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A Model for Vocational Curriculum Management in Senior High Schools to Enhance Graduate Independence

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Abstract

The high unemployment rate among high school graduates demands a transformation in the orientation of madrasahs from merely conventional theological transmission to the comprehensive mastery of applied sciences. This research aims to formulate a vocational curriculum management model in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) to enhance graduate independence. Utilizing a qualitative case study design at MA As-Syifa Balikpapan, data were collected through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, laboratory observation, and managerial documentation analysis. The findings reveal that the effectiveness of vocational management is supported by three fundamental strategies: (1) adaptive curriculum synchronization through direct collaboration with industries and vocational schools; (2) product-based learning implementation with a dominant practical ratio of 70:30; and (3) an evaluation system oriented towards product quality and alumni employability. Furthermore, this entire managerial construction is driven by an Islamic work ethic that positions skill mastery as a manifestation of piety. In conclusion, this governance model has proven effective in boosting the competitiveness and independence of graduates, both as young entrepreneurs and university students. This study contributes by offering a theoretical framework for contemporary Islamic vocational management that successfully integrates pragmatic industrial demands with spiritual values.

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary education in the era of disruption faces crucial challenges in bridging the gap between graduate competency profiles and the real demands of the business and industrial world (DUDI). The phenomenon of the high Open Unemployment Rate (TPT), consistently contributed to by graduates of general secondary schools, serves as a strong indicator that a purely academic educational orientation is no longer uniquely relevant.[1] This situation forces educational institutions to reconstruct their learning governance, shifting from mere transmission of theoretical knowledge toward the formation of practical skills that possess economic exchange value in the

[1] Tri Yulia Alfareza et al., "The Effect Of Education On The Open Unemployment Rate In Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal Of Development And Economics* 2, no. 01 (2026), https://doi.org/10.65886/ijde.v2i01.26.

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labor market. Graduates are now required to have absolute independence through the mastery of specific and adaptive life skills.[2]

Madrasah Aliyah (MA) occupies a unique yet vulnerable position within the vortex of this transition. Historically, madrasas are rooted in the tradition of deepening Islamic knowledge (*tafaqquh fiddin*), which then stands alongside the national curriculum.[3] However, current sociological pressures demand that these religious institutions take a proactive role in minimizing the number of educated unemployed, especially for groups of students who do not possess the financial privilege to continue to higher education.[4] The integration of vocational education programs into the curriculum structure emerges as an alternative solution. Nevertheless, this adaptive step is certainly not just about adding a 'Plus Skills' label to the school profile, but rather requires a systemic overhaul at the level of quality management.

Complicated issues immediately surface when madrasas attempt to orchestrate these vocational programs in the field. Operational failures often stem from a lack of synchronization between educational institutions and industrial parties, a shortage of qualified specialized instructors, to the arrangement of schedules that clash with mandatory subjects.[5] In order for the production of skilled and independent graduates to not stop at the rhetoric of vision-mission documents, institutions require a measurable governance model. The success of this initiative rests entirely on careful managerial engineering, ranging from external needs analysis and the formulation of collaborative learning tools to the adjustment of practical portions that dominate learning hours.

The discourse regarding the governance of vocational education within Islamic educational institutions has sparked widespread attention among academics. A recent study by Rodliyah et al. (2024)[6] dissects how the quality of Madrasah Aliyah graduates can be optimized through vocational program management integrated with boarding school (*pesantren*) values. From an institutional evolution perspective, the transformation of madrasas from a purely theological focus

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[2] Diroyatul Mufidah and Muh Hanif, "Implementation of Vocational Life Skills Program to Strengthen Skills Education," *Thawalib: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2025): 165–80, https://doi.org/10.54150/thawalib.v6i1.643; Muhammad Shalahuddin Al Awwaby et al., "Implementation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development at Stitma Madani Yogyakarta: A Practical and Theoretical Review," *Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner*, April 12, 2025, 74–83, https://doi.org/10.59944/amorti.v4i2.439.

[3] Muhammad Nizar Syahroni Saputra and Faridi Faridi, "Karakteristik Dasar Pesantren Dan Madrasah Sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam: Studi Komparatif Perspektif Historis-Sosiologis," *IHSAN : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2026): 14–28, https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v4i1.4359; Abdullah Hanif et al., "From Tafaqquh Fiddin to Applied Sciences: The Transformation of Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Khazanah Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 3 (2024): 157–76, https://doi.org/10.15575/kpi.v6i3.41500.

