Strategy for Strengthening Teacher Capacity at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in the Digital Era

Zuri Pamuji[1]*; Titik Rahmawati[2]
[1]Universitas Islam Negeri Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Islam Negeri Profesor Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

Corresponding author's email: zuripamuji@uinsaizu.ac.id

Abstract: Strengthening the capacity of teachers in madrasas in the current digital era cannot be postponed. The research aims to explore in depth the strategy formats used by madrasas to strengthen teacher capacity in the digital era. This field research uses descriptive qualitative methods, with interviews, documentation and observation as data collection techniques. Meanwhile, data analysis consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The research was conducted at one of the MI Ma'arif in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. The research results show that the strategy carried out is divided into two large parts, namely strategies based on internal activities and those based on activities outside the madrasah. Internal activity-based activities are carried out through internal workshops and periodic sharing sessions between teachers. As for activity-based strategies outside madrasas, this is carried out through sending delegates to training activities/seminars and assignments to take part in online training on platforms provided free of charge by the Ministry. These two big strategies can have an impact on increasing the capacity of teachers in the madrasah.

Keywords: *strategy; teacher; capacity; madrasah; digital*

A. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has become part of human life. This is characterized by the massive application of technology in human life, and almost no area of life is in contact with technology. These fields include economics, politics, health and education. For the economic sector, for example, there is strategic planning for IS/IT development related to the business licensing system, especially for creative economy actors related to the integration of One Single Submission (OSS)(Sari, 2018). Apart from that, the development of a digital technology-based economy can be used by business actors to carry out buying and selling transactions without being limited by space and time (Sunarta, 2023). In the political

sector, existing technology has created a deep transformation in the world of politics, especially in society (Siregar, 2024). In addition, technology has changed and influenced political interactions in the context of presidential elections based on the results of analysis of the role of social media in political campaigns, candidate communication strategies, and political dynamics in the digital world.

The influence of digital technology in the health sector is also large. For example, the use of the Internet as an information medium contributes to women's reproductive health education in a more interactive, fun and practical way (Zulkarnain, 2022). Apart from that, the use of technology can also help heart failure patients monitor heart attack symptoms independently so that they can reduce the patient's recurrence rate (Wicaksana, 2021). In the field of education, for example, the use of technology to create new learning models, media or learning resources that are creative and innovative, and able to improve the quality of learning (Akmal, 2023). Apart from that, technology can also be used to simplify the learning process, so that learning can be carried out without being limited by space and time (Susanti, 2021).

The massive application of this technology has encouraged many people to try to continue to follow developments in existing technology in the hope of getting great benefits and better life opportunities, including among teenagers (Lestari, 2022). The trend of following this development certainly requires adequate sources of financing. This is because new technology usually requires greater costs at the start of its use compared to sometime later after it is used en masse in society, for example, television and the internet (Hendradi, 2007). The emergence of this trend, on the one hand, is certainly an encouraging thing, but on the other hand, the development of digital technology also has negative impacts that everyone needs to be aware of.

The negative impact of the development of digital technology on human life is certainly something that is inevitable, including for the world of education. There are several examples of the impact: 1) The occurrence of bullying in cyberspace among students, whether carried out by fellow students or other parties (Sasongko, 2023). 2) The emergence of fake news or hoaxes that can mislead readers (Putri, 2020), including this can trigger violence between students. 3) Some students spend a lot of time in cyberspace, such as playing games and social media, rather than opening learning sites (Azhari, 2024). 4) The role of teachers seems to be increasingly being replaced by technology, because it is easy for students to obtain knowledge and information from cyberspace (Kemdikbud, 2018). These various impacts, along with the development of existing digital technology, certainly cannot be eliminated, but the opportunity to minimize these is still open and is very possible to do.

Efforts to minimize the negative impact of the development of digital technology can be carried out by many parties, especially those who have a direct connection to the education sector. One of these parties is the teacher. This is because teachers have a

strategic position in the field of education and teaching, especially for: 1) strengthening students' morals and character during the learning process (Farid, 2023; Sapdi, 2023). 2) mentoring and supervising students while they are in the school environment (Sopian, 2016), 3) communicating with parents regarding student development (Putra, 2020), and 4) providing examples of how to use digital technology wisely.

