren & Rindaningsih, 2016)

The problems underlying this research include the low quality of teacher professionalism in many Islamic schools, the lack of ongoing training in accordance with the needs of the times, and the weak HR management system that is able to encourage innovation and change. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed that not only describes the existing conditions, but also offers strategic solutions so that teachers in Islamic schools are truly able to act as agents of change in shaping future generations who are superior and noble.

Therefore, this research intends to explain how teachers as agents of change in Islamic schools, how the concept of HR management in the context of Islamic education, what are the strategies for developing teacher professionalism, and what are the challenges and solutions in strengthening teacher human resources in Islamic schools.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses library research methods and literature reviews. Literature review is an important part of research design that aims to present and analyze various sources of literature or previous research results that are relevant to the topic under study. Through this review, researchers can build a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation for the research conducted, demonstrate an understanding of the theories used, and reveal gaps or shortcomings in previous research which can later become a foothold for the development of new research. (Suhartawan et al., 2024)

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teachers as Agents of Change**

Education is the main foundation in creating superior human resources. In this process, teachers play a central role as the driving force of change. Along with the increasingly complex dynamics of the world, education is also required to continue to adapt. Teachers are expected to be agents of change who are able to direct the learning process to be more relevant to the needs of the times, equipping students not only with knowledge, but also with critical thinking skills, creative, and adaptive to face global challenges.

In the midst of these demands, creativity is a key aspect that every teacher must have. Creativity is not only reflected in the way of teaching, but also in the innovation of interesting and meaningful learning methods. Creative teachers are able to turn the learning process into a fun experience and deepen students' understanding. With creativity, teachers can bridge educational theory with real practice, thus creating more effective and sustainable learning. (Sulistyaniningsih et al., 2025)

As drivers of educational transformation, teachers have an important role in encouraging innovation in learning methods and approaches. They are able to create a learning atmosphere that is interesting, interactive and in line with students' needs. Innovative teachers can utilize technology, apply collaborative methods and develop student-focused approaches to improve the quality and effectiveness of the learning process. (Asif Nur Fauzi et al., 2024)

In addition, teachers have a crucial role in implementing educational innovations to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process. The role of the teacher is not limited to teaching alone, but also as a companion and facilitator in fostering an innovative attitude in the school environment. In learning activities, teachers contribute through the selection of appropriate learning strategies or models, which directly affect the achievement of student learning outcomes. As the driving force of educational transformation, teachers are responsible for shaping a superior and competitive generation. In the midst of the digital era, teachers are faced with disruption challenges that demand continuous innovation, including in maintaining students' psychomotor aspects through the use of digital-based technology in online learning. (Setyowati & Wardani, 2020)

Therefore, the role of educators in implementing teaching innovations is very important. Teachers act as facilitators, agents of change, as well as key components in creating a creative and quality learning atmosphere. In the realm of education, the role of teachers is very central, so it requires individuals who are professional and have a high level of creativity. An educator must master the ability to deliver material in an interesting and easily understood by all students. (Hidupi et al., 2024)

### **HR Management Concepts in the Context of Education**

The term Human Resource Management (HRM) consists of two

components, namely “management” which is interpreted as the process of organizing or managing something in order to achieve certain goals, and “human resources” which refers to individuals who have reason, emotion, desire, knowledge, skills, motivation, and the potential to work through their rationality, feelings, and will. All of these potentials are instrumental in helping an organization achieve its goals. Even though technology, information, capital, and materials are adequately available, organizations will still experience difficulties in achieving their goals if they are not supported by qualified human resources. Therefore, humans are the most crucial element in an organization, including all individuals who play an active role in carrying out various activities of the organization. (Nurhasnah et al., 2024)

The definition of Human Resource Management (HRM) can vary depending on the experts' point of view. Some emphasize activities related to employees or workforce, while others focus more on the importance of the strategic role and continuity of the human resource management process. HRM can be explained as a series of activities that include recruitment, selection, development, maintenance, and utilization of the workforce to achieve individual and organizational goals. In addition, HRM also includes the development of systematic policies, containing steps to meet workforce needs. Some of the main aspects of HRM include position management, recruitment process, employee selection, compensation, and workforce performance evaluation.

The quality of superior human resources (HR) is closely related to the education process, which is essentially a means to improve the standard of human life. Education aims to humanize individuals, shape maturity, change behavior patterns, and develop a person's potential and personal qualities. However, education is not a simple process, but a dynamic system that involves various interconnected elements. Education continues to evolve following the changing times, thus requiring continuous improvement to meet the demands of society. In this context, schools as the center of education play an important role and must receive serious attention. (Saidin et al., 2023)

Schools, as educational institutions, are complex and dynamic systems, not just places where teachers and students gather. Therefore, schools must be managed properly. The main activity in a school organization is the management of human resources in order to produce quality graduates who are able to meet the needs of society and contribute to nation building. In addition, schools also function to support the improvement of the quality of life of the community. To achieve these goals, schools need to be effectively organized, managed and empowered in order to produce excellent learners.

