



Bridging Gaps in Madrasah Human Resource Management: Lessons from Sigi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the quality of human resources (HR) in Islamic educational institutions has become a strategic priority in Indonesian education policy. This is true, as madrasahs, being Islamic educational institutions, have a distinctive role in imparting religious values and fostering students' intellectual and professional development. Objective: This study analyzes the implementation of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in madrasahs, focusing on recruitment, professional development, mentorship, and career advancement, as well as the alignment of these activities with managerial concepts and Islamic humanistic ideals. Methods: The study employed a mixed-methods research approach. Quantitative data were obtained via online questionnaires from 49 respondents. In contrast, qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 28 participants, including principals, deputy principals, teachers, and educational staff from five madrasahs in Sigi, Indonesia. The data analysis used descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation in SPSS 23 for quantitative data, and thematic analysis for qualitative data, incorporating triangulation to augment validity. Findings: Madrasahs are evolving towards more professional, competency-oriented approaches to human resource management. Nonetheless, considerable contradictions persist between formal administrative systems and humanistic principles, particularly with recruitment equity, fair career advancement, and the sustainability of professional development programs. These difficulties illustrate disparities in the comprehension and application of HRM principles across institutions. Conclusion: The research finds that successful HRM reform in madrasahs requires integrating Human Relations Theory and Organizational Behavior Theory to align Islamic ideals with modern managerial practices. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders aiming to enhance HRM systems in madrasahs, while acknowledging limits due to potential bias in online interviews and restricted opportunity for comprehensive qualitative analysis.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, enhancing the quality of human resources (HR) in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia has emerged as a strategic priority in national education policy. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational establishments, have a distinctive role by fulfilling two primary functions: imparting religious values and fostering students' intellectual and professional development (Hardaker & Sabki, 2015; Sabki

& Hardaker, 2013). In the realm of global educational advancement, madrasahs must strengthen institutional governance and elevate the professionalism of their personnel to effectively respond to rapid social, technological, and economic transformations (Bakar, 2017; Haddade et al., 2024; Warisno et al., 2025). A crucial aspect of this transition is the establishment of effective, transparent, and competency-based Human Resource Management (HRM).

Madrasahs in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi, play a significant role in preserving the continuity of Islamic education within a mixed community. These institutions encompass both public and private madrasahs, both affiliated with and independent of the Alkhairaat Foundation. Each has distinct obstacles in Human Resource Management, particularly with recruiting, career advancement, and the professional development of educators and educational staff. Variations in institutional context, organizational culture, and financial resources also affect HRM practices among madrasahs (Katou et al., 2010; Nawas et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2026; Jaya et al., 2026).

Haddade et al. (2024), for example, noted that Human Resource Management (HRM) in madrasahs, while highlighting three madrasahs in South Sulawesi, is considered a strategic element for developing madrasahs' competitiveness. In their view, this can be achieved through organizational management that integrates digital technology and Islamic educational values. They also emphasize that the reinforcement of capacity building for principals, teachers, and staff, especially their digital literacy and adaptability to the institutional reform agenda, becomes a key factor in madrasahs' HRM reform. They believe that such integrated efforts would contribute to better managerial development and to the quality of the madrasahs' outcomes. This view is in line with the finding of Agasisti et al. (2020) in the context of Italian middle schools. Despite this case, this research highlights its methodological weaknesses. First, this research finding would be unconvincing given the use of a case study design involving 18 participants and three madrasahs. Moreover, since the data is predominantly derived from interviews, with limited triangulation through observations, the workflows of headmasters, teachers, and staff, along with quantitative data, the research claims regarding HRM in madrasahs would be less robust.

In contrast to the findings of Haddade et al. (2024) and Windarruslana et al. (2026), which recognize HRM in secondary schools in Palu as a catalyst for teachers' development, individual motivation, and the process of lifelong learning, the study found that the practice of HRM has not yet been effectively implemented. They highlight that work overload, low motivation to develop competences, and poor incentives and rewards become clear impediments to effective HRM practice. Nevertheless, the main weaknesses of this research are the lack of details on the number of participants, data validation

techniques, and quantitative data to support its claims.

The study by Aminullah et al. (2024) highlights that human resource management (HRM) in madrasahs in South Sulawesi plays a strategic role in improving educational quality. They particularly noted that strengthening teacher competence, optimizing principals' leadership, and coordinating institutional responses to curriculum reform after the Ministerial Joint Decree strongly contributed to the competitiveness of HRM in madrasahs. The idea is also observed in the work of several researchers, including Alias et al. (2026) and Setiawan et al. (2026). Aminullah et al. (2024) further highlight that both public and private madrasahs across South Sulawesi, while implementing effective management of human resources and learning systems, for example, extended instructional hours and boarding school models, have together contributed to producing competitive graduates. Again, the emphasis on HRM, especially in madrasahs with limited financial resources and facilities, is becoming increasingly urgent to improve their competitiveness across a broad spectrum (Supriatna, 2025; Alias et al., 2026).

Generally, human resource management in Islamic educational institutions focuses primarily on administrative functions, such as teacher allocation and assignment, while failing to fully adopt contemporary HRM principles that prioritize performance, motivation, and competency enhancement. Several studies, including Putri et al. (2024) and Rosdiana et al. (2024), have revealed that Islamic educational institutions in South and Southeast Asia face challenges. For example, restricted competency-based recruitment, inadequate access to professional training, and ineffective performance-based return systems. This underscores the necessity for HRM policy change that is both administrative and focused on sustainable and equitable human resource development.

Despite significant research on HRM in Islamic educational institutions, most studies emphasize normative and policy dimensions rather than empirical practices at the institutional level. Fazlurrahman et al. (2022) and Islahuddin et al. (2024) found that human resource management in Indonesian madrasahs is primarily focused on bureaucratic functions and has not fully adopted contemporary HRM principles, such as competency-based recruitment, performance incentive systems, and ongoing professional development. Additional research (Putri et al., 2024; Rosdiana et al., 2024) underscores the limited availability of professional development and

career counseling for educators, especially in rural regions. This demonstrates the gap between national policy aspirations and their practical execution.

Previous studies by Haddade et al. (2024) and Aminullah et al. (2024) have shown that Human Resource Management (HRM) in madrasahs plays an important role in improving educational quality, teacher professionalism, and the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Several studies also found that strengthening teachers' competence, principals' leadership, and digital literacy can support the modernization of madrasah management, although its implementation still faces various challenges (Windarrusliana et al., 2026). In addition, national and international studies revealed that HRM in madrasahs still faces problems related to competency-based recruitment, continuous professional training, and fair reward systems, particularly in developing areas such as Sigi Regency (Putri et al., 2024; Rosdiana et al., 2024; Adi & Hasanah, 2025; Sawaludin & Namina, 2026).