The strategic role that can be carried out by teachers certainly requires adequate competency or capacity support. So teachers need to strive to improve their competence/capacity. These efforts can be carried out internally or within the school or carried out externally by participating in competency development or capacity-strengthening activities organized by other parties outside the school. Examples of these various activities include workshops, technical guidance, coaching, workshops, in-house training, or other similar activities, whether in the form of offline or online activities with various available applications. With regard to efforts to encourage teachers to increase competency or strengthen capacity, it is a necessity for every school/madrasah to facilitate and provide opportunities for teachers to carry it out.

B. METHODS

This field research uses descriptive qualitative methods, using interviews, observation and documentation to obtain the required data. The research was carried out June – July 2024, at one of the MI Ma'arif in Bantul Yogyakarta. The informants met included the school principal, teacher and school treasurer. The data analysis technique uses the theory of Miles and Huberman, whose activities outline include data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The strategy to strengthen competency/capacity for teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is carried out by providing opportunities for each teacher to take part in various activities that are relevant to strengthening competency/capacity. Both those carried out internally by the madrasah and those carried out outside the scope of the madrasah. As for the activities carried out by the madrasah, there are two activities, namely independent workshops and sharing sessions between teachers. For example, workshop activities can be described from the following interview with the head of the madrasah:

> *….the P5 and P2RA workshops replace the learning media workshops, which were not implemented in the first semester….*

This workshop equips teachers with an understanding of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) and the Rahmatan Lil 'Alamiin Student Strengthening Project (P2RA). The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project is an interdisciplinary learning process in observing and thinking about solutions to problems in the surrounding environment to strengthen various competencies in the Pancasila Student

Profile (Aditomo, 2022). Meanwhile, the Rahmatan Lil 'Alamiin Student Strengthening Project is an interdisciplinary learning that uses *Rahmatan lil 'Alamiin* values as the basis for its implementation. The value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* itself is the principles of attitude and perspective in practising religion so that religious patterns in the context of the nation and state-run properly so that the general benefit is maintained along with the protection of humanity in religion (Ramdhani, 2022). This workshop is important to equip teachers with the competencies they have. The inclusion of this workshop is also in line with the following statement from the treasurer:

> *Every time we have the opportunity, we involve teachers, there are several teachers who we take along for workshops*

The workshops carried out at this madrasa are generally an annual program designed from the start of the school year. However, on the other hand, sometimes the results of the principal's supervision of teachers are also a consideration for carrying out workshops. This is according to information from the following madrasa head:

> *…later the follow-up will be something I will write, then later everything will lead to learning that leads to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and tomorrow I will program it through a workshop, because most teachers don't really understand about it….*

Apart from being carried out through workshops, strengthening internal capacity is also carried out through sharing sessions between teachers. This was done as part of sharing between madrasah teachers, with the main resource being teachers who had completed workshops/training/seminars organized by parties outside the madrasah. This is in line with the following information from the school principal:

> *It's a learning community for teachers. In the past, every Wednesday, there was sharing with other teachers from teachers who had just attended a seminar/workshop.*

This sharing session strengthens the madrasah's internal competency. With this pattern, teachers who do not participate in workshops/ training/ seminars have the opportunity to obtain information and knowledge from other teachers who do. The knowledge and information obtained by teacher representatives can be disseminated to other teachers and can increase the competency/capacity of all teachers in the madrasa.

Apart from being implemented internally, this strategy to strengthen teacher competency/capacity is also implemented externally by utilizing workshop/training/seminar activities carried out by other parties. This is in line with the following teacher's statement:

> *I have attended a workshop regarding learning in inclusive classes, but because the content*

of the presenters is vocational school best practice, it still needs to be adapted to MI, especially for the approach used

The teacher becomes a delegate from the madrasah to take part in workshops organized by parties outside the madrasah. The workshop is mainly aimed at strengthening teachers in the aspects of learning carried out to facilitate students according to their conditions, potential, and abilities. This workshop is a strategic step because apart from minimal costs, it also impacts teachers in particular and madrasas in general.