Islamic Education Management is the process of managing educational institutions based on Islamic values by maximizing learning resources and various supporting aspects in order to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. These management principles include 14 main elements: 1) Division of Work, division of labor to increase productivity; 2) Authority and Responsibility, balance between the right to give orders and the obligation to

carry them out; 3) Discipline, compliance with agreed rules; 4) Unity of Command, one employee only receives orders from one superior; 5) Unity of Direction, one plan and leader for similar activities; 6) Subordination of Individual Interest to General Interest, common interests above personal interests; 7) Remuneration of Personnel, proper compensation and attention to employee welfare; 8) Centralization, concentration of authority that can be adjusted to the scale of the organization; 9) Scalar Chain, lines of authority from the top to the bottom; 10) Order, proper placement of people and objects; 11) Equity, fair and humane treatment of employees; 12) Stability of Tenure of Personnel, work stability to increase productivity; 13) Initiative, encouragement to employees to be creative and responsible; and 14) Esprit de Corps, a spirit of togetherness as a source of organizational strength. (Andini, 2023)

### **Teacher Professionalism Development Strategy**

An educator's personal skills are one of the main forces in shaping learners into quality members of society, as well as equipping them with the ability to contribute and lead in the future. In this context, the role of educators is no longer limited to teaching in the classroom, but also as agents of community education who must be able to serve as positive role models. Subject mastery can be defined as the capacity to understand a branch of knowledge broadly and deeply, so as to support the achievement of learner competencies in accordance with the criteria specified in the national education standards. (Saerang et al., 2023)

Professionalism refers to the quality of the attitudes of individuals involved in a profession towards their work, and the extent to which they master the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Thus, teacher professionalism reflects the level of attitude, insight and expertise that must be possessed in carrying out the responsibilities of education and learning, including Islamic religious education. An educator is expected to have a high enough level of professionalism in order to carry out their duties efficiently and maximally. (Sutiono, 2021)

The competence of a teacher can generally be proven through the possession of educator certification and the receipt of a decent professional allowance according to national standards in Indonesia. Currently, many teachers have obtained certification, are in the process of certification, have received professional allowances, or are waiting for the disbursement of these allowances. The existence of an educator certificate is a strong indicator that the teacher has met the required competency requirements. Teacher competencies are divided into four main categories, namely: 1) pedagogical competence, 2) personality competence, 3) social competence, and 4) professional competence. (Randa, 2023)

The progress of a country is greatly influenced by developments in the education sector, as education plays a vital role in improving the quality of people's lives. The goal of education is to produce quality human resources, which can be measured through competence, skills, creativity, innovation, and

constructive attitudes and behaviors. In the midst of globalization, the existence of professional educators is a must, especially considering the lagging quality of our education compared to other countries. Therefore, an educator is not only expected to work professionally, but must also enrich themselves with skills and deep insights.

Teacher professional development encompasses many key aspects. Some of these are:

Pedagogical competence is the main focus for an educator to continue to improve their ability to carry out their duties, especially in managing the learning process in an efficient manner. From this description, it can be concluded that the pedagogical competence of teachers is closely related to the ability to manage the classroom, such as preparing lesson plans, understanding the subject matter being taught, managing classroom dynamics, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Nurfuadi & Afandi, 2024)

Content knowledge refers to the teacher's understanding of the content of the subject matter, including how the knowledge is structured and organized. This knowledge includes two aspects, namely conceptual knowledge, which relates to mastery of abstract concepts and relationships between concepts, and procedural knowledge, which relates to understanding the steps or procedures in a process, including the use of algorithms. (Komarudin et al., 2023) In addition, an understanding of content enables educators to design appropriate and engaging teaching materials, as well as choose appropriate teaching methods based on the characteristics of the material being taught. A teacher who has a deep understanding of the content is also able to relate the subject matter to everyday life conditions, so that learners can see the connection and practical application of what they are learning. Furthermore, teachers who actively update their content knowledge can adopt the latest findings and theories in the learning process, keeping the curriculum relevant and engaging. Thus, strong content knowledge becomes the main foundation for teachers in providing quality education and promoting students' academic development to the fullest.

