

Implementation of Coaching-Based Academic Supervision in Enhancing Student Well-Being at MAS Ulumuddin, Lhokseumawe

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ABSTRACT

The coaching approach in academic supervision offers a new paradigm that is more collaborative and constructive, in which supervisors act as partners who accompany teachers in developing their professional potential. The concept of student welfare encompasses various dimensions of student welfare, including physical, psychological, social, and academic aspects. Student welfare is important because it correlates positively with academic achievement, social adaptation, and character development. This thesis is designed to conduct research on the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision in realizing student well-being and the obstacles faced by the Madrasah Principal in implementing coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin. This research is qualitative research with a descriptive analysis approach. The primary data sources in this study are the Madrasah Principal, teachers, and students. Secondary data sources include academic supervision records, supervision schedules, and supporting documents. The research results are as follows: 1) The implementation of coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin is carried out systematically through the stages of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. This approach emphasizes partnership between the school principal and teachers in a reflective and collaborative environment, thereby enhancing teachers' professional competencies. This supervision significantly contributes to improving student well-being through responsive, participatory, and student-centered learning. 2) Challenges faced by the principal in implementing coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin include limited supervision time, resistance from some teachers to a reflective culture, limited understanding of the independent curriculum among teachers, and inadequate learning resources such as projectors. Despite this, the principal demonstrated commitment through follow-up actions such as training, mentoring, providing resources, and routine monitoring.

Keywords:

Coaching-Based Academic Supervision, Student Well-being

1. Introduction

Academic supervision has evolved significantly in recent years, shifting from traditional evaluative approaches toward more reflective, empowering, and collaborative models. One of the most innovative developments in this area is coaching-based academic supervision, which frames the supervisor not as an inspector, but as a partner guiding teachers through professional growth and instructional improvement. In educational institutions, particularly in Islamic boarding schools such as *Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) Ulumuddin* in Lhokseumawe, the integration of coaching in supervision practices becomes crucial in fostering both teacher professionalism and student well-being.

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The concept of *student well-being* has also gained significant attention in global educational discourse. According to OECD (2017), student well-being includes multiple dimensions such as cognitive, psychological, social, and physical well-being. These components interact to shape a student's ability to engage meaningfully in learning, develop resilience, and maintain healthy relationships with peers and teachers. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that student well-being should be considered a core outcome of quality education, not merely a supplementary goal.

Within the Indonesian educational system, especially in religious schools (madrasah), supervision has traditionally focused on administrative compliance and instructional adequacy. However, the new curriculum directions, including the Merdeka Curriculum, encourage more autonomy, reflective teaching practices, and student-centered learning. This shift requires supervisors—especially principals—to adopt more supportive and dialogical methods. Coaching-based supervision meets this need by fostering mutual respect, goal setting, reflective dialogue, and shared accountability.

MAS Ulumuddin is a unique case, integrating both national curriculum and dayah-based Islamic instruction. Teachers in this context often face dual challenges: adapting to modern instructional standards while preserving traditional religious values. Early observations revealed that despite the school's commitment to excellence, limitations in time, professional development, and reflective culture have hindered optimal supervision practices. Moreover, student well-being has not always been explicitly addressed as a measurable educational outcome.

This study aims to explore the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision in MAS Ulumuddin and its contribution to realizing student well-being. It also seeks to identify the challenges encountered by the principal and teachers in applying this model effectively. Through this study, the authors hope to provide insights for improving supervision practices in Islamic educational institutions, thus contributing to holistic student development.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How is coaching-based academic supervision implemented in fostering student well-being at MAS Ulumuddin?
2. What challenges are encountered by the principal in carrying out coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Coaching-Based Academic Supervision

Coaching in the field of education has emerged as a transformative approach to professional development, distinguished by its emphasis on trust-building, mutual dialogue, and reflective practice. Rather than functioning as a one-way transmission of knowledge or a hierarchical process of inspection, coaching redefines the supervisory relationship into a collaborative partnership. In this model, the supervisor no longer acts as an evaluator or inspector, but as a facilitator of growth, committed to supporting teachers in identifying their strengths, confronting their challenges, and evolving their instructional practices over time.