[4] Ihsan Ihsan et al., "Curriculum Management in Pesantren-Based Madrasah for Implementing Religious Moderation," *QUALITY* 12, no. 2 (2024): 241–56, https://doi.org/10.21043/quality.v12i2.30677.

[5] Armin Müller, "Cooperation Between Colleges and Companies: Vocational Education, Skill Mismatches and China's Turnover Problem," *The China Quarterly* 260 (December 2024): 986–1004, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741023001868; Syed Hammad Mian et al., "Adapting Universities for Sustainability Education in Industry 4.0: Channel of Challenges and Opportunities," *Sustainability* 12, no. 15 (2020), https://doi.org/10.3390/su12156100.

[6] St. Rodliyah et al., "Optimizing the Quality of Islamic Senior High School Graduates through Curriculum Management of Vocational Programs Based on Pesantrens in East Java, Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2423437, https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2423437.

toward the mastery of applied sciences and work skills is identified as an essential adaptive response to maintain institutional relevance amidst modernization.[7] At the praxis level, research by Amini et al. (2023)[8] proves that the implementation of specific interest-based skills programs is significantly able to boost learning enthusiasm and the career readiness of students in state madrasas.

Viewed from macro-level policy instruments, the alignment of the curriculum with real industrial standards plays a decisive role in efforts to break the chain of educated unemployment.[9] In line with this argument, a qualitative study by Tamsilu et al. (2025)[10] emphasizes that the effectiveness of life skills education in madrasas depends heavily on the firmness of its planning execution stages, which include the recruitment of professional tutors, the determination of work partners, and the preparation of applicable learning modules.

Various previous literatures have successfully mapped the urgency and form of vocational implementation in madrasas; however, the majority of studies still portray this phenomenon separately and conceptually. It is very rare to find research that constructs a complete management model daring to combine extreme technical interventions—such as a 70:30 practicum ratio treatment and the direct adoption of Vocational High School (SMK) syllabi—with the theological foundation of the Islamic work ethic as its primary spirit. Departing from this research gap, this article is intended to comprehensively formulate a prototype of the vocational curriculum management model in Madrasah Aliyah. The analysis focuses on managerial synchronization between collaborative planning stages, work-based learning implementation, and graduate absorption evaluation, so that these research findings may later serve as a tested reference framework for institutional transformation of madrasas in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research applies a **qualitative design** with a **case study approach** to dissect vocational curriculum governance holistically and in-depth within a specific context. The research locus is MA As-Syifa Balikpapan, a *Madrasah Plus Keterampilan* (Skills-Plus Madrasah) that is representative in restructuring graduate orientation toward industrial competitiveness. Informants were selected through a **purposive sampling technique** involving the Head of the Madrasah, the Vice Head of Curriculum, the life skill program manager, and teachers from four expertise concentrations. This range of actors across hierarchies was chosen to ensure source triangulation for high data credibility.

Data collection relies on three main pillars: in-depth interviews regarding strategy and evaluation, non-participant observation of classroom and laboratory dynamics, and managerial

[7] Hanif et al., "From Tafaqquh Fiddin to Applied Sciences."
[8] Sri Aisyah Amini et al., "Penerapan Program Pembelajaran Vokasional Madrasah Aliyah di MAN 2 Sijunjung," *Adaara: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 2 (2023): 164–73, https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v13i2.4271.
[9] Yessi Mey Widianti et al., "Policy Analysis of Merdeka Curriculum: Readiness to Fulfill Industry Needs," *Journal of Office Administration : Education and Practice* 4, no. 1 (2024): 34–44, https://doi.org/10.26740/joaep.v4n1.p34-44.
[10] Takdir Tamsilu et al., "Life Skills-Based Leadership Strategy in Improving Madrasah Quality: A Case Study," *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review* 4, no. 4 (2025): 1503–21, https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v4i4.3813.

documentation such as lesson plans (RPP), student portfolios, and tracer study records. The collected data were then analyzed using the **interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)** through a cyclical process including data condensation, narrative data display, and drawing conclusions.[11] All these procedures culminate in a reflection of findings based on theoretical foundations and theological principles to produce a solid vocational curriculum management model formulation.[12]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Curriculum Planning Through Industrial Synchronization

The planning stage in this madrasa vocational management model is not viewed as a mere administrative routine, but as a strategic process to align theological vision with the pragmatic demands of industry. Planning begins through an annual Working Meeting (Raker) mechanism involving all stakeholders to formulate the direction of life skill curriculum development. In this forum, the madrasa conducts internal and external needs analyses to ensure that the competencies taught have high absorption rates in the labor market. As explained by the Vice Head of Curriculum regarding the starting point of program preparation:

> " *Regarding the planning process, as has been done at the end of every academic year, our school will conduct an annual working meeting... discussing, among other things, the life skill program curriculum which is part of the curriculum development.*"

These findings indicate that the madrasa implements a participatory management pattern in determining instructional goals. Setting clear objectives at the beginning of the year is a crucial step to ensure that all organizational resources, both human and financial, converge on achieving the quality of independent graduates. This is in line with the findings of Yuris (2024)[13] and Izzah et al. (2024),[14] which emphasize that the successful integration of vocational programs in Islamic educational institutions depends heavily on the consistency of strategic planning capable of uniting character values with technical competency standards.[15]

Another unique feature of this planning model lies in the external synchronization process through benchmarking mechanisms at Vocational High Schools (SMK) and Job Training Centers (BLK). The madrasa realizes that to produce graduates with industrial standards, they cannot isolate themselves. The curriculum development team conducts field visits to adopt and modify

[11] Matthew B. Miles et al., *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (SAGE Publications, 2014).
[12] Aris Munandar et al., "Menggali Kreativitas Guru PAI dalam Era Digital: Studi Kasus di Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium Jambi," *Jurnal Penelitian Inovatif* 4, no. 4 (2024): 2173–80, https://doi.org/10.54082/jupin.734.
[13] Evicenna Yuris, "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Penguatan Budaya Mutu Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *AUD Cendekia: Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 121–37, https://doi.org/10.53802/audcendekia.v4i2.603.
[14] Ismatul Izzah et al., "Strategic Management of Schools for Excellence: Integrating Quality Culture and Character Development in Leading Educational Institutions," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 4 (2024): 4654–68, https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i4.5953.
[15] Isfiana Oktaria Nasihatul Umami and Muhammad Yasin, "Integrating Islamic Ethical Values into Human Resource Development: Enhancing Educational Quality in Indonesian Islamic Schools," *Dirosatuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2024): 99–110, https://doi.org/10.31538/dirosatuna.v7i2.7683.

vocational learning tools to make them more applicable and less theoretical. This modification strategy was expressed by one of the instructors:

> "*The life skill program supervisor and their secretary visited the SMK to ask about how to create learning tools... we modified the preparation of the learning tools further to make them easier and more effective*."

This curriculum adaptation process is a form of institutional responsiveness to "link and match" dynamics. The synthesis of these findings strengthens the research of Malaikosa et al. (2022)[16] and Fadlin et al. (2024),[17] which found that effective life skill program management requires flexibility in managing the curriculum to equip students with skills that are truly useful in society. Furthermore, the institution's ability to map regional needs and align them with the classroom learning process is a primary determinant of a skills program's success.[18]

In addition to the curricular aspect, HR planning through the recruitment of competent teachers serves as a primary supporting pillar. The madrasa sets strict qualifications, prioritizing educators with linear educational backgrounds and expertise certifications. This step is taken to ensure the effectiveness of practical knowledge transfer to students. This analysis aligns with the studies of Bukhari (2025)[19] and Tamjidnor et al. (2025),[20] which underline that the transformation of madrasas toward applied sciences demands the availability of instructors with practical scientific authority so that the learning process does not get trapped in mere theoretical narratives. Thus, planning in this madrasa has shifted from a general school management model toward a specialized vocational school management model.

Implementation of Dominant Practicum-Based Learning

Curriculum transformation on paper will not yield results without pedagogical engineering in the classroom. The most prominent finding from the implementation of the vocational program at MA As-Syifa is the institution's courage to deconstruct conventional learning proportions. This madrasa sets a very dominant practicum ratio, ranging from **70% to 80%**, inversely proportional to regular subjects which are generally laden with theoretical material. This policy is strictly implemented to ensure the locus of learning control is fully oriented toward high-level hard skill

[16] Yes Matheos Lasarus Malaikosa et al., "Curriculum and Learning Management: Integration of Creative Economy Value to Improve Students' Life Skill," *Jurnal Pendidikan Vokasi* 12, no. 1 (2022): 76–85, https://doi.org/10.21831/jpv.v12i1.44253.

[17] Iswan Fadlin et al., "How Can Pesantren Curriculum Development Keep up with Society's Needs for Life Skills Education?," *Development: Studies in Educational Management and Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2024): 01–16, https://doi.org/10.47766/development.v3i1.1915.