The soundest distinction of this current research lies in its more empirical, contextual, and integrative focus in portraying the practices of HRM in several madrasahs in Sigi. Unlike previous research that predominantly emphasizes normative, administrative, and public policy aspects, this research delves into the implementation of HRM in five madrasahs in Sigi, Central Sulawesi. The main focuses of the current research cover recruitment mechanisms, professional development, mentoring, career development, and the effectiveness of local talent recruitment in the context of Islamic values and local wisdom. This research further offers a more comprehensive theoretical approach by integrating Human Relations Theory and Organizational Behavior Theory to explain how Islamic humanism values can coexist with modern professionalism principles and work-based management. Besides, this research not only questions administrative efficiency but also locates the value of justice, trustworthiness, teachers' prosperity, and Islamic work ethic as the core of madrasah reform. Hence, this research presents a new madrasah HRM model based on Islamic values that is more contextual and participative, and oriented toward reinforcing sustainable human resources.

International research, such as that by Rasheed et al. (2016) and Singh et al. (2021) in Pakistan, Hedayati Mehdiabadi & Li (2016) and Zein (2017) in Malaysia, and Singh et al. (2021) in Bangladesh, revealed similar patterns: weak open recruitment systems,

limited needs-based training support, poor appraisal practices (Elrehail et al., 2020), and lack of objective performance evaluation (Mebratie et al., 2025). The weaknesses of HRM practices across the globe have also been observed by researchers such as Zahid Iqbal & Khan (2011), Ghotane et al. (2021), Usman (2026), and Koman et al. (2024). The reform initiatives of Human Resource Management in madrasahs continue to encounter challenges in integrating spiritual ideals with modern professional standards. As a consequence, a contextual exploration of how HRM practices are implemented in Indonesian madrasahs, especially in areas such as Sigi, is needed, taking into account local social, cultural, and religious characteristics.

In this context, recruitment and human resources quality are important. A sound recruitment process not just determines the quality of educators but also manifests honesty and meritocracy. Recruitment of teachers and education personnel should consider academic qualifications, pedagogical competence, moral integrity, and conformity with Islamic values. However, in practice, challenges often arise, including limited resources, an unstandardized selection process, and the dominance of non-academic considerations (Rasheed et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2021).

Recruitment effectiveness in attracting local talent is also a key concern. Madrasahs have considerable potential to empower surrounding communities through employment opportunities for local teachers and education staff. Their involvement may strengthen interpersonal bonds and encourage a sense of ownership within the institution. However, this requires an inclusive selection system and policies that support local potential without jeopardizing professional standards. Islahuddin et al. (2024) and Rahman (2025) emphasized that local community-based recruitment policies are a principal strategy for improving the social relevance and sustainability of madrasahs.

In addition to recruitment, professional development and mentoring programs for teachers are also urgently needed. In the digital era, madrasah teachers must master not only religious material and conventional pedagogy but also adapt to innovations in learning technology. Therefore, madrasahs need to provide ongoing training, workshops, and a structured mentoring system. Putri et al. (2024) and Rosdiana et al. (2024) note that much teacher training remains short-term and is not yet integrated into a long-term career development system.

Another important aspect is fair and

planned career development. A merit-based career system can improve teacher motivation, loyalty, and performance. In practice, there is still a gap between civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara - ASN) and non-civil servants (non-ASN) teachers in terms of promotion and rewards. Xin et al. (2022) and Yansyah (2022) emphasized the need for a performance-based evaluation system grounded in the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) principles to ensure career equity.

A solid understanding of human resource management is also crucial. This is important because all elements of the madrasahs share a shared awareness of the importance of professionalism, work-life balance, and teacher well-being. The well-being of teachers directly affects student motivation and learning outcomes. Classical motivation theories, including Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Abbas, 2020; Ansorger, 2021; Bridgman et al., 2019) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Miah & Hasan, 2022), emphasized that job satisfaction is determined not only by moral responsibility, but also by working conditions and appreciation of personal achievements.

Theoretically, this research is based on Human Relations Theory (Fox & Stallworth, 2010; Zhang & Jiang, 2015) and Organizational Behavior Theory (Campbell et al., 2016; Kılıç & Uludağ, 2021; Qalati et al., 2022). HRT emphasizes interpersonal relationships, communication, and emotional support to increase productivity, whereas OBT highlights organizational behavior, transformational leadership, and performance-based

management systems. The combination of the two forms the cornerstone for understanding how Islamic humanistic principles can align with modern professional principles. In the madrasah context, the humanistic approach upholds social harmony and the institution's spirituality, while the systematic approach secures managerial efficiency and accountability.

Based on the identified problems, the research questions are formulated as follows: 1) How are recruitment mechanisms implemented in Islamic educational institutions, particularly in madrasahs in Sigi Regency?, 2) To what extent are the selected madrasahs effective in attracting and retaining local talent as part of their Human Resource Management (HRM) practices?, 3) How do professional development and mentorship programs implemented in the selected madrasahs improve the competence and performance of teachers and educational staff in madrasahs?, 4) How is career development in madrasahs managed for both ASN and non-ASN teachers within Islamic educational institutions?, and 5) How do recruitment, local talent attraction, professional development, mentorship, and career development collectively shape the understanding and practice of Human Resource Management (HRM) in madrasahs?

This research examines in-depth HRM practices in five madrasahs (Islamic schools) in Sigi, Indonesia. The main focus of the study is to better understand how recruitment mechanisms, the effectiveness of attracting local talent, professional development programs, mentorship programs, and career development are implemented in the context of Islamic educational institutions, and how all these aspects shape the understanding and practice of HRM in Islamic schools.

Thus, this research is not only relevant to the development of Islamic education policies at the local level but also makes a theoretical contribution to strengthening the HRM model based on Islamic values. The results of the study are expected to serve as a reference for stakeholders: madrasah principals, teachers, and decision-makers, in formulating strategies to improve human resource quality that emphasize not only administrative efficiency but also the embedding of principles such as impartiality, trustworthiness, and generosity into managerial practices. Modernization of HRM in madrasahs should be interpreted not only as a process of institutional secularization but also as an effort to reform values that reaffirm the importance of Islamic work ethics in building transparent, competent, and holistically human-welfare-oriented

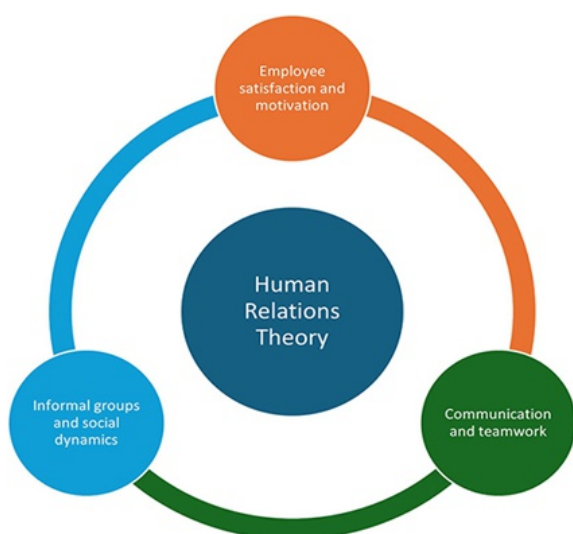


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of human relations theory (Fox & Stallworth, 2010)

educational governance.