Knight (2007) introduced the instructional coaching framework, which positions coaching as an iterative process involving goal-setting, focused observation, and reflective dialogue. Within this cycle, teachers are encouraged to identify specific instructional goals, engage in classroom experimentation, and analyze the outcomes through guided reflection. This process fosters not only professional competence, but also a sense of agency, ownership, and intrinsic motivation—factors which are often absent in traditional, compliance-driven supervision models.

Aguilar (2013) further reinforces the transformative potential of coaching, arguing that it enables deeper shifts in teaching identity, mindset, and relational capacity. Coaching, in her framework, is not limited to technical fixes or lesson execution, but extends to the emotional and cognitive dimensions of teaching. It empowers educators to reflect on their beliefs, reconnect with their purpose, and navigate the emotional demands of the profession.

At its core, coaching-based supervision incorporates several essential principles:

1. **Active Listening** – The supervisor listens with full attention, acknowledging not only the teacher's words but also their context, emotions, and underlying concerns.
2. **Powerful Questioning** – Rather than offering immediate solutions, the coach poses reflective, open-ended questions that guide teachers to discover insights and develop their own solutions.
3. **Constructive Feedback** – Feedback is offered in a respectful and actionable manner, highlighting strengths while inviting critical reflection.
4. **Mutual Trust and Psychological Safety** – Coaching thrives in an environment where teachers feel safe to admit uncertainties, explore new strategies, and engage in honest dialogue without fear of judgment.

These principles align strongly with Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, particularly the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which asserts that individuals learn best when they are supported by more knowledgeable others in a collaborative setting. In the context of coaching, the supervisor plays the role of a more capable peer who scaffolds the teacher's learning through responsive interaction.

In addition, coaching promotes professional self-efficacy, as conceptualized by Bandura (1997), by creating

repeated opportunities for success, reflection, and mastery. Teachers who engage in meaningful coaching cycles often report increased confidence in their instructional decisions, stronger resilience, and a greater willingness to innovate.

From a systemic perspective, coaching-based supervision represents a paradigm shift from compliance to capacity-building. Rather than checking whether a teacher adheres to standard lesson components, the coach aims to unlock professional potential, nurture reflective habits, and cultivate a learning-oriented school culture.

In faith-based contexts such as Islamic madrasahs, coaching also provides an avenue to integrate pedagogical excellence with ethical development. The reflective nature of coaching resonates with the Islamic concept of *muhasabah* (self-accountability), allowing educators to examine both the technical and moral dimensions of their work. Therefore, coaching not only enhances instructional quality but also supports the broader educational mission of nurturing virtuous, competent, and emotionally balanced individuals.

2.2. Student Well-Being

Student well-being is a multidimensional construct that includes emotional, psychological, academic, and social health. Diener (2000) defines well-being as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of life.” In educational settings, it manifests in students’ motivation, engagement, sense of belonging, and perceived support. A student with high well-being is more likely to exhibit positive learning behaviors, build meaningful relationships, and sustain intrinsic motivation over time.

Research by Waters & Loton (2019) reveals that well-being positively correlates with academic achievement, pro-social behavior, and resilience. Schools that invest in supportive environments, teacher-student relationships, and inclusive practices see higher levels of student success and satisfaction. In Islamic contexts, student well-being also integrates spiritual peace and alignment with moral values, highlighting the need for culturally responsive well-being strategies.

Recent literature emphasizes the **interplay between teacher behavior and student well-being**, noting that classroom climate and instructional style significantly influence how students feel, behave, and perform. Teachers who practice empathy, fairness, and responsiveness contribute to a sense of psychological safety, which in turn fosters curiosity and persistence among learners (OECD, 2017). As such, improving teacher professional capacity—especially through reflective and relational approaches like coaching—is critical in cultivating student well-being as a systemic outcome rather than an incidental byproduct.

Furthermore, in faith-based schools such as madrasahs, well-being is not limited to emotional and academic dimensions, but also includes **spiritual serenity**, moral integrity, and alignment with divine values. In these settings, the concept of *student well-being* is deeply embedded in the Islamic vision of holistic education (*tarbiyah*), which seeks the balanced development of the soul, intellect, and behavior. Thus, any supervisory or pedagogical reform—such as coaching-based supervision—must attend not only to performance outcomes, but also to the ethical and spiritual growth of learners, aligning with the broader goals of *insan kamil* (the ideal human).