[18] Rudzani Israel Lumadi, "Bridging the Skills Divide: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Lifelong Learning Initiatives in South Africa," *South African Journal of Education* 45, no. 4 (2025): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v45n4a2721; Muhamad Abdul Muid, "Information Literacy Skills of Students in Pesantren Environments: A SCONUL Seven Pillars Analysis in Language Learning Contexts," *Literaturia: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching* 1, no. 1 (2026): 17–26.

[19] Dr Syed Hamid Farooq Bukhari, "Islamic Education Reform: Madrasa and Public School Collaboration," *Al-Aijaz Research Journal of Islamic Studies & Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2025): 1–8.

[20] Tamjidnor et al., "Transformation of Hadith Teaching as an Effort to Revitalize Islamic Science in Pesantren," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2025): 123–38, https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i1.9.

mastery. The technical strategy behind this ratio was explicitly explained by the Fashion Design instructor:

> "*The fashion design skills material taught contains 20% theory and 80% practice... The entire sewing assignment is deliberately done at school with the aim of avoiding cheating that might be committed by the students*."

The shift in emphasis toward hands-on experience resonates strongly with the arguments of Amalia et al. (2025).[21] Their research emphasizes that the effectiveness of vocational education in a madrasa environment demands a dominance of practicum activities; students absolutely require direct interaction with instructional props to test and fully internalize technical competencies so they remain relevant to DUDI demands.[22]

In addition to setting a radical ratio, managerial engineering also touches upon scheduling governance. Realizing that the creative process—such as cutting clothing patterns, batik making, screen printing, or producing audiovisual broadcasts—cannot be limited by rigid period bells, the management shifts all skill time blocks (4 lesson hours) to the end of the day. The Vice Head of Curriculum provided a very tactical rationalization for this scheduling policy:

> "*From these 4 life skill program majors... Usually, I deliberately arrange the lesson hours in the final periods so that when it is time to go home, more time can be added if needed so they are not in a rush. Our goal in positioning them in the final hours is so the results are more effective*."

At the methodological level, this dominance of practice hours is not allowed to run aimlessly but is executed using a scientific approach combined with digital media. Instructors relinquish their position as the sole source of information (teacher-centered) and transition into facilitators within the cycle of observing, questioning, gathering information, reasoning, and communicating the work. This process relies on the availability of specialized laboratory facilities that imitate real industrial ecosystems—ranging from apparel printing equipment for the Multimedia concentration to high-specification cameras for the Broadcasting studio.

The existence of comprehensive vocational laboratories in this madrasa addresses the critical need for infrastructure highlighted by Siregar et al. (2024).[23] Through a literature review on the integration of vocational education in Islamic institutions, it is stated that the availability of adequate supporting facilities in the form of technology laboratories and workshops is an essential prerequisite (*conditio sine qua non*). Without such infrastructure, it is impossible for madrasas to

[21] Ema Amalia et al., "Membangun Kompetensi Lulusan Vokasi Melalui Pembelajaran Berbasis Deep Learning Di MAN 2 Majalengka," *SEMNASFIP* 2, no. 2 (2025): 1199–215.

[22] Faizal Rahmanto Moeis, "Unraveling the Myth of Madrasah Formal Education Quality in Indonesia: A Labor Quality Approach," *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 21, no. 2 (2022): 177–200, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-021-09298-6; Rintatik Wahyuningsih et al., "Work-Integrated Learning to Improve Work Readiness of Vocational Education in School and Madrasah," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 4 (2025): 586–602, https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1928.

[23] Zulfikar Ali Buto Siregar et al., "Integrasi Pendidikan Islam Dan Pendidikan Vokasi: Kajian Pustaka Tentang Pemantapan Keahlian Dan Nilai Spiritual," *Ahdāf: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 2 (2024): 140–53, https://doi.org/10.47766/ahdf.v2i2.2915.

form a workforce that possesses not only good morals but also the agility and mental readiness to compete in the modern industrial ecosystem.[24]

Quality Evaluation and Graduate Independence

The success of curriculum engineering cannot be measured solely by the smoothness of the classroom learning process; it must be proven through the outcomes or the quality of its graduates. In this vocational management model, the evaluation of competency achievement no longer rests on theoretical written exams but has shifted toward product-based evaluation (work portfolios) and tracking alumni absorption in the workforce (tracer studies). This approach was chosen to test the extent to which the skills taught are able to provide economic and social added value for the students.