Proficiency in educational technology is one of the important elements in teacher professional development. This competency includes understanding and skills in utilizing various technological devices and platforms to support and enhance the learning process. With an understanding of educational technology, educators can utilize software, applications and digital resources to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. (Demmanggasa Yultan et al., 2023)

Social and Emotional Skills Teachers with strong social skills are able to build positive relationships with students, parents and colleagues. This harmonious relationship will create a comfortable and supportive learning atmosphere, so that students can grow and develop both socially and emotionally. (Sutiawan & Hamdarida, 2023) Social and emotional skills are an important part of teacher professional development. They include the management of personal emotions as well as the skill of interacting effectively

with others. Teachers who master this aspect are able to create a positive classroom environment, build strong relationships with students, peers and parents, and manage classroom dynamics wisely. These skills also enable teachers to handle conflict, provide emotional support, motivate students constructively and respond to students' needs with empathy. In addition to improving the quality of interactions in educational settings, social and emotional skills also help teachers maintain work-life balance, manage stress and improve their professional effectiveness.

**Continuous Learning,** continuous learning is an effort to build a learning environment that encourages continuous student growth and development, both in academic and personal aspects. This process includes providing the support and resources necessary for students to continue to develop over time. (Badrullah et al., 2024)

The strategy for developing teacher professionalism can be done in several ways: (Miramadhani et al., 2024)

**Trainings and workshops** are programs that take place over a period of time to update teachers' knowledge and skills, while workshops are short sessions that focus on hands-on practice. Both aim to hone new skills and provide methods that can be directly used in learning. Types of training include improving subject matter, educational technology, classroom management and communication skills. Methods such as interactive presentations, simulations and group discussions make the learning process more effective. Evaluation is required to ensure proper application of the material and follow-up.

**Communities of practice** are groups of teachers who meet regularly to share experiences and solutions related to teaching. With shared goals and active participation, these communities improve the quality of learning, motivation and adaptability of teachers. Implementation can be through regular discussions, online forums or joint training. The main challenges are time, member commitment and different needs, but the benefits for professional development are great.

**Mentoring and Coaching,** Mentoring is a mentoring relationship between experienced and newer teachers, focused on developing skills and confidence. Coaching is more structured, focusing on improving performance through feedback and reflection. Both help teachers improve teaching techniques, manage the classroom, and solve specific problems. These programs require competent mentors and coaches and ongoing evaluation to be effective.

**Technology** provides widespread access to learning resources such as online courses and webinars, allowing teachers to learn flexibly according to their schedules. Technology also supports virtual learning communities that facilitate experience sharing and feedback between teachers. In addition, digital tools and educational software enrich teaching methods and help teachers adapt to educational innovations.

**Collaboration** involves teachers working together to exchange ideas, best practices and professional support, while partnerships with other institutions

expand access to resources and training. This cooperation increases competence, motivation and innovation in teaching. Community and parental involvement is also important to create a holistic learning environment. Implementation can take the form of joint projects, teacher exchanges and collaborative training, with coordination and commitment challenges to overcome.

Education and training is essential to improve teachers' competence and professionalism. Effective training should be tailored to the needs of schools and individuals through prior analysis, as teachers' abilities and experience vary. Although many teachers participate in training, the implementation is still uneven and unsustainable. Therefore, the government, education offices and school principals need to pay more attention to organizing continuous education and training so that it can have a real positive impact on improving teacher quality. (Ulandari & Santaria, 2020)

### **Challenges and Solutions in Strengthening Teachers' Human Resources in Islamic Schools**

In responding to the challenges faced, human resource management in educational institutions needs to adopt a flexible, innovative and sustainable approach. These efforts include structured HR planning, meeting the needs of educators and staff in a targeted manner, developing individual capacity and competence, implementing fair and open policies, and establishing a work culture that focuses on developing potential and achieving a shared vision. Effective HR management will create a productive work environment, improve the quality of learning activities, encourage employee job satisfaction, and support the optimal achievement of institutional goals. (Yusaini et al., 2023)

In addition, educational institutions are also faced with the challenge of managing qualified and professional educators. They must ensure the availability of teachers or lecturers who master the material in depth, apply effective teaching methods, and are able to establish good communication with students. This challenge is increasingly complex along with social and economic changes and the rapid development of technology, which has an impact on changes in the competency needs of teaching staff. For example, advances in information and communication technology have revolutionized learning models in various educational institutions. Therefore, educational institutions are required to adapt to these developments through increasing the capacity and skills of educators relevant to these technological advances.

In addition, the limited technical ability to operate technology is an obstacle for some Islamic education managers who have not mastered adequate technical knowledge and expertise. In addition, social and cultural barriers can also arise in the process of implementing digital transformation, such as concerns about the negative impact of technology on Islamic values and traditions. (Miftahul Jannah et al., 2023)

Teachers are the most vital resource in ensuring the success of the



learning process and in raising educational standards. Because the success or failure of students is greatly influenced by the methods and ways of teaching teachers, teachers are required to be professional in educating. The effectiveness of teaching and learning activities determines the quality of student learning outcomes, and the teacher's position in this process is crucial. In fact, if schools do not support the goals of education, the availability of funds, building facilities or adequate infrastructure will not guarantee the achievement of educational goals. However, the expansion of infrastructure must be matched by an improvement in the quality of human resources, particularly in terms of the number and quality of teaching staff. (Manora et al., 2024)

Some steps that can be taken to improve teacher competence include: 1) developing knowledge, attitudes and skills through pre-placement education programs. 2) improving competence during the learning process in the classroom. 3) deepening expertise through various training programs, such as multicoaching. 4) honing knowledge and skills through professional forums, such as teachers' working groups (KKG) and subject teachers' meetings (MGMP). 5) improving the quality of teacher teaching through educator certification programs.