2.3. The Role of Principals as Instructional Leaders

Principals are not merely administrators but key instructional leaders shaping teaching quality and school culture. Hallinger (2011) argues that effective principals promote professional learning communities, data-informed decision-making, and teacher empowerment. In coaching-based supervision, the principal supports teachers through trust-building, co-reflection, and mentoring.

In the Indonesian madrasah system, where principals often juggle multiple roles, adopting coaching requires structural and cultural adjustments. Studies (Yusrianti, 2023) show that principals trained in coaching skills can better motivate teachers, handle resistance, and create a climate of continuous improvement.

Principals who adopt a coaching posture do more than supervise instruction—they model a culture of learning, vulnerability, and relational leadership. Instead of relying on authority and compliance, they engage teachers as thought partners, helping them uncover their potential through reflection and dialogue. This approach aligns with *transformational leadership theory*, which emphasizes inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation as drivers of school improvement (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When principals coach rather than command, they foster autonomy, shared ownership, and intrinsic commitment to pedagogical excellence.

However, in many Indonesian madrasahs, principals face **unique institutional and cultural challenges** in enacting this role. The dual burden of managing academic and religious programs, responding to bureaucratic mandates, and maintaining community trust often limits their time and focus for instructional leadership. Therefore, implementing coaching-based supervision requires not only leadership capacity but also structural redesign—such as delegating routine administrative duties, building collaborative teams, and cultivating a reflective school culture. With adequate support and vision, madrasah principals can become pivotal agents of change who balance tradition and innovation to elevate teaching quality and student well-being.

2.4. Madrasah Context and Supervision Reform

Supervision reform in Indonesia is ongoing, with the Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizing reflective, formative, and dialogical approaches. Coaching aligns well with these reforms, especially in madrasahs where personalized mentoring can balance between compliance and development. Supervision reform in Indonesia is undergoing a

paradigmatic shift. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) has issued several policy directives encouraging supervision practices that are reflective, formative, and dialogical rather than merely evaluative or administrative. These reforms emphasize teacher growth, pedagogical innovation, and student-centered instruction. In this evolving landscape, coaching-based academic supervision emerges as a timely and relevant model that aligns with the Ministry's vision—particularly in faith-based educational institutions where moral and pedagogical goals must be harmonized.

Coaching-based supervision offers a flexible yet structured approach that respects teacher agency while promoting continuous professional development. In contrast to top-down inspection models, coaching invites mutual inquiry and shared reflection, fostering a culture of trust and openness. This is especially relevant in madrasahs, where hierarchical traditions often make teachers hesitant to express challenges or seek feedback. By shifting the tone of supervision from evaluative to developmental, coaching helps balance institutional accountability with individual empowerment—ultimately enhancing both teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

The case of MAS Ulumuddin illustrates this intersection vividly. As a madrasah that integrates a dual curriculum—combining classical Islamic studies (*kitab kuning*, *tahfidz*, *fiqh*) with the national curriculum (science, math, literacy)—teachers are required to navigate pedagogical complexities daily. They must maintain the authenticity of Islamic teachings while adopting 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. This duality creates both opportunities for enrichment and challenges in integration, demanding a supervision model that is adaptable, responsive, and contextually sensitive.

Coaching-based supervision provides the tools and ethos needed to bridge these pedagogical tensions. It enables supervisors to support teachers not only in lesson planning and instructional techniques, but also in contextualizing learning within religious values and contemporary student realities. For example, coaching sessions can help teachers design lessons that connect Islamic ethics with modern social issues or technology use. In doing so, coaching ensures that madrasah teachers are not merely compliant implementers of curricula, but reflective professionals who bring relevance and meaning to their instruction without compromising the spiritual mission of the school.

Previous Studies

This study explores the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision in fostering student well-being at MAS Ulumuddin. Several previous studies support the relevance and importance of this topic:

First, Juhadira et al. investigated the impact of coaching-based supervision on teacher performance and educational quality in several kindergartens in Kendari. Using interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study revealed that coaching enhanced communication and trust between principals and teachers. Teachers experienced increased motivation, confidence, and significant improvement in teaching practices.

