Academic Supervision of Madrasah Supervisors in Improving Professional Competencies of Teachers

Syamsul Huda
State Islamic University of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia
huda.jbi@gmail.com

Mohamad Muspawi
Jambi University, Indonesia
muspawi01@gmail.com

Abstract
Academic supervision is important to improve teacher's competency. This study aimed at revealing how thep academic supervision for *Madrasah* supervisor was implemented to improve the professional competence of religion teachers at MTS N 8 Bungo, Jambi. This study also explained some factors which affected the process of implementation, barriers and efforts in conducting that academic supervision. This study used qualitative method with a case study approach. The subjects of the research were *Madrasah* supervisors, *Madrasah* headmasters, and the teachers. The results of the study showed that the performance of *Madrasah* supervisors at MTS N 8 Bungo, Jambi was not optimal. It can be seen from the fact that the process of the supervision had not been conducted based on laws. As the result, the teachers' professionalism had not been improved yet.

Keywords: Academic supervision, *Madrasah* supervisor, teachers' professionalism and competencies

Introduction

Culturally, Islamic education is the tool to civilize the society. As one of the educational tools, Islamic education has the function for human development to achieve prosperity. In order to improve the quality of educational resources, the teacher is the component of human resources that must be guided continuously to potentially carry out their functions. In addition, the influence of very rapid changes encourages teachers to continually learn to adjust themselves to science and technology development and community mobility (Saondi & Suherman, 2010).

A teacher is one of important factors in administering the education at schools. Thus, improving the quality of education means improving the quality of teachers in term of their prosperity and professionalism. Based on Act No. 14 of 2005, Article 1 Paragraph 1, a teacher is a professional educator whose main tasks are to educate, to teach, to guide, to train, and to evaluate students in formal education. Professionally, a teacher must have good competencies. Teacher's competency is reflected on his/ her ability to implement the concepts of how to perform as a good teacher, to be able to demonstrate interesting and creative teaching strategies, to become disciplined, honest, and consistent (Habibi, Mukminin, Sulistiyo, & Sofwan, 2017). The process of enhancing teachers' professionalism will be more successful if it is achieved

through their own effort. However, a teacher frequently still needs help from others because he/ she has not understood yet about the procedures of obtaining the source needed for improving his/ her professionalism. The way to help the teacher is by giving supervision (Burnham, 2018). There have been many studies about supervision in education (Burnham, 2018; Graham & Edwards, 2018). However, there are only few studies about the supervision in Islamic education. There are also fewer studies conducted in Islamic education in South East Asia, including Indonesia. Thus, this study was proposed to answer how the role of the *Madrasah* supervisors in academic supervision to improve religion teachers' professional competence at MTs N 8 Bungo, Jambi.

Review of Literature

Supervision plays a central role to guide and develop the learning process in *Madrasyah*, to evaluate and improve the teacher's quality in learning process.It is an effort to assess and develop teacher quality in learning (Sofwan & Habibi, 2017). Supervision is a coaching activity that is planned to help teachers and the staffs to work effectively (Tanner & Tanner, 1987). The purpose of supervision at school according to Embo, Driessen, Valcke, and van der Vleuten (2015) and Burnham (2018) is to provide technical assistance to teachers and other school staffs, so that they can improve their performance. One of the parties considered to have an important role in the administration of education in *Madrasah* is the supervisor. The supervisor is the element of educators whose main tasks are monitoring, supervising, and evaluating the implementation of education in *madrasah* related to administrative and academic matters (Agung & Yufridawati, 2013). Supervision is a technical service that mainly deals with learning and improving learning conditions and student's growth (Odo & Gabriel, 2016).

In Indonesia, according to the Ministry of National Education as cited in Danim and Khairil (2012, p.202), the principal task of supervisors in relation to academic supervision can be explained as follows: First, inspecting, which is related to: a) the implementation of the curriculum, b) the learning process, practicum, field study, c) extracurricular activities, d) the use of media, tools, and learning resources, d) the progress of student learning, and e) the learning environment. Second, advising, which is related to: a) advising the teachers in effective learning or guidance, b) teachers in improving professional competence, c) teachers in carrying out the evaluation and learning outcomes, d) teachers in carrying out classroom action research, and e) teachers in enhancing personal, social, pedagogic competence. Third, monitoring, which is related to: a) learning resistance, b) implementation of test, c) quality of students' achievement, d) teacher professional development, e) utilizing the learning resources. Fourth, coordinating, which is related to: a) the implementation of learning innovations, b) procurement of learning resources, c) activities to improve the ability of the teaching profession. Sixth, reporting, which is related to: a) the teacher's performance in carrying out the learning, b) the progress of student learning, and c) the implementation of academic supervision tasks.