■ METHOD

Research Participants

The participants of the research were drawn from five Islamic educational institutions (madrasahs) located in the Sigi district of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, and its surroundings, consisting of one public/state Islamic high school (Madrasah Aliyah), one private Alkhairaat Islamic high school (Madrasah Aliyah), two Alkhairaat junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah), and one Madrasah Tsanawiyah outside Alkhairaat. This study employed purposive sampling to select participants, including individuals directly involved in implementing and practicing Human Resource Management (HRM), such as principals, deputy principals, teachers, and other educational staff. They were intentionally chosen to provide relevant, in-depth information aligned with the study objectives.

The population of the current research consisted of all educational personnel and teachers across five madrasahs in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The number of potential participants was 85, comprising 30 personnel from Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Sigi, 18 personnel from Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Alkhairaat Dolo, 15 personnel from Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta Alkhairaat Biromaru, 9 personnel from Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta Birrul Walidain Kabobona, and 13 personnel from Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta Baliase. This population was targeted for the survey because they were active heads of madrasahs, teachers, and administrative staff at the selected madrasahs. All 85 individuals were considered part of the target population because they met the criteria and characteristics relevant to the study's objectives.

From each madrasah, all potential participants received an online survey link containing questions about their perceptions and experiences of human resource management, specifically recruitment, recruitment effectiveness in attracting local talent, professional development opportunities, mentoring programs (mentorships), and career development in madrasahs. The total number of research participants who returned the survey was 49. After the survey, some willing participants were invited back for an online interview to deepen the survey findings and explore broader conceptual dimensions of human resource management in madrasahs in the district of Sigi. The number of these participants was 28 personnel.

Although questionnaires were distributed to the entire target population, only 49 were

returned. Therefore, the response rate of the survey included in the final analysis was 57.6%. Consequently, this research used an available-response approach in which all returned and usable questionnaires were analyzed (Manfreda & Vehovar, 2012; De Leeuw, 2012). While the response rate limited the representativeness of the findings as explained by Manfreda & Vehovar (2012), a sample size of 49 remains within the range commonly considered acceptable for exploratory correlational studies (de Winter et al., 2009; Bujang & Baharum, 2016). From the perspective of methodological literature, the sample sizes between 30 and 50 could still provide reasonably stable estimates of correlations and were sufficient for identifying moderate relationships among variables, provided that the findings were interpreted within the context of the study and without broad generalization beyond the participating respondents (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Anderson et al., 2017). Therefore, the results of this study should be understood as reflecting the perceptions of the respondents who participated in the survey rather than representing all madrasah personnel in Sigi Regency.

Research Design and Procedures

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. The research began with the collection of quantitative data using an online Google Form-based survey. This was followed by qualitative data gathering with online interviews. The interviews aimed to clarify and deepen the findings in the online survey. The research started in January, and it was completed in October 2025. This research lasted 10 months and consisted of four stages. The first stage (January–February) covered a preliminary study. Here, a literature review and the creation, development, and validation of research instruments took place. From March to May, the online survey link was distributed to participants in five selected madrasahs via Google Forms. In this stage, variables such as recruitment, local recruitment effectiveness, professional development, mentoring programs, and career development were carefully covered in the online survey. After the survey, from June to August, semi-structured online interviews were conducted with madrasah principals, deputy principals, teachers, and educational staff to explore their experiences and perceptions of human resource management practices. In the final stage, from September to October, data analysis, triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings, and the preparation of a systematic

and comprehensive research report were conducted. In this stage, to ensure the robustness of the research findings, the data were carefully triangulated, and unnecessary data were reduced alongside the completion process.

Instruments

The research instruments consisted of two types: survey questionnaires and semi-structured interview guidelines. The survey questionnaire was adapted from previous studies on Human Resource Management (HRM), teacher professional development, and Organizational Behavior Theory in educational institutions. The adaptation is particularly derived from the works of Haddade et al. (2024), Putri et al. (2024), Rosdiana et al. (2024), and Xin et al. (2022). This questionnaire covered six major themes/variables adopted in this current research as follows: (1) recruitment and its relationship to

human resource quality, (2) recruitment effectiveness in attracting local talent, (3) professional development opportunities, (4) mentoring programs, (5) career development, and (6) additional perspectives on HRM practices in madrasahs. Here, each item of the question employed a *five-point Likert* scale ranging from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*”. This aimed to measure participants’ perceptions and experiences regarding HRM practices in the five selected madrasahs in Sigi.

The themes were categorized as variables in the current research. These themes were further identified as indicators, designated X1 to X6, from which questions were developed to gather the research participants’ views. See table 1 for the details of variables.

It is also important to note that the interview instrument was designed in a semi-structured format. This was to allow participants to provide deeper explanations and reflections on their experiences with HRM

Table 1. Survey research instruments

Themes/ Variables	Indicators (X1 – X6)	Sub-indicators	Survey questions
Recruitment and its relationship to human resource quality	Recruitment and Its Relationship to Human Resource Quality (X1)	X1.1 Open and professional recruitment	1. The recruitment process for teachers and administrative staff at madrasahs is designed transparently and professionally.
		X1.2 Recruitment supports for improved quality of education	2. The recruitment mechanism for teachers and staff supports improving the quality of education at madrasahs.
		X1.3 Recruitment fairness and equality for all applicants	3. Recruitment at madrasahs prioritizes fairness and equality for all applicants.
		X1.4 Clear selection criteria	4. Madrasahs have clear criteria for the teacher and staff selection process.
		X1.5 The applicant's long-term contributions	5. The recruitment process at madrasahs considers the applicant's potential long-term contribution to the institution.
Recruitment effectiveness in attracting local talent	Recruitment Effectiveness to Attract Local Talent (X2)	X2.1 Recruitment targets for qualified local talents.	1. Recruitment initiatives at the madrasahs attract local talents with appropriate qualifications.
		X2.2 Job vacancy information and accessibility to the local community.	2. Information on job openings at the madrasahs is easily accessible to the local community.
		X2.3 Local networks for strong talents.	3. The madrasahs leverage local community networks to attract the best candidates.
		X2.4 Local talents priority without lowering quality.	4. Local talents are prioritized in the selection process without compromising on quality.
		X2.5 Recruitment promotion for competent local talent.	5. The madrasahs’ recruitment promotion program attracts highly competent individuals from the local community.