Second, Sisean Baga et al. aimed to improve teacher performance and instructional quality through coaching techniques within academic supervision. Conducting a school action research using a descriptive quantitative approach, they reported significant score improvements across supervision cycles, highlighting the effectiveness of coaching stages such as pre-observation, observation, post-observation, and reflection dialogue.

Third, Nining Fatmawati and Ahmad Hariyadi explored the impact of coaching in academic supervision using a qualitative method across three elementary schools. The study found that coaching not only served as feedback but also strengthened communication, teacher motivation, confidence, and teaching quality.

Fourth, Agustin Endah Ekawaty et al. examined the role of educational supervision in enhancing learning effectiveness through observation, evaluation, and feedback. Their literature-based qualitative study concluded that communicative and collaborative supervision supports teacher professionalism and improves student learning outcomes.

Fifth, Abu Nawas conducted a descriptive qualitative study on coaching-based supervision at SDN 014 Kempas Jaya. The research confirmed its effectiveness in promoting differentiated instruction. However, challenges such as managerial workload, unprepared teachers, leadership transitions, limited resources, and discipline issues hindered optimal implementation.

Sixth, Putri Melati analyzed the effect of principal supervision on teacher motivation at MIN 1 Rejang Lebong. Findings showed that structured supervision—including class observations, constructive feedback, and periodic evaluations—had a positive impact on teacher engagement, attendance, student interaction, and ongoing professional development.

Seventh, Antonius Da Silva et al. studied coaching and mentoring practices in academic supervision at two junior high schools in Lembata. Despite limited resources, coaching enhanced pedagogical competence, encouraged innovation and technology use, and fostered collaborative, responsive supervisory environments.

Eighth, Muhammad Qamaruzzaman et al. discussed digital-based academic supervision through a literature review. Findings from eight journal sources indicated that digital supervision improves efficiency, data accuracy, and supports teachers' technological literacy and ability to use supervision tools effectively.

3. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach using descriptive analysis to explore the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin and its perceived impact on student well-being. The qualitative paradigm was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture the depth and richness of lived experiences, explore the

meaning-making processes of educational actors, and understand phenomena within their natural settings. This methodology is particularly appropriate when the research aims to interpret social realities, professional interactions, and cultural nuances that may not be easily quantified.

The study emphasizes thematic analysis, allowing patterns, concepts, and categories to emerge inductively from the data. Through this approach, the research uncovers how supervision practices are experienced, interpreted, and adapted within the specific context of a faith-based educational institution. The use of descriptive analysis ensures that data are presented narratively, enriched by the voices of participants, and supported by thick description. This method also allows for triangulation of data sources, increasing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at MAS Ulumuddin, a private Islamic senior high school located in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia. The school represents a hybrid educational model that integrates the national curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) with dayah traditions, including Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*), and moral development (*akhlakul karimah*). This dual framework creates a distinctive environment where academic excellence and spiritual formation are pursued simultaneously, making it an ideal setting for examining supervision practices that merge modern pedagogy with Islamic values.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a strategy appropriate for qualitative inquiry when specific individuals are most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse perspectives. The key informant was the principal, chosen due to their central role in instructional leadership and policy implementation. Additional participants included the vice principal of curriculum, six teachers actively involved in supervision cycles, and five students representing various levels of academic and personal development. Teachers were selected based on their participation in coaching-based supervision activities, while students were chosen based on their engagement and responsiveness to classroom instruction.

The inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives—leaders, teachers, and learners—enables a more holistic understanding of how supervision practices are enacted and perceived across different levels of the educational ecosystem.

Data Collection Techniques

This study employed three primary qualitative data collection techniques: interviews, observation, and document analysis.

1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth insights into the perceptions, experiences, and practices of school leaders and teachers. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to probe emerging themes while maintaining consistency across participants. The interviews specifically explored how coaching principles are embedded in academic supervision and how these practices influence student well-being.

2. Observation

Non-participant observation was carried out during supervision activities, classroom teaching, and post-supervision reflection sessions. The researcher maintained an unobtrusive presence to capture authentic interactions while minimizing influence on the setting. Observational notes focused on teacher-coach interactions, feedback delivery, and evidence of reflective practice.