In carrying out their duties, the *Madrasah* supervisors must spend more time to visit the *madrasah* under his/her advisory. Teachers with high professional ability will be able to administer the learning activities well and as the result will improve the quality of learning (Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina, 2017; Muslim, 2009). Supervisors have very big responsibilities toward the development and progress of *Madrasah*. The presence of supervisors is highly expected by teachers to assist and guide them towards the achievement of improving the quality of teachers, students, and learning.

Methodology

Research design

This study used a qualitative study with a case study approach. The method facilitated people to work with small groups of participants to obtain in-depth information, understanding, and wider insights on the determined topic. In addition, Creswell (2014) says that the case study approach has focus on deep exploration of a bounded system such as an activity, an event, or a process).

Subject of the study

The key informants of this study were *madrasah* supervisors, headmaster, teachers, students, and staff at Bungo District. Creswell (2012) states that the researcher needs to pay attention to the following condition; informants who master or understand something through the enculturation process so that thing that is not only known but also comprehensible. Next, the informants who are classified as still engaged or involved in the activities being studied, who have sufficient time to be asked for information, who do not tend to convey information on the results of their own perspective, who was originally classified as quite unfamiliar with the researcher so that it was more exciting to be a kind of teacher or resource person. For research ethics, the rights of all research participants must be protected and respected. Adherence to this principle guarantees that people will not be utilised as merely a means in achieving research objectives (Mack et al., 2005). Therefore, in this research, all sensitive personal information of the participants was masked through initials.

Data collection

We conducted semi-structured interviews in the data collection process. A semi-structured interview is defined as qualitative instruments for data collection to ensure that each participant of the interview is given similar questions during the process of the interview. It allows a researcher to come into the inner worlds of the participants and gain a comprehension of their perspectives by utilizing a structured of prepared questions (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 1990). In this research, each participant was interviewed for 30 to 40 minutes and all interviews were recorded using smartphones.

Triangulation, member checking, and reflexivity were used in this study (Creswell, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Mukminin & McMahon, 2013) to examine the reliability and validity (trustworthiness) of the data. We conducted triangulation in this study by collecting the data from the interviews with all participants, supervisors, school principals, and teachers. In order to verify the accuracy of the data, we gave back the transcribed interviews data to each participant involved for what Creswell (2012) called as "member checking". This was done to make sure that each of the participants agreed on the data we gained and used. We also ensured that the participant gave their permission to use the data. Creswell (2012) explained that researchers in elaborating the data must explicitly inform their biases, values, and personal interest related to the research topic, process, and research participant access. Through reflexivity, we engaged our self-reflection about the result from our own potential biases.

Through reflexivity, the bias becomes more controllable. We conducted the self-reflection by conducting discussion whether we possessed bias and if so, what kind of bias we had in this research.

Data analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1999) explain that analysis in a qualitative study is a messy, time consuming, creative, ambiguous, and fascinating process and undoubtedly, no consensus exists for the analysis of the forms of qualitative data. In analyzing the data, interviews were recorded with a smartphone through recording application and the data then were transcribed. Next, the data were carefully analyzed, re-analysed and categorized into particular themes. We did within case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After the interviews, the data were transcribed in the forms of verbatim. We conducted the analysis and categorized the data into themes and sub-themes before we did cross-case analysis. We did re-analysis and comparison to the transcripts from all participants' information in order to gain the frequency of statements for each general theme and sub-theme. We also did it to eliminate repetitive data, for example there is one participant who makes the same statement for many times.

Findings and Discussion

The implementation of academic supervision done by madrasah supervisors in improving professional competence of religious teachers

Based on the main task of supervision, the implementation of supervision activities in this study was carried out through the mapping of learning problems, preparation of supervision programs, implementation of supervision, evaluation and follow-up of supervision results. The program prepared by supervisor's aims to improve the professional competence of religion teachers in improving the quality of education. One of the participants revealed,

> The supervision or academic supervision that I conducted on religion teachers in my area was initiated from mapping learning problems, arranging supervisory programs, implementing supervision, evaluating and following up on results supervision.