A teacher must have various important characteristics in carrying out his role to educate and shape the character of students. Some of the traits that must be possessed include trustworthiness and sincerity, knowledge and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties, a teacher must uphold the trust, because the knowledge possessed is a trust from Allah entrusted to scholars or teachers. The success of the prophets in guiding their people cannot be separated from their trustworthiness. Likewise, the scholars or teachers in educating their people or students will not succeed without maintaining the trust. A scholar or teacher should not betray the trust by hiding knowledge, especially if the knowledge is needed by the people or students. (Zubairi, 2022)

Islamic values that need to be applied in the process of developing teacher professionalism include:

*Ikhlas*, a teacher should carry out the task of teaching and educating students with the main objective of achieving the pleasure of Allah, spreading knowledge, and upholding Islamic teachings. The intention in teaching and studying should be based on sincerity to get blessings from Allah SWT. According to the author, teachers should not expect material rewards or worldly benefits in the teaching process. Sincerity in conveying knowledge must be the main foundation, namely solely for Allah SWT. (Fitri, 2022)

*Tawadhu' (humble)*, An educator has a very vital role, even at the forefront in the implementation of the educational process. The level of educational success is highly dependent on the quality of the teacher, both in terms of mastery of the material taught and effective delivery methods, and supported by a personality that reflects harmony between speech and action. An educator should also have an attitude of tawadhu, which is humble, and avoid the nature of ujub or feeling the greatest. However, the attitude of tawadhu in question is not excessive self-abasement to make others

underestimate, but rather a humble attitude that reflects equality, mutual respect, and does not feel superior to others. This kind of attitude can foster a spirit of equality, respect for others, tolerance, solidarity, and love for the values of justice. (Rahman, 2021)

***Trustworthy and responsible.*** A teacher's performance is closely related to all activities that are his responsibility in carrying out his role as an educator, coach, and guide for students towards success. In Islamic teachings, a teacher is required to have a trustworthy nature and a high sense of responsibility for the duties he carries. Amanah reflects the attitude of maintaining and carrying out the trust that has been given, especially in conveying knowledge honestly and sincerely for the sake of Allah. The responsibility includes the seriousness in educating, guiding, and shaping the character of students based on the values of Islamic teachings. The role of the teacher is not only to deliver subject matter, but also to set an example through good behavior and morals. Therefore, the role of educating should not be carried out carelessly or simply fulfilling obligations. In the Islamic view, ignoring the mandate of education is a form of violation of the trust that has been given by Allah SWT and society. (Harianja et al., 2025)

***Being a moral role model,*** a teacher not only acts as a conveyer of knowledge, but also as a role model who deserves to be used as a role model by students. Therefore, teachers are required to have a strong spiritual commitment and be able to display praiseworthy morals in every word and action. The presence of teachers with noble characters not only positively affects the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, but also plays a major role in shaping the character of students based on the principles of Islamic teachings. (Haris, 2025)

By implementing these values, efforts to improve teacher professionalism in Islamic education institutions not only contribute to improving the quality of learning, but also play a role in producing a generation that is intellectually intelligent and superior in morals, in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers have a strategic role as agents of change in the education system who are not only tasked with teaching, but also guiding, inspiring and shaping the character of students to be ready to face global challenges in the digital era. In this context, teacher creativity and innovation are needed to create an active, relevant and meaningful learning atmosphere, with a student-centered learning approach and effective use of technology. Teachers must be able to bridge between theory and practice and encourage critical, collaborative and adaptive thinking skills in students. Therefore, the development of teacher professionalism is a crucial aspect that must be carried out on an ongoing basis, either through training, workshops, mentoring, or collaboration in learning communities.

In the context of Islamic education, strengthening the human resource

management (HRM) of teachers must be done strategically and thoroughly, by prioritizing spiritual values such as sincerity, trustworthiness, tawadhu', responsibility, and exemplary morals. HRM includes a selective recruitment process, systematic competency development, fair performance evaluation, and proportional rewards. Islamic education management principles such as justice, unity of direction, and discipline become the foundation in creating professional and ethical governance. Thus, teachers are not only academically and pedagogically superior, but also able to form an Islamic generation that has intellectual intelligence, spiritual strength, and moral integrity in facing the dynamics of global life.

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