Professional development opportunities	Professional Development Opportunities (X3)	X3.1 Provision of active training and skill development. X3.2 Professional development facilities and staff needs. X3.3 The encouragement of teachers and staff to join external training. X3.4 Updated programs for current educational needs. X3.5 Adequate HR support for professional development	1. The madrasahs actively provide training and skills development for teachers and staff. 2. Professional development facilities at the madrasahs cover the needs of all teachers and administrative staff. 3. Madrasah teachers and staff are encouraged to participate in seminars or external training. 4. Professional development programs at the madrasahs are updated according to the needs of the educational sector. 5. Resources available for professional development are adequate at the madrasahs.
Mentoring programs	Mentoring Program (X4)	X4.1 Effective ministry mentorship for staff competence. X4.2 Relevant expertise mentors X4.3 Ongoing support mentorship X4.4 Regular constructive feedback from mentors X4.5 Roles of mentorship for boosting staff confidence	1. Mentorship provided by local education authorities effectively improves the competency of madrasah teachers and staff. 2. Appointed mentors possess expertise that aligns with the needs of madrasah teachers and staff. 3. The mentorship program provides ongoing support for teachers and staff. 4. Mentors regularly provide constructive feedback to madrasah teachers and staff. 5. The mentorship program helps increase teachers' and staff's confidence in carrying out their duties.
Career development,	Career Development (X5)	X5.1 Career paths motivation for staff competencies X5.2 Fair promotion opportunities for all staff X5.3 Equal access to career development information for staff X5.4 Policies for encouraging advancement to higher positions. X5.5 Career development programs for staff retention.	1. Career development pathways in madrasahs are designed to motivate teachers and staff to improve their competencies. 2. Promotion opportunities in madrasahs are equitably available to all teachers and staff. 3. Teachers and staff have access to information regarding career development opportunities in madrasahs. 4. Madrasahs have policies that encourage teachers and staff to achieve higher positions within the organization. 5. Career development programs in madrasahs help improve the retention of qualified teachers and staff.

Additional perspectives on HRM practices in madrasahs	Additional HR Management Insights in Madrasahs (X6)		1. HRM policies at the madrasahs consider work-life balance for teachers and staff.
		X6.1 HR policies support work-life balance.	2. The madrasahs regularly evaluate the performance of teachers and staff to support their career development.
		X6.2 Regularly evaluated performance for career growth.	3. Teachers and staff feel valued for their contributions to supporting the madrasah's goals.
		X6.3 Contribution values for teachers and staff	4. The reward system at the madrasahs motivates teachers and staff to improve their performance.
		X6.4 Rewards for motivating improved performance.	5. The work culture at the madrasahs supports innovation and collaboration between teachers and staff.
		X6.5 Work culture encouragement for innovation and collaboration.	

practices in their madrasahs. The basis for the online interview questions was the theoretical framework of Human Relations Theory and Organizational Behavior Theory. The premise was to focus on recruitment mechanisms, fairness and equality in recruitment, local community involvement, mentoring systems, professional development, and career advancement in madrasahs. A total of thirteen guiding questions were used to gain richer qualitative insights from the participants. Since these were online interviews, follow-up questions were not provided, which became one of the methodological limitations of the current research. Here is an example of a semi-structured interview question: *Is there any relationship between how teachers and administrative staff are recruited and the quality of HRM in madrasahs? Is the recruitment initiative(s) in madrasahs effective in attracting talent from the local community? Are the provisions of professional development opportunities adequately accessible to teachers and staff in madrasahs?*

In this case, to ensure the validity of the instruments, content validity was examined through expert judgment by two experts in educational management and Islamic education research, in accordance with the policy of the Research and Community Service Agency of UIN Datokarama Palu. Revisions were made based on their feedback to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire and interview items. In addition, the construct validity of the questionnaire was assessed using item correlation analysis, with all items meeting the acceptable threshold ($r > 0.30$). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the overall reliability coefficient was above 0.70,

indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, several qualitative validation strategies were employed. These validation strategies were applied within the limitations of the research design. First, with an awareness of the research's limitations, a 10-month data collection period was conducted. This allowed for sufficient time to communicate with the participants, clarify responses, and verify emerging findings from the survey and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, triangulation was employed, enabling the quantitative survey results to be compared with qualitative data from the online semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2011; Ramseook-Munhurrun & Durberry, 2017). The objective of this section was to enhance the consistency of interpretations across the data sources. In addition, peer discussions were also employed. The data and their interpretation were frequently the subject of discussion in this context. The objective was to conduct a critical evaluation of the research process, including coding decisions, interpretations, and emerging themes. The objective of each stage was to mitigate the likelihood of individual bias. Data were collected exclusively through online semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, with no direct field observations or prolonged participant observation. As a result, the research's results should be interpreted within the constraints of interview-based accounts and self-reported perceptions.

Data analysis

This research employed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation in IBM SPSS Statistics 23 to analyze quantitative data from the survey. Here, the data were analyzed using descriptive

Table 2. Research Variables and Indicators

Variables	Indicators
X1	Recruitment and Its Relationship to Human Resource Quality
X2	Recruitment Effectiveness to Attract Local Talent
X3	Professional Development Opportunities
X4	Mentoring Program
X5	Career Development
X6	Additional HR Management Insights in Madrasahs

statistics. The descriptive statistics covering frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to identify the general tendencies of respondents' perceptions toward the major variables of the study, such as recruitment mechanisms, recruitment effectiveness in attracting local talent, professional development opportunities, mentoring systems, and career development in madrasahs. This type of analysis helped to describe the overall patterns and conditions of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices within the selected madrasahs in Sigi.

The survey on the current research employed a Five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The survey mean scores were categorized into five levels: *Very Low* (1.00–1.80), *Low* (1.81–2.60), *Moderate* (2.61–3.40), *High* (3.41–4.20), and *Very High* (4.21–5.00). The use of mean scores was intended to facilitate interpretation of research participants' perceptions of the survey indicators. With these categories established, the six indicators examined in this study could be applied, as presented in Table 2. In addition, the categorization enabled a consistent interpretation of participants' perceptions across all variables, which in turn facilitated better comparison among the indicators of HRM practices in the selected madrasahs.

Moreover, Pearson correlation analysis was used to measure the strength and direction of relationships among the research variables. In particular, the relationships between recruitment mechanisms and human resource quality, the effectiveness of local talent recruitment, and professional development programs in madrasahs were examined. The technique was selected because the study aimed to determine whether significant linear relationships existed among the variables measured using Likert-scale responses. The interpretation of the correlation coefficients was based on common statistical guidelines.

This meant that values closer to +1 were deemed to show stronger positive relationships, whereas values closer to 0 indicated weaker relationships among the variables.

In the qualitative phase, data from semi-structured online interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Here, several stages of analysis were conducted. These phases encompassed data transcription, initial coding, categorization of recurring ideas, identification of major themes, and interpretation of participants' experiences related to HRM practices in madrasahs. The qualitative findings were then triangulated with the quantitative survey results. This aimed to strengthen the validity, consistency, and credibility of the research findings. Through a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the quantitative findings were further explained and deepened by qualitative data, particularly regarding the implementation of recruitment policies, local talent engagement, and professional development strategies in Islamic educational institutions.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the direction and strength of relationships among two or more variables in the current research. The value of correlation lies between the ranges: $-1 \leq r \leq 1$: positive value (+) shows a one-way relationship; a negative value (–) shows a different direction relationship; a value close to 0 shows a weak or no relationship; and the close value to 1 or –1 shows a very strong relationship.