3. Document Analysis

Relevant documents—including supervision reports, lesson plans, teacher evaluation forms, and reflective journals—were analyzed to complement and validate the data obtained from interviews and observations. These documents offered concrete evidence of planning, implementation, and follow-up processes within coaching-based supervision.

Together, these techniques ensured data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using the **interactive model of qualitative analysis** proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involves three key components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data Reduction

This step involved selecting, organizing, and coding the raw data from interview transcripts, field notes, and document reviews. The goal was to identify emerging themes, patterns, and categories related to the implementation of coaching-based supervision and its influence on student well-being.

2. Data Display

The reduced data were then presented in thematic matrices, narrative descriptions, and comparative charts. These visual and textual displays allowed for pattern recognition, within-case and cross-case analysis, and deeper interpretation of the phenomena under study.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusions were drawn iteratively throughout the research process by continuously revisiting the data and refining interpretations. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study applied triangulation across data sources and conducted member checking, allowing participants to verify and clarify the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations.

This rigorous analytic process ensured that the findings were grounded in authentic participant perspectives and context-specific realities.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The identities of participants were anonymized to protect confidentiality. Research approval was granted by the head of MAS Ulumuddin, and the study adhered to ethical research practices throughout the process.

The use of a multi-method strategy enriched the reliability and depth of findings, aligning with best practices in qualitative educational research. This methodology section sets the foundation for presenting findings and discussing their significance in the next section.

4. Results

This section presents the major findings of the study and discusses them in relation to relevant theories, previous research, and the unique educational setting of MAS Ulumuddin. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. An inductive thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and core issues emerging from participants' narratives and institutional documents. Each key finding is presented analytically, supported by empirical data and interpreted through theoretical lenses.

In alignment with the study's objectives, the findings are categorized into five analytical dimensions:

- (1) the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision,
- (2) its role in enhancing student well-being,
- (3) challenges encountered during implementation,
- (4) strategic efforts to overcome those challenges, and
- (5) alignment with prior theoretical frameworks.

These findings not only reveal the innovative supervisory practices at MAS Ulumuddin but also offer insight into how Islamic educational institutions can integrate modern instructional leadership models while upholding their spiritual and cultural ethos.

4.1 Implementation of Coaching-Based Academic Supervision

The implementation of coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin follows a structured yet adaptive process, underpinned by principles of trust, dialogue, and professional reflection. The principal functions not only as a supervisor but also as a coach and instructional leader who facilitates the growth of teachers through relational mentoring, rather than hierarchical evaluation.

1. Planning of Supervision Activities

Supervision at MAS Ulumuddin begins with a well-structured planning phase. The principal, in collaboration with the vice principal for curriculum and academic staff, formulates a comprehensive supervision plan integrated with the academic calendar. This planning stage includes defining goals, identifying focus areas, assigning mentors, and selecting supervision tools. Importantly, it incorporates coaching principles—mutual trust, partnership, and collaborative goal setting.

"We start by identifying the needs of each teacher, not just administratively, but also in terms of pedagogical challenges. From there, we determine what kind of coaching interaction would benefit them."

— *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

This foundational phase repositions supervision from a bureaucratic obligation to a meaningful professional dialogue that nurtures growth and self-awareness.

2. Execution Strategies of Coaching Supervision

The implementation phase focuses on cultivating relational trust and encouraging reflective thinking. Coaching sessions are built around post-observation discussions that invite teachers to analyze their own teaching rather than passively receive feedback. Questions such as:

- "What went well in your class today?"
- "What would you improve in terms of student interaction?"

These help teachers reflect critically on their practice and take ownership of their professional learning.

"I feel more comfortable because I'm not being judged, but guided. It helps me see my class differently."

— *Teacher, MAS Ulumuddin*

This approach resonates with Knight's (2007) model of instructional coaching, which emphasizes trust, autonomy, goal setting, and formative feedback.

3. Utilization of Technology and Digital Tools

To enhance supervision practices, MAS Ulumuddin employs digital tools such as the **Kurikulum Merdeka Supervision App**, allowing for real-time documentation of classroom observations, performance notes, and coaching feedback. These tools support transparency and help track professional development over time.

