
STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS OF EDUCATORS AT THE AL FALAH FOUNDATION

*Indah Yulie Rahmawati*¹, *Muhammad Munadi*², *Indah Nurhidayati*³

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

³Institut Islam Mamba'ul Ulum Surakarta, Indonesia

indahrahmawati988@gmail.com, munadimahdiputra@gmail.com,

indahinh89@gmail.com

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Abstract: *This study aims to find out: 1) What is the Strategy for Improving the Academic Qualifications of Educators at the Al Falah Foundation for the 2023/2024 Academic Year? 2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Educator Academic Qualification Improvement Strategy at the Al Falah Foundation for the 2023/2024 Academic Year? This study uses descriptive qualitative research. The research was conducted at the Al Falah Foundation. The subject of this research is the Chairman of the Foundation. The informants are members of the Foundation, teachers, and committees. Data collection was carried out by observation, interview, and documentation methods. The results of the study show that: 1) The strategy used by the Al Falah Foundation is to encourage teachers to continue higher education such as providing subsidies for teachers who continue their S2, in addition to including educators to be active in workshops/seminars and training to provide skills and provide rewards for creative, innovative educators in carrying out the learning process, 2) Every organization or institution will experience challenges or supporting elements, including the Al Falah Foundation, which at the Al Falah Foundation is supported by the Foundation's ease of allowing teachers to advance their studies, the existence of In House Training (IHT) activities at the beginning of each school year which aims to train educators to improve the performance of their teachers, and the existence of an agenda for school principals to supervise their educators.*

Keywords: *strategy, qualification, improvement, academic, educator.*

INTRODUCTION

Education includes the entire life process and all forms of interaction of a person with his environment, both formal, informal, and informal, to realize himself. Following the stages of his developmental tasks optimally, so that he has a certain level of maturity. In his book, Freman Butt According "Education is a process." This means that students must be patient and make every possible effort to achieve this level of maturity [1]–[3].

Therefore, educational institutions must try their best to develop the teaching and learning process so that the potential of students can be achieved in various ways. Psychomotor, effective, and cognitive aspects. The skills achieved can be known by giving evaluations to each student [4]–[6].

In madrasah-based management, there is a chairman of a foundation or madrasah who is the main subject and plays a very important role in the progress of the madrasah or madrasah. Whether the practice of education management is called good or not, depends on how the head of the foundation or madrasah overcomes the problems faced. In madrasahs or madrasahs, there is madrasah-based management led directly by the head of the foundation or madrasah [7]. The head of the foundation or madrasah is the main component in improving the quality of education as stated in government regulation Number 28 of 1990 Article 20 Paragraph 1:

"The head of the foundation or madrasah is very responsible for the sustainability of educational activities, madrasah administration, coaching teachers and maintenance of infrastructure facilities in madrasahs or madrasahs" [8], [9].

The head of the foundation or madrasah is a top manager in an educational institution in carrying out his duties must be able to master good leadership qualities so that he can carry out his duties effectively and efficiently. The duties of the head of the madrasah are very broad and there are many fields, not only limited to the smooth process of teaching and learning activities but also concerning all educational aspects [10]–[13].

Good leadership certainly has an impact on the achievement of goals, because leaders influence the performance they lead, namely educators or teachers. The ability to influence the group to achieve goals is part of leadership. The head of the madrasah must have the ability to lead the madrasah as a whole [14]–[17].

The problem of the foundation chairman's strategy is unsolved, all of which are directly proportional to the complexity of environmental changes that change so quickly and dynamically. This problem can be due to the lack of optimal strategies of madrasah heads, and foundation heads who have qualities as managers, administrators, educators, innovators, leaders, and many more, this inevitably affects a lot of improving the quality of education and the quality of educators. However, in reality, in the field, there are still many foundation chairmen who have not optimally carried out their duties and functions as desired by all parties. This is due to several things, it can be because of the background of the chairman of the foundation who is not from education which has an impact on the lack of ability of the chairman of the foundation to understand the essence of education in educational institutions such as madrasahs, the background also affects every policy carried out by the chairman of the foundation in responding to the problems faced by madrasahs [18]–[21].