Ethical Issues and Research Limitations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles. This research ensured that each participant received an information sheet and provided informed consent after understanding the research objectives. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time. Online interviews were scheduled as agreed upon to ensure comfort. Limitations included internet connection issues, limited nonverbal communication, and limited time, but data triangulation ensured the validity of the research findings.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This statistical analysis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the implementation of human resource management in madrasahs, utilizing six main variables (X1–X6). Each variable was analyzed descriptively to examine respondents' perceptions of various aspects, including recruitment and the effectiveness of attracting local talent, professional

development opportunities, mentoring programs, career development, and understanding of human resource management. In addition, the correlation analysis was used to identify relationships among variables. This was to ensure that the data were normally distributed and that a sufficient sample size was obtained.

This study, employing a sequential mixed-methods design, collected and analyzed quantitative data in the first phase of the research. This was followed by a qualitative exploration aimed at clarifying and deepening the statistical findings. The total population involved in the five selected madrasahs in Sigi consisted of 85 educational personnel. The population consisted of principals, deputy principals, teachers, and administrative staff. Although the questionnaire was sent to all personnel, only 49 participants completed it, resulting in a response rate of approximately 57.6%. Although the number of returned questionnaires was relatively limited, the sample remained statistically acceptable for Pearson correlation analysis. This was because correlational studies commonly permitted sample sizes of 30-50 participants, as explained by De Winter et al. (2016), Fraenkel et al. (2012), and Anderson et al. (2017). This was particularly true because the current research emphasized identifying relational patterns among variables rather than producing broad national generalizations. Moreover, the survey instrument in this research was designed to measure six strategic human resource management variables (X1–X6). Having these six human resources variables allowed the study to focus on institutional HRM tendencies and internal relationships within the participating madrasahs.

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data were collected through online interviews. Here, 28 willing participants were selected to provide deeper explanations of the quantitative findings. The interviews of the 28 participants were deemed to have significantly strengthened the study. This was particularly accepted because the ratio was chosen by more than half of the survey respondents. The views of these participants provided additional contextual insights into recruitment systems, professional development, leadership practices, and HRM practices across the five madrasahs. In sequential mixed-method research, qualitative inquiry serves to elaborate and validate statistical tendencies rather than to achieve statistical representation alone. The 28 in-depth interviews provided sufficient methodological rigor and analytical depth for the current research.

Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that all variables fell into the good-to-very-good category, with mean values ranging from 3.51 to 4.24 on a five-point Likert scale. The relatively low standard deviations for most indicators suggest homogeneity in respondents' perceptions. This suggests that HRM practices in the madrasahs studied followed a relatively uniform pattern, although there were variations in implementation and policy consistency.

In addition, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to identify relationships among HRM variables. The analysis showed that all variables were positively and significantly correlated at the 0.01 level, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.467 to 0.818. Based on the correlation analysis, it was revealed that HRM in madrasahs in Sigi Regency is an integrated system. In other words, the effectiveness of one aspect in HRM practices heavily depends on how the other aspects function. Hence, efforts to improve the quality of human resources in the selected madrasahs cannot succeed without improvements in other required aspects.

Recruitment and Its Relationship to Human Resource Quality

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses showed high consistency between respondents' perceptions and empirical experiences regarding teacher and educational staff recruitment practices in the five selected madrasahs. Quantitatively, the variable X1 (recruitment and its relationship to HR quality) received an average score of 4.04–4.22 on the 5-point Likert scale, showing a positive perception of the recruitment system as transparent, professional, and backing of improving HR quality. Transparency indicators (X1.1) and professionalism (X1.2) were the main strengths, with a score of 4.22, while the fairness indicator (X1.3) was worth 4.04, indicating the need for increased application of the principle of equality. The low standard deviation (0.499–0.626) further supports the finding that respondents' perceptions were homogeneous.

Qualitative data confirmed these conclusions. Research participants understood recruitment as *“an effort to meet the need for quality education”* (P1) and *“a process of acquiring professional human resources in accordance with Islamic instructional standards”* (P5). The organized steps, *“needs analysis, planning, selection, and placement”* (P13, P22), were considered essential to ensure objectivity. However, some highlighted practices that were *“not entirely fair due to the influence of proximity or nepotism”* (P4, P10,

P13).

In the participants' view, *recruitment criteria are defined by national regulations, including academic, pedagogical, professional, social, and moral qualifications* (P15). Strategically, participants emphasized a long-term orientation based on *"loyalty, commitment, as well as potential for self-development"* (P6, P8, P25). Overall, the data confirm that transparent, professional, and sustainable recruitment is the main pillar for improving the quality of madrasahs' human resources.

Based on the research findings, there was high consistency between respondents' quantitative perceptions and their empirical experiences regarding recruitment and its relationship to HRM quality (X1). This means that structural and social functioning in the madrasah recruitment system worked as expected. In the view of Human Relations Theory (HRT), the high mean score of 4.22 can be interpreted as indicating high openness and professionalism in HRM recruitment across the five madrasahs. This score indicated a relatively favorable work climate during the recruitment process. This was understood as a joint effort developed by the madrasahs to meet the need for quality education and maintain Islamic values. However, qualitative findings on the influence of personal closeness and nepotism indicated that unmanaged social relations can shift the tenets of justice and equality.

The Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), on the other hand, suggests that the HRM recruitment of madrasahs should be guided by national regulations, competencies, and a long-term orientation. This position is important to ensure that madrasahs, as educational institutions, build a professional, performance-oriented organizational culture. Hence, the lower fairness score (*mean* 4.04) indicated a strong need for madrasahs to strengthen the meritocratic system in the recruitment process. This is to guarantee that social interactions and organizational structures are aligned, enabling continuous improvement in madrasah human resources.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a paradox. While formal regulations have encouraged professionalism, social and relational values continue to influence decision-making. This finding confirms the studies by Rasheed et al. (2016), Singh et al. (2021), Hedayati Mehdiabadi & Li (2016), Zein (2017), Islahuddin et al. (2024), and Rahman (2025). This is true because madrasahs commonly encounter tensions among ideological loyalty,

social closeness, and demands for professional competence. For example, according to Rasheed et al. (2016), Singh et al. (2021), and Hedayati Mehdiabadi & Li (2016), weak open recruitment systems, limited needs-based training support, and a lack of objective performance evaluation are weaknesses in HRM practices. These circumstances were also evident in HRM practices in the selected madrasahs in Sigi, and at times the situation was even worse.

Recruitment Effectiveness in Attracting Local Talent

The data analysis showed a close relationship among transparency, access to information, and local priority policies in the effectiveness of teacher and administrative staff recruitment in Sigi Regency. Quantitatively, the variable X2 representing (*recruitment effectiveness to draw local talent*) obtained an average score between 3.51–4.08 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating quite good effectiveness. The highest indicator X2.2 (*Mean* = 4,08) shows that *"job vacancy information is easily accessible to local people"*, affirming transparency. The indicator X2.3 (*Mean* = 4,00) described the optimal utilization of local networks, whereas the X2.4 (*Mean* = 3.51; *SD* = 0.960) showed differences in perceptions of local priority policies.