What has been done by the supervisor is certainly not separated from the nature of academic supervision itself, which according to Ambarita, Biner, Paningkat, and Sukarman (2014), academic supervision is a series of activities to help teachers develop the ability to manage learning so that learning objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. The implementation of *Madrasah* academic supervision was quite good, but not optimal. This was indicated by the following indicators: a) The intensity of the supervisor's visit was far from enough, however, at every visit, the supervisor gave input to the head master by having focus group discussion with all members of the school, b) The intensity of the visit of supervisors to *madrasahs* is less due to too many *madrasahs* (48 *madrasahs*) to be visited, c) The process classroom supervision was rarely conducted. Visit by supervisors to religion teachers' classrooms was usually done *Madrasah* final examination, d) The infrastructure for the implementation of learning supervision was limited. The lack of standards for learning infrastructure became an obstacle and reason why the implementation of active, creative, innovative and independent learning was not

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fully realized and conducted. This can be seen from the fact that the supervisors could only supervised classroom manually because *Madrasah* did not have CCTV that could be e used to monitor the teaching and learning process.

Looking deeply at what the *Madrasah* supervisors do, the tasks of supervisors should be guided by the objectives of academic supervision as Sergiovanni's opinion cited by Fathurrahman and Ruhyanani (2015), namely: 1) To help teachers develop their professional skills in understanding academics, managing classes, developing teaching skills, and using their abilities through certain techniques. 2) To monitor the learning process at school. Monitoring here is not to look for teacher errors, but to control and improve the quality of teacher performance. 3) To help teachers apply their abilities in carrying out their teaching assignments, encouraging teachers to develop their own abilities, and encouraging teachers to have genuine attention or commitment to their duties and responsibilities.

Inhibiting factors of the implementation of academic supervision of madrasah supervisors in improving professional competence of religion teachers.

The development of academic supervision techniques in improving the professional competence of religion teachers was not optimal. It could be seen by the lack of readiness of teachers to accept the academic supervision from *Madrasah* supervisor in the form of sudden classroom visits (unannounced visits).Therefore, the implementation of supervision must be on schedule. Then, the development of other techniques for supervision such as seminars, workshops in *madrasah*, making scientific journals, and others was not optimal. These obstacles can be implied through the interview with the supervisor:

> The obstacle I experienced during this supervision was the lack of readiness of the teacher to accept unannounced visits. The teacher must be notified in advance of the supervision schedule and the results are unnatural to feel frivolous in order to look better, but somehow the sudden visit is considered to grow a greater sense of responsibility of the teacher, and can increase teacher's motivation to improve the quality of teaching in the district, then for supervision, supervisors do not come into the classrooms, but only monitor from outside, the teacher in the process of teaching is monitored suddenly, if the teachersare informed in advance, the teachers will be more well prepared ready. The guidance for the teacher is very needed because the learning method is still weak. There is not enough teaching media at madrasah. As the result, the students are not motivated (Asrul).

In observations in the field, we saw that the teacher was still unfamiliar with classroom situation. When the supervisor was supervising, the teacher felt nervous and made him/ her frequently made mistakes in teaching. Somehow, this was quite challenge for the teachers to improve their teaching strategies. The Supervision process in *madrasahs* under the religion of ministry affairs was infrequently done because there are so many *madrasahs* that must be supervised. In fact, there are 48 *madrasah* in the district, whereas there is only one supervisor for those madrasahs in Bungo district. Consequently, the process of supervision at MTSN 8 Bungo did not run well. In addition, the madrasahs in 15 sub-districts of Bungo district are situated far away from one another. This situation made the supervisor difficult to reach them. Even, there is

one madrasah that can be reached in 50 kilometers with a hard area. There is only one narrow road to go to that *madrasah.*

MTSN 8 Bungo is also situated in that kind of hard area. It takes one hour to go for the supervisor to that *madrasah*. This situation makes the intensity of attendance of supervisor to MTSN 8 Bungo was not optimal. Based on the interview with the supervisor named Mesdan, we got the information as follows

> Another obstacle that I face in conducting the supervision is the number of educational institutions that I have to supervise, both private and state educational institutions are too many. There are 48 Madrasah Tsanawiyah in the District. Then, the supervision of 48 *Madrasah* is the responsibility of one supervisor; making academic supervision in *Madrasah* is not optimal. Every *Madrasah* should be visited once a month, but because there are 48 *Madrasah* under the supervision of one supervisor, each *Madrasah* can only be visited during once in 2 months.

In fact, the implementation of academic supervision evaluation was not effective and efficient. After we observed the *Madrasah*, the evaluation and follow-up supervision proved that the process of supervision was not optimal. From the information obtained from the interview with the *Madrasah* supervisor who carried out the academic supervision evaluation, he/she said that the academic supervision evaluation was not done in detail, and it was not scheduled yet. The academic supervision evaluation was still done even though once in a semester.