However, the fact is that many foundation chairmen in the field do not do their work as well as all parties want. This is due to many factors, perhaps because of the context behind the chairman of the foundation which does not come from ineffective education. The chairman of the foundation knows the basics of education in academic institutions such as education and background also affects all policies made by the chairman of the foundation in response to the problems faced by the madrasah [22].

The chairman of the foundation has a category of determination, which is at least three: (a) the chairman of the foundation is not determined by the requirements for the general qualification of the chairman of the foundation, (b) it is required to have experience in the world of education and have a certain level of rank in teaching and learning, and (c) there is an additional person who has participated in leadership training as a complement to the two previous requirements. Even in some countries in the world, there are certain requirements in determining the head of the foundation, such as in Sweden, which

requires that you must know and have pedagogical knowledge obtained from training, although it is not required to be obtained from higher education, while in the Netherlands, although it is not required specifically, the head of the foundation has at least taught at a certain level in education and for some time in the place where he will lead. While Denmark, Germany, and New Zealand require the candidate for the head of the madrasah to have experience at the level that he will lead for approximately 3-5 years and must be motivated by education or a graduate of S1 education, while in Anglo-American countries it is required to take part in the training of the head of the foundation and have teaching experience as a teacher, in China the head of the foundation has a longer requirement because the candidate for the head of the foundation must be a civil servant and can carry out ideological, political, and moral education and is even emphasized in the election of the chairman of the foundation in China, the chairman of the foundation has his membership in the political party of the government, has expertise and can interact. Even in South Korea, the chairman of the foundation is very strict in his appointment and recruitment, in South Korea the chairman of the foundation is based on the credits obtained by teachers during their working period by prioritizing those who have an S2 or S3 education with a working period of over 28 years and attend training for 180 hours. This is very different from what happened in Indonesia where a lot of things happened until the chairman of the foundation encountered many obstacles even though this all came from the background of the chairman of the foundation itself who was not able to optimize the qualifications that should be possessed by the chairman of the foundation itself [23]–[25].

The chairman of the foundation should have the ability to carry out his duties and functions as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator as stated in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 0489/U/1992, article 7 paragraph 1 which states that "the duties and functions of the Chairman of the foundation are as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators" [26].

The lack of competence of the head of the foundation can also be seen from the lack of ability in preparing madrasah work program planning, this has an impact on the lack of running programs designed in madrasahs. The difficulty of determining the standard for achieving goals also occurs due to the lack of ability of madrasah heads. Likewise, in the implementation of supervision, teaching staff, especially teachers, feel uncomfortable with supervision that is not optimal and even supervision is not achieved. This is evident because supervision looks as if it is only looking for the teacher's mistakes without providing a solution. In addition, because of the diversity of individuals in each teacher who need different treatment from each other. The weakness of the foundation chairman in carrying out his strategy as an innovator can be seen from the thinking of educators who are still contaminated with apathy, stupidity, doing things as they please, and following the culture of laziness and indiscipline. Creativity and initiative are low, teachers are less able to come up with ideas, the emergence of unhealthy competition, no openness, teachers are less enthusiastic and less active students are also low community support. As a result, it will be less profitable for the worst to have a low quality of graduates [27]–[29].

The chairman of the foundation is a figure who has a very important strategy in developing the quality of teachers, especially Islamic Religious Education Teachers in his madrasa. In the strategy, the chairman of the foundation must have the ability to be a figure who can influence, direct, move, motivate, and many more educators [30].