Qualitative results reinforced the main themes of transparency, equal access, and the prioritization of quality local candidates. The majority of research participants (P5, P6, P7, P18, P23, P24) stated that *"Open and transparent recruitment can attract local interest and strengthen general trust."* However, P17 reminded that *"closed and nepotistic recruitment makes people reluctant to participate."* Participant (P20) assessed that *"giving priority to local teachers boosts social connections and cultural meaning."* However, the variation in the X2.4 score indicates that the policy is not yet uniform.

Quantitative findings on the recruitment effectiveness variable *in attracting local talent* (X2) indicate that openness of job vacancy information (*mean* 4.08) and the use of local networks (*mean* 4.00) significantly increase local community interest. This finding is supported qualitatively by the participants' statements that *"open and transparent recruitment can attract local community interest and strengthen community confidence"* (P5, P6, P7, P18, P23, P24). The perspective of Human Relations Theory (HRT) suggests that this disclosure serves as a form of social capital, fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and emotional closeness between the madrasah

and the surrounding community.

However, qualitative data also revealed structural tensions in which “*closed and nepotistic recruitment practices discourage community participation*” (P17). This phenomenon accounts for the low scores and high variation in perceptions on the local priority indicator (*mean 3.51; SD 0.960*). From an Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT) perspective, this condition reflects policy inconsistencies and weak organizational control over recruitment implementation. As noted by Bakar (2017), Rasheed et al. (2016), and Singh et al. (2021), social exclusivity often negates the principle of meritocracy. In line with Rahman (2025), to ensure madrasahs remain rooted in the local socio-cultural context while preserving professionalism and the sustainability of the quality of Islamic education, integrating community-based recruitment with a competency-based evaluation system is important.

The results of this combined analysis confirm that the effectiveness of madrasah recruitment was greatly influenced by the levels of information transparency, equal access, and dependability in local priority policies. Revitalizing these three aspects is believed to increase the attractiveness of madrasahs to local human resources. At the same time, this would help madrasahs strengthen their social legitimacy and the sustainability of quality Islamic education at the community level.

Professional Development Opportunities

The analysis showed that madrasahs’ support for the professional development of teachers and education personnel was rated good, with an average score of 3.63–4.24. The highest indicator, X3.4 (Mean = 4.24), indicates that professional development programs in madrasahs were relevant and up to date with the needs of the education sector. The indicator X3.5 (Mean = 3.63) appeared to be the lowest, indicating limited training resources. The SD range of 0.577–0.809 reflected moderate variation in perceptions, especially for trainer availability (0.654), and the most consistent perception was regarding encouragement to take external training (0.333).

The highest mean score for indicator X3.4 (4.24) demonstrates that respondents in the study strongly perceived professional development programs in madrasahs as relevant, adaptive, and aligned with current educational needs. This finding suggests that madrasahs have been successful in designing development initiatives that are responsive to

changes and demands in the education sector, despite limited training resources.

Qualitative analysis highlighted four sub-themes: ongoing support, supportive leadership, limited resources, and promotion of inequality. Most of the research participants (P5, P6, P8, P20, P22, P23, P26) made mention that “Madrasahs encourage professional development through training, workshops, certification, and continuing education. Meanwhile, the P26 confirmed that “leadership holds a vital role in motivating and assisting career growth.” However, P4 and P9 highlighted “inconsistency due to budget limitations and unsystematic planning.” In addition, the issue of inequality in job promotions still appeared. P7 emphasized that “every teacher should have an equal opportunity to be promoted.”

Reflecting on the findings, the thematic concept map was offered to illustrate the relationship among the emerging themes (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). This was further aimed to strengthen the quantitative findings, which indicated a relationship between human resource development mechanisms and the quality of human resources in madrasahs. In addition, ongoing support and supportive leadership were found to contribute positively to teacher quality improvement. However, limited resources and promotion inequality were identified as barriers to effective professional growth and sustainable human resource development in Sigi madrasahs.

As observed, the madrasah has demonstrated a strong commitment to career advancement but requires increased resources, greater implementation consistency, and a merit-based career system to ensure continued professionalism. The research findings show that madrasah support for the professional development of teachers and education

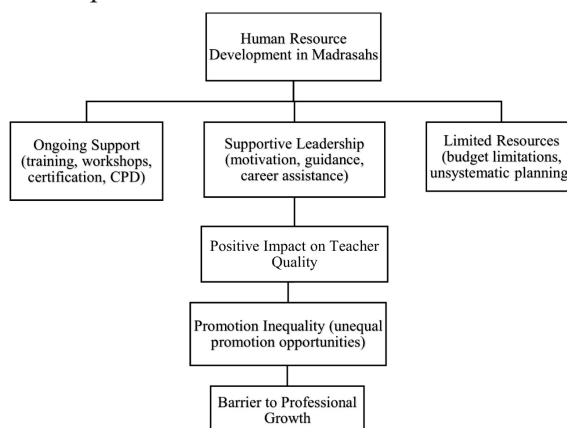


Figure 2. Adapted Thematic Concept Map of HRM Development in Madrasahs (Werner & DeSimone, 2012)

personnel is in the good category (mean 3.63–4.24), with the main strength being the relevance and currency of the training program (X3.4). In this perspective, Human Relations Theory (HRT), continuous encouragement from leaders, and a supportive work environment—as expressed by participants (P5, P6, P26)—serve as motivational factors that strengthen commitment and job satisfaction (Fox & Stallworth, 2010; Zhang & Jiang, 2015). However, as admitted by (P4, P9), limited resources and inconsistent implementation indicate that emotional support for professional development opportunities within the selected madrasahs has not been fully backed by structural support.

Based on the view of Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), as evidenced by low scores on resource support (X3.5) and promotion inequity (P7), there was a weak integration between competency development and performance-based career systems within the madrasahs. This finding confirms the findings of Putri et al. (2024) and Rosdiana et al. (2024), in which professional development in madrasahs remained short-term and strongly dependent on leadership initiatives. Reflecting on the finding, it is clear that leadership in madrasahs needs to develop a sustainable, planned, and integrated professional development system. Moreover, leaders in madrasahs need to ensure that meritocratic promotion mechanisms are fully considered to sustain teacher professionalism.

Mentorship Program

The results of the quantitative analysis showed that the effectiveness of the mentoring program in madrasahs falls in the good category, with an average score of 3.76–4.02. The highest indicator (X4.3 = 4.02) confirmed that this program provided continuous vocational support to teachers and education personnel. In contrast, indicator X4.1 (Mean = 3.76) indicated the need to strengthen the Ministry of Religious Affairs' assistance at the district level to more effectively improve competency. Low variation in perceptions (SD 0.540–0.693) indicated a relatively uniform view among respondents regarding the implementation of mentoring.