The first stage of evaluation is conducted through public validation of students' work. Products from vocational classes are not left to pile up in laboratory warehouses but are encouraged to be contested and marketed. For example, in the Fashion Design expertise program, clothing products sewn by students are exhibited through fashion shows and school bazaars involving external parties. The impact of this exhibition strategy is significant, as expressed by one of the teachers:

> " *Alhamdulillah, for the fashion design program, there are many students who can make very beautiful clothes; there was even a product from our school purchased by a boutique in Balikpapan city during the exhibition yesterday*."

This real-market recognition (purchase by a local boutique) of student work is not only a graduation indicator but also a powerful **branding** instrument for the institution. This reinforces the findings of Suparyati & Habsya (2024),[25] which state that vocational education graduates will have high competitiveness in the global labor market if educational institutions are able to shift the evaluation paradigm from merely 'passing exams' to 'passing industrial product feasibility tests.'[26]

At the post-graduation evaluation level, data collected by the madrasa management shows a very positive trend in alumni absorption. Graduates of MA As-Syifa do not only dominate freshman admissions at State Universities (PTN) through achievement tracks, but also succeed in demonstrating economic independence. The Head of the Madrasa emphasized the success of this career transition:

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[24] Manjit K. Misra et al., "Role of Seed Certification in Quality Assurance," in *Seed Science and Technology: Biology, Production, Quality*, ed. Malavika Dadlani and Devendra K. Yadava (Springer Nature, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5888-5_12; Oparinde Olayiwola Raheef, "Facilities Availability to Support Teaching and Learning Process and Public Reactions Toward Technical Education," *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review* 3, no. 3 (2024): 71–83, https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v3i3.1528.

[25] Muhammad Fahmi et al., "KONSEP NASKH-MANSUKH DALAM ILMU HADIS;(Deskripsi Metode Interpretasi Hadis Kontradiktif)," *MHS: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Keislaman* 1, no. 2 (2025): 121–32.

[26] Iryna Storonyanska et al., "Redesigning Sustainable Vocational Education Systems to Respond to Global Economic Trends and Labor Market Demands: Evidence from EU Countries on SDGs," *Sustainability* 17, no. 21 (2025), https://doi.org/10.3390/su17219530; Geng Wang and Zhonghan Wang, "Vocational Education: A Poor Second Choice? A Comparison of the Labour Market Outcomes of Academic and Vocational Graduates in China," *Oxford Review of Education* 49, no. 3 (2023): 408–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2022.2096583.

> "*Many alumni from this madrasa are accepted into state universities and pass selections for Bidikmisi, SPAN PTN, or start their own businesses for those who do not continue their studies; some are also accepted to work in well-known companies...*"

Interestingly, the vocational certification issued by the madrasa has proven to have high bargaining power at the university level. There are cases where students were accepted into the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM) with full scholarship facilities based solely on certificates and portfolios from the Multimedia expertise program, without having to go through regular academic tests.

These achievements reflect that the life skill program in madrasas is able to become a social mobility equalizer for students. The results of this analysis are consistent with the research of Amalia et al. (2025)[27] regarding vocational madrasa graduate competencies, which concludes that mastering specific skills not only equips students with job readiness but also fosters strong self-efficacy and entrepreneurship spirit. This self-confidence ultimately gives birth to an independence that eliminates the stigma that madrasa graduates are only capable in religious matters but stumble when facing the reality of the industrial world.[28]

Integration of Islamic Work Ethic in Management

The most fundamental distinction separating vocational management in madrasas from general vocational schools lies in its driving philosophical foundation. At MA As-Syifa Balikpapan, the life skill program is not merely constructed as a pragmatic response to market needs, but as a manifestation of a theological doctrine that mandates independence. This curriculum engineering is driven by the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE), where school leadership serves as the primary catalyst. As the highest authority, the madrasa head positions themselves not merely as an educational administrator, but as a transformational manager responsible for translating a vision of the hereafter into worldly technical proficiency. This is clearly depicted in their statement:

> "*Regarding the quality of graduates at our madrasa, we carry out curriculum development specifically regarding the life skill program... We hold this program to minimize unemployment after students graduate... With mature planning, it will automatically produce the desired educational goal, namely producing skilled graduate quality*."

The managerial seriousness shown by the madrasa leadership is an absolute prerequisite in building a vocational ecosystem. This analysis is confirmed by the findings of Aceh et al. (2024),[29] which prove that leadership based on Islamic values (Islamic leadership) has a direct and measurable influence on institutional performance. The research emphasizes that a strong leader is able to inject a high work ethic into all teaching staff, so that pioneering programs that demand

[27] Amalia et al., "Membangun Kompetensi Lulusan Vokasi Melalui Pembelajaran Berbasis Deep Learning Di MAN 2 Majalengka."