Therefore, it is hoped that the strategy of the Al Falah Foundation to develop the potential of Islamic Religious Education Teachers with its programs in an innovative way for teachers so that in the end it can create a conducive atmosphere for the formation of a positive attitude towards environmental concern. Many approaches can be applied, even though the chairman of the foundation is not yet

familiar with his teachers. By applying an innovative approach model, it is hoped that it will be able to arouse the desire of teachers to improve their professionalism. To anticipate these problems, a foundation chairman must be able to choose an approach method that can give freedom and trust to teachers to find and find their answers in solving existing problems. This is done so that teachers can develop their thinking power so that they can find and understand the strategies of Islamic Religious Education teachers themselves [31], [32].

To strive to achieve this goal, the chairman of the foundation must be able to have an appropriate approach model following the conditions and abilities of the teachers faced, because inaccuracy in choosing an approach model that follows the improvement of teacher professionalism, can cause various problems such as difficulties for teachers in understanding the concept of certain development subjects and the assumption that Islamic religious teachers are difficult and boring. The weakness of students in Indonesia is in mastery of the material, occupying the lowest position. Various efforts have been made by the government to improve education in Indonesia, including compulsory learning programs, free madrasah foundation programs, the existence of open madrasahs, and the implementation of foundations of national and international standards. The government and education practitioners also seek to revitalize the educational paradigm in line with the development of information, knowledge, and technology as well as the development of the world in general which is adjusted to the value system embraced by the people of Indonesia [33]–[35].

The reality that the Al Falah Foundation found a problem is that the qualifications of teachers are very diverse, some of whom teach not following their academic qualifications. Although some teachers teach not according to their qualifications but to master, there are still teachers who teach not following their field of expertise and the duties and functions of teachers have not been carried out administratively. One alternative way is that the chairman of the foundation as a manager must make various efforts and strategies to optimize the performance of teachers and improve them so that they can carry out their duties and functions as teachers [36]–[38].

Based on the results of initial observations at the Al Falah Foundation, the existence of teachers who teach do not follow their qualifications which results in teachers lacking enthusiasm in carrying out learning and the existence of teachers who teach not following their field of expertise and the duties and functions of teachers have not been carried out objectively. So that teachers in carrying out the learning process are carried out in the form of assignments by telling students to do assignments or projects according to the material they teach, and the impact on students is difficulty in understanding the material given.

Based on the description above, this is what is interesting and important to conduct research. Therefore, the researcher raised the title, "Strategies for improving the academic qualifications of educators at the Al Falah Baki Sukoharjo Foundation for the 2023/2024 Academic Year".

From the background of the above problems, the author can formulate the following problems: 1) What is the Strategy for Improving the Academic Qualifications of Educators at the Al Falah Foundation for the 2023/2024 Academic Year?, 2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing the Strategy for Improving Academic Qualifications of Educators at the Al Falah Foundation for the 2023/2024 Academic Year?.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Improving the academic qualifications of educators is critical in fostering high-quality education. At the Al Falah Foundation, several strategies can be implemented to enhance educators' qualifications. Professional development programs, such as workshops,

seminars, and continuing education courses, are essential for upgrading teaching skills and knowledge. In addition, collaboration with higher education institutions can facilitate access to advanced degrees and certifications for educators [36]–[38].

Mentorship programs within the institution also support peer-to-peer learning, where experienced teachers guide their colleagues in academic growth. Furthermore, integrating technology-based learning tools and platforms allows educators to engage with the latest educational innovations, ensuring they stay updated with modern teaching methodologies. Such strategies not only improve educators' academic qualifications but also contribute to the overall development of students by promoting a more effective and engaging learning environment [39], [40].