Qualitatively, these outcomes were reinforced by participants' perspectives, stressing the strategic role of leadership and mentors. The P26 stated that leadership “plays an essential role in motivating, nurturing, and assisting teachers' career growth.” At the same time, P5 emphasized that madrasahs “play a role in developing teachers' professionalism through continuous development

opportunities.” However, several participants (P4, P6, P9, P20) acknowledged “differences in implementation because of limited resources and external coordination.” Therefore, the success of mentoring depends heavily on increasing mentors' capacity, supplying consistent institutional support, and working with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure the program is effective and sustainable.

The results of the study further indicate that the effectiveness of the mentoring program in madrasahs is in the good category (mean 3.76–4.02), especially in providing ongoing professional support (X4.3). From the perspective of Human Relations Theory (HRT), the success of the mentoring program in madrasahs should begin with how leaders and mentors develop and maintain emotional and motivational support for their subordinates. This was emphasized by participants (P26, P5). This view is consistent with the studies by Fox & Stallworth (2010) and Zhang & Jiang (2015), which find that the effectiveness of HRM development policies is strongly influenced by interpersonal relationships and a collegial work culture within madrasahs.

However, from the perspective of Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), the low score on the Ministry of Religious Affairs' external support indicator (X4.1) and participants' recognition of differences in implementation (P4, P6, P9, P20) indicate weak structural coordination and reliance on leadership initiatives. These outcomes are closely related to those of Putri et al. (2024). Rosdiana et al. (2024), who found that training and mentoring programs in madrasahs remain short-term and not yet institutionalized. Hence, the key factors for sustainable improvement in madrasahs' teacher competency cover these three aspects: cross-institutional synergy, mentor capacity-building, and a standardized mentoring system.

Career Development

The quantitative analysis of variable X5 indicated that career development programs in madrasahs were assessed positively and consistently, with average scores ranging from 3.88 to 4.04. The highest indicator (X5.1 = 4.04) confirmed that madrasahs have designed career development paths that encourage increased competency of teachers and education personnel. However, the indicators X5.2 and X5.4 (Mean = 3.88) indicated that promotion opportunities and career policies were not perceived as fair by all employees. The small standard deviation, ranging from 0.540 to 0.634, reflected a relatively uniform perception, although there were differences in

views on promotion fairness over madrasahs.

The results of the quantitative analysis of variable X5 indicated that career development programs in madrasahs were assessed positively and consistently, with average scores ranging from 3.88 to 4.04. The highest indicator (X5.1 = 4.04) confirmed that madrasahs have designed career development paths that encourage increased competency of teachers and education personnel. However, the indicators X5.2 and X5.4 (Mean = 3.88) indicated that promotion opportunities and career policies were not perceived as fair by all employees. The small standard deviation of 0.540–0.634 reflected a relatively uniform perception, although there were differences in views on promotion fairness between madrasahs. Based on the findings, the interview results supported them by highlighting the disparity in promotion as a key issue.

Based on the interviews, several participants, including P1, P7, and P14, stated that teachers should have equal opportunities for promotion. Others, such as P9, P16, P21, and P25, held that opportunities for promotion in madrasahs depend on employee status and institutional needs. These views suggest that career development policies were still influenced by structural and administrative factors. Hence, to ensure equitable and sustainable development in teacher professionalism, the madrasahs need a more transparent, merit-based, and competency-oriented career system.

Although many things needed to be done to support the career development of teachers and staff in madrasahs, the results of the career development analysis (X5) showed a positive and relatively consistent assessment, with a mean of 3.88–4.04. This was especially true regarding the openness of career paths, which encourages increased competence (X5.1). From the perspective of Human Relations Theory (HRT), there was a strong need to establish a clear career path for both teachers and administrative staff in madrasahs. This would serve as a source of motivation and psychological recognition for teachers and staff alike. Based on the qualitative findings of the current research, a paradox emerged between perceptions of openness and the reality of promotion inequity. This was particularly evident among non-ASN teachers, who felt they lacked opportunities despite having equivalent qualifications and competencies (P1, P7, P14). This finding aligns with the study by Harahap et al. (2022), which particularly highlights a structural gap between ASN and non-ASN teachers. This finding is also consistent with previous studies by

Fazlurrahman et al. (2022), Islahuddin et al. (2024), Putri et al. (2024), and Rosdiana et al. (2024), which emphasized that HRM practices in Indonesian madrasahs remain largely bureaucratic and have not fully implemented competency-based promotion, fair reward systems, and sustainable professional development, particularly in rural areas.

In contrast, several previous studies presented more optimistic findings regarding HRM implementation in madrasahs. Haddade et al. (2024) and Aminullah et al. (2024), for example, concluded that HRM practices in madrasahs significantly improved educational quality, teacher professionalism, and institutional competitiveness. The same methods as those used in the study by Windarruslana et al. (2026). They found that leadership strengthening, digital literacy, and competency development supported the modernization of madrasah management. The current findings may stem from differences in research focus and context. Previous studies mainly discussed HRM from normative and policy perspectives. The current research in particular empirically explored the everyday realities of HRM implementation in five madrasahs in Sigi Regency. Therefore, this study reveals that although policy frameworks and institutional visions appear progressive, their practical implementation still faces structural inequalities, resource constraints, and unequal career opportunities, especially for non-ASN teachers in developing regions.

Based on Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), the dominance of employee status and administrative needs, as highlighted by P9, P16, P21, and P25, suggests that the career system in the selected madrasahs has not yet been fully performance-based. In fact, as explained by Nkgapele and Mofokeng (2024), Lado et al. (2025), and Yansyah (2022), implementing merit-based assessments and SMART objectives is urgently needed to promote organizational justice, increase motivation, and ensure the sustainability of teacher professionalism in madrasahs.

Additional Understanding of Human Resource Management in Madrasah

Based on the research findings, the variable X6 indicated that respondents' perceptions of the implementation of human resource policies in madrasahs were generally positive and consistent. This was evidenced by an average score ranging from 3.92 to 4.18. The highest value (X6.5 = 4.18) indicated that the work culture in madrasahs strongly supports originality and employee cooperation. Meanwhile, the lowest indicator (X6.1 = 3.92)

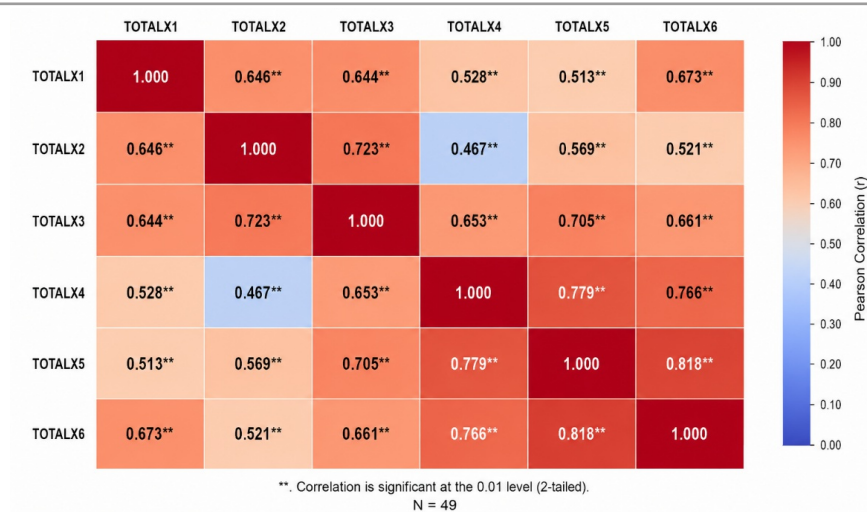


Figure 3. Correlation Analysis between Variables

confirmed that the balance between work and private life still needed to be considered by the leaders of madrasahs and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Sigi Regency. The low standard deviations (0.493–0.586) indicated uniformity in respondents' perceptions, strengthening the conclusion that satisfaction with HR policies was relatively high and evenly distributed across madrasahs.