Digital archives—lesson plans, growth reflections, supervision forms—also allow the principal to tailor future mentoring strategies based on past data. The integration of digital tools reflects the **technological adaptiveness** required by modern educational leadership, while maintaining the integrity of interpersonal communication.

4. The Role of the Principal as Coach-Leader

The principal adopts a coaching mindset by positioning themselves as a **collaborative facilitator**, rather than a traditional evaluator. Their role includes active listening, non-judgmental questioning, collaborative reflection, and solution-focused dialogue.

“When teachers feel safe, they open up. That’s when real development starts.”

— *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

This aligns with Aguilar’s (2013) model of transformational coaching, in which psychological safety and relational equity are the foundations for deep learning and sustainable change.

Moreover, such leadership demonstrates elements of *servant leadership*, where the leader prioritizes empowerment over authority—especially vital in faith-based contexts.

5. Cultural Context of Madrasah Supervision

Given the madrasah’s dual curriculum—national standards and Islamic religious instruction—the coaching process at MAS Ulumuddin is deeply contextualized. Supervision includes both pedagogical guidance and moral-spiritual reinforcement, reflecting the institution’s holistic educational philosophy.

From document analysis, it was found that supervision records often integrate Qur’anic reflections or character-building reminders alongside technical teaching feedback. For example:

“You guided students well today. Don’t forget to nurture their akhlak as much as their knowledge.”

— *Supervisor’s note in a teacher reflection journal*

This hybrid model situates coaching within an Islamic ethical framework, blending instructional improvement with spiritual mentorship—a model rarely documented in secular literature but crucial for understanding Islamic school ecosystems.

The findings in this section reflect a unique convergence between Western coaching theories and Islamic educational values. While much of the global literature emphasizes professional agency, trust, and collaboration, the MAS Ulumuddin model adds a spiritual dimension to the coaching process—where ethical character, sincerity, and service to learners become part of the supervisory dialogue. This convergence illustrates the adaptability of coaching frameworks within diverse cultural and religious landscapes.

These findings are consistent with prior studies (e.g., Juhadira et al., Fatmawati & Hariyadi) that highlight the transformative potential of coaching in improving teacher motivation, confidence, and instructional quality. However, the integration of coaching within a faith-based supervision model—as seen at MAS Ulumuddin—extends the existing literature by showcasing how spiritual and academic goals can co-exist in supervision practices. The use of culturally-responsive coaching, embedded in Islamic values, represents an innovative contribution to both educational leadership theory and practice.

4.2 The Role of Supervision in Realizing Student Well-Being

The implementation of coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin has shown significant influence not only on teacher professional development but also on the overall well-being of students. While the direct focus of supervision lies in improving instructional quality, its indirect impact radiates into the classroom climate, shaping students’ emotional, social, academic, and spiritual experiences. This section highlights how coaching-based supervision contributes to the multidimensional concept of student well-being.

1. Improved Classroom Climate and Student Engagement

Teachers who participated in regular coaching sessions reported increased confidence, creativity, and responsiveness in their pedagogical approach. This professional growth translated into classrooms that were more interactive, inclusive, and student-centered. Observational data revealed an evident shift toward the use of collaborative learning strategies, contextualized materials, and real-life applications that increased student participation and motivation.

“Now class feels more alive. Our teacher listens more, and we’re allowed to express our opinions.”

— *Student, MAS Ulumuddin*

These observations align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that student well-being thrives when three core needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are met. Through reflective coaching, teachers were empowered to create classroom environments where students felt more valued, heard, and intrinsically motivated to learn.

2. Emotional Safety and Strengthened Teacher-Student Relationships

Coaching encourages teachers not only to evaluate pedagogical strategies but also to cultivate emotionally responsive classrooms. Many teachers began to adopt pre-lesson emotional “check-ins” and informal conversations to better understand their students’ psychological states. This shift from task-centered instruction to relationship-centered teaching enhanced the emotional tone of the learning environment.