> Evaluation and follow-up of supervision in *Madrasah* is not optimal. This is because the number of supervisor's visits to *Madrasah* is not still very often. Therefore, the follow-up of the visit results were not maximal.

Efforts made by madrasah supervisor to maximize implementation of academic supervision in enhancing professional competence of religion teachers

The efforts made by *Madrasah* supervisors to maximize the implementation of academic supervision in improving the professional competence of religious teachers can be noted from the interview with Asrul as follows:

> The efforts that I have made to maximize the implementation of the academic supervision at the *Madrasah* I supervised are as follows: 1) the supervisor keeps training the teacher's mentality to get used to being supervised without prior notice or without being announced, 2) the supervisor socializes to all teachers in the next semester to be well prepared, and the supervisor prepares all learning devices when teaching, 3) the supervisor provides guidance on the evaluation process of supervision, in groups and individually.

Moreover, teacher's professional development through education and training, seminars, workshops, teacher meetings, teacher demonstrations should have been given more attention. Teacher's professional development techniques had been implemented for a number of teachers. This could be proven that many teachers had already attended seminar training, specifically religion subjects such as *Fiqh and Hadith* held in every six month. The teachers were also

encouraged to join the seminars, conducted under the cooperation among universities held by Religious Ministry Affairs, which aim to develop teacher's professional competence. In addition, the madrasah supervisor hoped that Religious Ministry Affairs would soon form a teacher forum in the field of Jurisprudence, Morals, Islamic Cultural History, and the Al-Qur'an Hadith. This forum could be in the form of training. The training was established but it still merged among subjects in Islamic Religion Education. However, the training expected by the teachers was a training specified for particular subject in order to be more detailed and monitored. Then, religion teachers need to make a kind of teachers' measurement of authenticity, which could seen from their students' ability. The measurement was used to find out whether the *Madrasah* had already prepared a specific kind of measurement other than the semester exam. As a result, it could be understood whether students were able to absorb the information and knowledge or not. In other words, there was a need for a measurement tool from the *Madrasah* to find out the competence of the teachers, by giving tests for students.

Some efforts informed in this study were done in order to maximize the implementation of academic supervision in enhancing professional competence of religion teachers. There were individual and group supervision techniques. For individual supervision; class observations should be carried out simultaneously with class visits. Classroom observation can be an activity carried out by supervisors to observe the training teacher who is teaching in a class. In the class, supervisors can make careful observations by using certain instruments on the classroom atmosphere created and developed by the teacher during the lesson hours in order to obtain objective data (Pidarta, 2009).

When conducting a supervision, the characteristics of class observation techniques according to Maisah (2013) are: a) there is no information in advance, b) there is adequate information in advance, c) there is guideline on how to determine the ideal time of supervision arrival to school by informing the teacher beforehand, but not mentioning the day and date. Besides observation, class visit is also important. Class visits according to (Sagala, 2013) can be done in three ways; 1) unannounced visitation class visits, 2) visits with prior notification (announced visitation), 3) visits at the invitation of the teacher (visit upon invitation)

Group supervision techniques according to Makawimbang (2013) can be done as follows: a) orientation meetings, b) group studies among teachers, c) teacher meetings, d) discussions as group processes, e) exchanging experiences, f) workshops, g) panel discussions, h) seminars as a means of deepening various learning problems, i) symposiums as a means of brainstorming, j) teaching demonstrations, and k) supervision bulletins.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that the implementation of the *Madrasah* supervisor's academic supervision in improving the professional competence of religion teachers were still weak in fostering teacher professional competence. Indications of this lack of awareness indicated the weakness action of the school supervisor, in terms of coaching. The couching was done without careful planning. Then, the supervision was not carried out continuously even there was no discussion or meeting. Next, there was no teacher's professional organization, and teachers did not make lesson plan in implementing the teaching process. The inhibiting factor in the development of teacher professional competence was the quality of school supervisor professionalism, such as the appointment process of school supervisors which was not transparent. The low mentality of school supervisors was characterized by lack of

motivation and enthusiasm and lack of discipline in carrying out tasks, and the frequency of late coming to the school.

Finally, efforts had already been made in the implementation of the *Madrasah* supervisor's academic supervision in enhancing the professional competence of religious teachers in the District. In those efforts, there was the need for motivation and self-awareness and the spirit of dedication of the school supervisor that would emerge a clear institutional vision with conceptual capabilities in terms of teacher guidance by having teachers' training, debriefing to make learning programs,and supervision to the classroom.

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