[28] Jamilnur D. Sarip, "Obtaining Higher Education: Status, Issues, And Challenges Among Muslim Women Students In Iligan City," *International Seminar On Islamic Education & Peace* 5 (December 2025): 635–64.

[29] Ardi Saputra Aceh et al., "Exploring the Impact of Islamic Leadership, Work Ethic, and Discipline on Job Satisfaction and Teacher Performance in Madrasah," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 4 (2024): 1110–23, https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v8i4.8911.

hard work—such as managing practical skill laboratories—can be executed without internal resistance.[30]

At the epistemological level, the entire series of planning described in the previous subsection rests on a contextual interpretation of the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-Hashr verse 18. The divine command to *"observe what it has sent forth for tomorrow"* is interpreted by the madrasa management not only in the eschatological dimension (life in the hereafter) but also in the sociological dimension, namely career readiness for the future. The preparation of syllabi, recruitment of expert instructors, and fulfillment of laboratory infrastructure are concrete forms of that 'tomorrow' planning.

Furthermore, the process of creating work through skill practicums is viewed as a form of amal saleh (righteous deeds), as mandated in Surah Al-Bayyinah verses 7-8. Students are educated to realize that producing high-quality products—whether it be a neatly tailored dress, an informative broadcasting video, or an artistic batik pattern—is the way to become *khayrul bariyyah* (the best of creatures). This synthesis of thought aligns with the argument of Khofi et al. (2026)[31] in their study of work ethics in the madrasa environment. The internalization of IWE values is able to transform the orientation of work and study from merely pursuing material gain into a form of spiritual accountability.[32] The awareness that every cut of a clothing pattern or camera shot holds the value of worship is what ultimately produces graduates with a level of integrity and independence that is far superior in the labor market.

CONCLUSION

The vocational curriculum management model implemented at MA As-Syifa Balikpapan is empirically proven to be able to answer the problem of secondary school graduate unemployment by producing an independent and competitive generation. The success of this governance model rests on an institutional paradigm shift that no longer isolates itself, but proactively synchronizes its curriculum with external parties, namely SMKs and Job Training Centers (BLK). The adaptation of these learning tools is then executed through radical pedagogical policies, namely the allocation of dominant practicum hours (70:30) and evaluations based on real product feasibility tests of students' work.

Beyond technical engineering, the main strength of this vocational management prototype lies in its philosophical foundation. The entire managerial cycle—from professional HR planning and industry-standard laboratory provision to the creation of work—is driven by Islamic Work

[30] Pepen Supendi et al., "Transformational Leadership in Education: Improving Work Ethic and Professional Commitment of Teachers," *Lectura : Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 1 (2025): 357–67, https://doi.org/10.31849/lectura.v16i1.25842.

[31] Mohammad Bilutfikal Khofi et al., "The Model of Islamic Work Ethic Values in Strengthening Trust Culture in Madrasahs," *Nidhomiyyah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2026): 34–51, https://doi.org/10.38073/nidhomiyyah.v7i1.3572.

[32] Elaine C. Long, "Faith-Infused Work," in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Leadership and Organizational Change* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51650-4_105-1; Meng Qingyan, "Investigation into the Intrinsic Worth of University Students through the Lens of Spiritual Motivation," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 20, no. 1 (2025): 2548678, https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2025.2548678.

Ethic values. The transformational leadership in this madrasa has succeeded in merging the pragmatic orientation of labor market needs with the theological awareness that mastering skills is a form of righteous deeds. This integration is what produces graduates with high self-efficacy, enabling them to build independent businesses or enter state universities without losing their spiritual identity.

Although this management model has proven effective, this study has limitations due to its design being a qualitative case study based on a single madrasa entity. Consequently, the generalizability of these findings to institutions with different geographic, funding, and cultural characteristics is still limited. Therefore, future research is suggested to use a quantitative or mixed-methods approach with a multi-contextual sample of madrasas across various regions. Additionally, longitudinal studies (long-term tracer studies) are highly recommended to statistically measure the trends of career stability and financial resilience of madrasa vocational alumni amidst global economic fluctuations.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

In the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) utilized Gemini and ChatGPT to assist with brainstorming ideas, outlining the initial draft, and refining the abstract. All outputs were subsequently reviewed and revised by the author(s), who assume full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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