The results of the analysis on the variable (X6) showed positive and consistent perceptions, with mean scores between 3.92 and 4.18. This was especially true of the work culture, where inventiveness and cooperation (X6.5) were highlighted. In Human Relations Theory (HRT), key factors in teachers' professional commitment include a cooperative work environment, interpersonal relationships, a sense of belonging, and job satisfaction. The findings of the research suggest that the selected madrasahs should serve as a motivational factor in fostering an accepted work culture from which collective engagement and innovation can grow.

However, the lowest score regarding work-life balance (X6.1) indicates that some needs are not fully met. From the perspective of Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), this disequilibrium may affect long-term performance and organizational sustainability. Referring to Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959), as explained by Khoshnevis and Tahmasebi (2016), and Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), as outlined by Navy (2020), professional dedication must be balanced with the fulfillment of material and psychological needs. Here, the HRM policies in the madrasahs need to integrate flexibility in work arrangements and welfare support to maintain an innovative work culture.

The correlation matrix in Figure 3 indicates that all variables (X1–X6) were significantly correlated, with p-values of .000; in SPSS, this means the significance value was smaller than 0.001 rather than exactly zero. Although several correlations were relatively high, particularly between X5 and X6 ($r = 0.818$), the coefficients did not exceed the critical threshold commonly associated with severe multicollinearity, namely $r \geq 0.90$. The strong relationships among variables are theoretically understandable because all constructs represent interconnected dimensions of Human Resource Management practices in madrasahs, such as recruitment, professional development, mentoring, and career advancement. Therefore, improvements in one HRM dimension are likely to influence improvements in other dimensions, resulting in moderate to strong correlations. Nevertheless, the possibility of partial construct overlap and common method bias is acknowledged, as the data were collected via self-reported questionnaires within similar institutional contexts.

The results of the correlation analysis between variables (X1–X6) showed a positive and significant relationship at the 0.01 significance level (2-tailed), indicating that all facets of human resource management in madrasahs were interrelated and that this interrelatedness strengthened improvements in the quality of teachers and education personnel. The variable X1 (recruitment and quality of human resources) shows a strong correlation with X6 (understanding of human resource management; $r = 0.673$), indicating that a transparent, professional recruitment system adds substantially to the effectiveness of overall human resource management.

A strong relationship was also observed between X1 and X2 ($r = 0.646$), confirming that effective recruitment was closely associated with the madrasah's ability to attract high-quality local talent. The highest correlation was found between X5 (career development) and X6 ($r = 0.818$), indicating that well-managed careers strengthen motivation, retention, and a team-oriented culture. In addition, the relationship between X4 (mentorship) and X5 ($r = 0.779$) indicated that effective mentoring played an important role in career advancement. Overall, the high correlations (0.467 – 0.818) confirm the coherent integration of HRM in madrasahs, where improvements in one aspect directly affect others, creating a synergistic, sustainable, and effective human resource management system that enhances the quality of madrasah education.

Based on the perspectives of Human Relations Theory (HRT) and Organizational Behavior Theory (OBT), the paradoxes in HRM practices in the selected madrasahs can be explained as follows. The emotional support and interpersonal relationships, as explained by Fox & Stallworth (2010) and Zhang & Jiang (2015), play key roles in teachers' and staff's motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational productivity. Here, HRT identifies the two key factors as the driving forces behind high performance in madrasahs. At the same time, OBT emphasizes transformational leadership and performance-based systems, as highlighted by Campbell et al. (2016), Kılıç & Uludağ (2021), and Qalati et al. (2022). Here, as the OBT explained, when social warmth is not balanced with administrative institutional structure, an institutional paradox may emerge. Thus, madrasahs under Alkhairaat, as the well-known private body that runs Islamic-based schools, and those outside this collective body, show a commitment to embracing HRM modernization. However, this remains a discourse for maintaining religious idealism and administrative professionalism. This is in line with the work of Arifin (2013) and Bakar (2017), which do not equate modernization with secularization. Rather, it is a value reform that integrates justice, trustworthiness, and generosity into competency-based management and transparency. The success of madrasahs' HRD depends on the cooperation between the humanistic orientation of HRT and the systemic logic of OBT to create a religious, professional, and competitive Islamic education ecosystem. HRT emphasizes.

■ CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study,

respondents across five madrasahs in Sigi Regency generally perceived several aspects of good Human Resource Management (HRM). The recruitment, professional development, mentoring, career pathways, and collaborative work culture were relatively positive. However, several practical challenges persisted. These challenges covered the perceived influence of personal relationships in recruitment, limited sustainability of professional development programs, resource constraints, and unequal career opportunities between ASN and non-ASN staff. The findings of the research should be interpreted cautiously. This was because the research was based on perceptions from a limited number of respondents within specific institutional contexts and therefore cannot be generalized to all madrasahs. Therefore, rather than demonstrating broad structural improvement, the study provides an empirical description of how HRM practices are currently experienced and interpreted by teachers and staff in the participating madrasahs. Therefore, the findings may serve as an initial reference for understanding HRM dynamics in madrasahs, particularly in developing regions, while highlighting the need for broader future studies.

Pedagogical implications encompassed ongoing professional development programs based on pedagogical needs, formal mentoring structures, and a performance evaluation system that prioritize teaching competencies. Practical implications involve reforming accountable recruitment processes, developing community-based recruitment policies, implementing meritocratic promotion, and strengthening teacher welfare policies. Despite its contributions to madrasahs' HRM, the limited sample size of five madrasahs means this research requires caution when generalizing. Also, online interviews are sensitive to connectivity disruptions, limit participants' honesty in disclosure due to a lack of direct interaction, and may limit the depth of qualitative data due to limited space for probing questions. Policy recommendations are based on field evidence and international best practices.

■ DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors declare that the use of artificial intelligence-assisted tools in the preparation of this manuscript, in this case ChatGPT, is intended to support language refinement, improve clarity, and enhance the overall readability of the text without generating original ideas, data, or interpretations. QuillBot is used exclusively for grammar checking and sentence-level

corrections. All the concepts, data analysis, interpretation, and final editorial decisions remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

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