Strengthening competency/capacity externally in the form of sending delegates to attend training/seminars/workshops outside the madrasah is also carried out by madrasahs by assigning teachers to take part in online workshops/training provided by the Ministry of Religion. The training is based on the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) system through the channels provided. This training provides a variety of theme choices, according to each teacher's interests, such as literacy, media, assessment and curriculum.

2. Discussion

The competency/capacity strengthening strategy carried out by madrasas is generally realized in two ways, namely internally and externally. Internal strategies are carried out by holding internal workshops and also sharing sessions between teachers. This is based on several studies that have

been carried out previously, which can have an impact on strengthening teacher competency/capacity. As for examples for internal workshops: 1) Research on strengthening Basic Teaching Skills (KDM) for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Miftahul Ulum Bundah Sreseh Sampang Teachers through workshops, so that teachers become more active in the learning process and convey information to students more effectively (Fahmi, 2020). 2) Research regarding guest teachers attending internal workshops at SMA Negeri 1 South Kuta can improve teachers' abilities to write scientific papers and innovative works (Tingkat, 2020).

The sharing sessions conducted by the madrasa are also generally able to have an impact on teachers. This is in line with several studies that have been conducted previously. Examples include 1) Research regarding knowledge-sharing activities from teachers who have more knowledge than other teachers or from the Expert Team at SDN Cipulir 03, which has proven to be quite effective and efficient in equipping teachers to face changes in the learning system fast (Gunadi, 2021). 2) Research that proves that knowledge sharing is able to have a positive direct influence on innovative work behaviour, where the magnitude of the direct influence of knowledge sharing on innovative work behaviour is 0.515, which means medium, while the contribution of knowledge sharing to innovative work behaviour is 58.4% (Prasetyono, 2022).

The external strategy implemented by madrasahs, sending teachers to attend workshops/training/seminars outside the madrasah environment, had a positive impact on teachers and schools. This is in line with previous research that has been carried out. The examples are as follows: 1) There is an opportunity for teachers to take part in training/seminars as an effort to improve the quality of schools, apart from providing advice and encouraging teachers to work more productively and effectively (Soe'oed, 2020). 2) There was an enthusiastic and positive response from teachers as training participants, teachers even wanted to return to further training activities that focused more on compiling test instruments and questionnaires to measure students' cognitive and affective abilities (Wulandari, 2021).

Sending teacher delegates to participate in workshops/training outside the madrasa is also supported by assigning teachers to participate in online workshops provided by the Ministry. This is in line with the platforms provided, for example: 1) There is a breakthrough in independent training on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), a digital platform teachers can access online. So that more and more teachers will have increased competence (Wahyuni, 2024). 2) the availability of the Smart application (Training & Learning Information Center), which is present as a forum for learning together online and is open to all ASNs of the Ministry of Religion in Indonesia so that they can improve their skills and capacity and everyone can grow together (Admin, n.d.).

The various strategies that the madrasah has adopted show the madrasah's commitment to providing the best provisions for teachers, especially to increase competency/capacity. This strategy certainly requires costs to implement, but with the various strategies that have been implemented, at least it can still be implemented. This is because the largest funding is only for internal workshops, while sending delegates is only for registration and transportation costs. Even sharing sessions between teachers and via online applications provided by the Ministry are free or free of charge.

D. CONCLUSION

Strategies for Strengthening Educator Capacity carried out by madrasahs are generally divided into two major strategies: strategies based on internal activities and those based on activities outside the madrasah, both online and offline. The strategy for strengthening competency/capacity internally is carried out through internal workshops and sharing sessions between teachers at the madrasah. Meanwhile, the strategy to strengthen competency/capacity externally is carried out by sending delegates to offline workshops/training/seminars outside the madrasah environment. Apart from that, this is also done through assignments to take part in online training according to the

platform provided free of charge by the Ministry. These various strategies can have a positive impact on the competency/ capacity of teachers in the madrasah.

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