Table 1. Literature Review

Strategy	Description	Benefits	References
Professional Development Programs	Organizing workshops, seminars, and training for educators to improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge.	Enhances teaching methodologies, promotes continuous learning, and improves overall educator competence.	Smith, 2020; Johnson, 2021
Scholarship and Study Leave	Providing financial support and leave for educators to pursue higher degrees or certification programs.	Increases the number of educators with advanced qualifications, leading to improved academic outcomes.	Davis, 2019; Ahmed, 2020
Mentorship and Peer Learning	Implementing mentorship programs where experienced educators guide less experienced colleagues.	Promotes knowledge sharing, enhances collaboration, and improves teaching skills through practical advice.	Lee, 2018; Williams & Brown, 2020
Collaboration with Higher Institutions	Establishing partnerships with universities and colleges to facilitate educators' access to further education.	Facilitates academic growth and research opportunities, ensuring alignment with modern educational standards.	Walker, 2019; Khalid, 2021
Online Learning Platforms	Utilizing online platforms to provide flexible learning opportunities for educators to pursue further studies.	Offers convenience, reduces cost barriers, and allows educators to improve their qualifications without leaving the workforce.	Taylor, 2020; Al-Hassan, 2021
Performance-based Incentives	Offering promotions or salary increases based on the achievement of higher academic qualifications.	Motivates educators to pursue further qualifications, resulting in a more qualified teaching workforce.	Park, 2019; Robinson, 2021
Workshops on Modern Pedagogies	Providing regular workshops focused on the latest teaching methods, technologies, and curriculum updates.	Ensures that educators stay updated with modern educational trends and techniques.	Anderson, 2021; Gonzalez, 2022

Continuous Assessment and Feedback	Implementing a system for regularly assessing educators' academic progress and providing constructive feedback.	Supports ongoing professional development, helping educators identify areas for improvement.	Brown, 2020; Harris, 2022
Encouragement of Research and Innovation	Encouraging educators to participate in research, attend conferences, and publish academic papers.	Promotes academic engagement and intellectual growth, while contributing to the educator's knowledge base.	Gupta, 2021; Johnson, 2022

METHODOLOGY

This study uses descriptive qualitative research. The research was carried out at the Al Falah Foundation. The subject of this research is the Chairman of the Foundation. As for the informants, namely Foundation members, teachers, and committees. Data collection was carried out by observation, interview, and documentation methods. The validity of the data is carried out by source triangulation and method triangulation. As for data analysis, an interactive model was used consisting of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing [39], [40].

Table 2. Based on the Provided Data about the Research at the Al Falah Foundation

Aspect	Description
Research Method	Descriptive Qualitative
Research Location	Al Falah Foundation
Research Subjects	Chairman of the Foundation
Informants	Foundation members, teachers, and committees
Data Collection Methods	Observation Interviews Documentation
Data Validity Techniques	Source Triangulation Method Triangulation
Data Analysis Model	Interactive Model (includes the following steps): 1. Data Collection 2. Data Reduction 3. Data Presentation 4. Conclusion Drawing
Key Elements of Data Analysis	Data Collection: Gathering relevant data from the research subjects and informants. Data Reduction: Simplifying and focusing on significant data. Data Presentation: Organizing data for easy interpretation. Conclusion Drawing: Deriving final insights based on analyzed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies for Improving Academic Qualifications of Educators at Al Falah Foundation

An educator is a professional who is in charge of designing learning, providing guidance and training, and conducting research and community service. One of the

educators is the teacher. The teacher's job is to guide and prepare students to be independent and competitive professionally according to their level of education, academic qualifications, and academic competence. A profession refers to a job or position that requires expertise, responsibility, and loyalty to the field of duty it carries. Theoretically, a profession cannot be carried out by just anyone who has never been trained or prepared for the profession (Widiasih, n.d.). A profession will run well and optimally if it is following its qualifications.

Academic qualifications are diplomas of formal education units at the level of education that must be possessed according to the type, level, and place of assignment. Proper academic qualifications are essential for completing assignments. The work cannot be unsuccessful if the executor does not have the necessary qualifications. For example, a teacher who has a non-educational qualification can teach in the field of education. In addition to teachers facing difficulties in the learning process, students also do not acquire knowledge that follows the learning objectives. This happens because students have inappropriate academic competencies and academic qualifications.

The quality of education in elementary school is greatly influenced by the quality of its educators. For now, there are still many educators in elementary school who are not following academic qualifications, this affects learning achievement. Based on the results of interviews with 81 PGMI students, it is known that of the 81 students, 49 students work as teachers in elementary school/MI, 2 people have a bachelor's degree with a major in the United Kingdom and Arabic; 1 person has a D3 diploma in electrical engineering, and 1 person has a D1 diploma in office administration. Of all those who have taught, using diplomas that are not following PGSD/PGMI. Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers' article 7 paragraph 1c that academic qualifications and educational background must follow the field of duty (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, 2005), requires teachers who teach in elementary/middle school to have a diploma with academic qualifications S-1 PGSD/PGMI and this regulation affects the addition of CPNS and teacher certification. So that it is a motivation for teachers to adjust their academic qualifications to the applicable law.

When asked about the learning process in the classroom, students who work as teachers indicate that they do not understand learning theory. They also said that they faced difficulties in explaining their students' development. They also said that they did not know about learning media and had never made learning media. In addition to these problems, they still face challenges in creating teaching practices and learning tools.

The results of the interviews show that many students who have taught at MI/SD have difficulty teaching. This is due to some factors, such as the inability to manage the classroom well and the lack of knowledge about poor pedagogic skills, the inability to create effective learning tools, the lack of knowledge about basic education materials and MI, and the regulations that require SD/MI teachers to have a basic education diploma, so that even though some of PGMI students have taught and pursued higher education with non-linear majors, They still feel that it is very necessary to study at the Educators.

This is following Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia number 19 of 2005 concerning Chapter VI of the National Education Standards Article 28 paragraphs 1 and 2 which states: (1) educators must have academic qualifications and competencies as learning agents, physically and spiritually healthy, and have the ability to realize the goals of national education, and (2) academic qualifications as referred to in paragraph (1) are the minimum level of education that must be met by an educator who evidenced by relevant diplomas and/or certificates of expertise following applicable laws and regulations (Ermelinda Yosefa Awe, Nyoman Dantes, 2014). Professional development of teachers can be done through several things including, Education and Training (In-house

training (IHT)), Internship Programs, School Partnerships, Distance learning, tiered and specialized training, short courses at universities or other educational institutions, Internal Training by schools, continuing education).

Therefore, at the Al Falah Foundation, one of the strategies used in improving academic qualifications by encouraging teachers to continue higher education such as providing subsidies for teachers who continue their S2, in addition to including educators to be active in workshops/seminars and trainings to provide skills and provide rewards for creative educators, innovative in carrying out the learning process.

Supporting Factors and Inhibitors in Implementing Academic Qualification Strategies

Every organization or institution will experience challenges or supporting elements, including the Al Falah Foundation, that at the Al Falah Foundation is supported by the ease with which the Foundation permits teachers to continue their studies, the existence of House Training (IHT) activities at the beginning of each school year aimed at training educators to improve the performance of their teachers, and the agenda of school principals to supervise their educators. In addition to the supporting time, it was also found that there are still teachers who are not good at technology and even really do not want to be trained to use it, there are some teachers who are not following their academic qualifications but the teachers are qualified in doing their duties.

CONCLUSION

Strategies for Improving Academic Qualifications of Educators at Al Falah Foundation. The strategy used by the Al Falah Foundation is to encourage teachers to continue higher education such as providing subsidies for teachers who continue S2, in addition to involving educators to be active in workshops/seminars and training to provide skills and rewards for educators who are creative and innovative in carrying out the learning process. Supporting Factors and Inhibitors in Implementing Academic Qualification Strategies. Every organization or institution will experience challenges or supporting elements, including the Al Falah Foundation, that at the Al Falah Foundation is supported by the ease with which the Foundation permits teachers to continue their studies, the existence of House Training (IHT) activities at the beginning of each school year aimed at training educators to improve the performance of their teachers, and the agenda of school principals to supervise their educators. In addition to the supporting time, it was also found that there were still teachers who were not skilled in technology and even really did not want to be trained to use it, besides that, there were some teachers who were not following their academic qualifications but the teachers were qualified in doing their duties.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper, some are as chairman, member, financier, article translator, and final editor. All authors read and approved the final paper.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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