“Before, I was focused on finishing the lesson plan. Now I’m more aware of how my students feel. I ask them how their day is going.”- *Teacher, MAS Ulumuddin*

This humanization of teacher-student interaction reflects Waters & Loton’s (2019) research, which emphasized that emotionally safe environments foster trust, reduce anxiety, and enhance student engagement. By making space for

empathy and emotional expression, coaching-based supervision nurtures the interpersonal foundations of student well-being.

3. Academic Confidence and the Cultivation of Growth Mindset

Another outcome observed was the rise in students' academic confidence and willingness to take intellectual risks. Teachers who had undergone coaching began to embrace formative assessment and strength-based feedback, shifting from a deficit mindset to a developmental one. Students, in turn, expressed lower levels of fear and greater openness to making mistakes.

"When I make mistakes, I'm not afraid anymore. My teacher helps me fix them instead of scolding me." — *Student, MAS Ulumuddin*

This perspective resonates with Carol Dweck's (2006) Growth Mindset theory, which argues that belief in the ability to grow and improve fosters resilience, perseverance, and long-term academic achievement. Coaching-based supervision thus becomes a vehicle for shaping not only effective teachers, but also resilient learners.

4. Integration of Spiritual Well-Being in Learning

Unique to the MAS Ulumuddin context is the integration of spiritual well-being into the broader student development framework. Supervision practices intentionally include value-based reflections, moral teachings, and connections between academic subjects and Islamic principles. Teachers were encouraged—through coaching dialogues—to reflect on how their lessons contribute not only to cognitive growth but also to students' iman (faith) and akhlaq (character).

"Student well-being here isn't just about emotions or academics—it's also about their spiritual peace." — *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

This holistic model aligns with the Islamic educational philosophy that seeks to nurture balanced human beings—intellectually competent, emotionally intelligent, and spiritually grounded. Coaching, therefore, serves as an ethical leadership practice that aligns teacher development with the moral-spiritual mission of madrasah education.

The findings in this section affirm that teacher development and student well-being are intricately connected. As teachers become more self-aware, compassionate, and intentional in their practice—through coaching—they create the conditions for students to thrive. In the context of MAS Ulumuddin, this transformation is not limited to academic outcomes but extends to the emotional and spiritual flourishing of students, providing a powerful case for the role of coaching in holistic Islamic education.

4.3 Challenges in the Implementation of Coaching-Based Supervision

While coaching-based academic supervision holds significant promise, its practical implementation at MAS Ulumuddin was not without obstacles. These challenges emerged from both systemic constraints and individual behavioral patterns, underscoring the complex interplay between institutional culture, leadership dynamics, teacher readiness, and structural realities within a faith-based educational context.

1. Time Constraints and Limited Human Resources

One of the most frequently cited obstacles was the scarcity of time allocated for coaching conversations. MAS Ulumuddin operates under a dual curriculum system—combining the national curriculum with Islamic boarding school (dayah) practices—which results in an extremely packed schedule. Teachers are required to juggle academic instruction, spiritual responsibilities, and boarding school supervision, leaving little room for extended reflection or one-on-one mentoring.

"We would love to have more time to sit and discuss teaching practices. But between teaching, managing student life, and extracurriculars, time is extremely limited." — *Teacher, MAS Ulumuddin*

Compounding this issue is the limited availability of supervisory staff. The burden of coaching, observing, mentoring, and managing often falls solely on the principal, who also handles a range of other managerial and pastoral duties.

"I serve as principal, supervisor, coach, sometimes even counselor. It's overwhelming." — *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

These findings reflect the need for distributed leadership models (Spillane, 2006), where supervisory responsibilities are shared across a leadership team to avoid role saturation and maintain program quality.

2. Low Literacy on Coaching Principles Among Teachers

A significant barrier to effective implementation was the limited understanding of coaching philosophy among teachers. For many educators, particularly those trained in traditional models of supervision, coaching was perceived as a veiled form of evaluation rather than a dialogical and growth-oriented process. This led to initial confusion, skepticism, and passive engagement.

"At first, I thought coaching was just a nicer way to criticize us. It took time for me to understand its true purpose." — *Senior Teacher, MAS Ulumuddin*

Such misconceptions can undermine the reflective goals of coaching sessions and result in superficial participation. The lack of coaching literacy illustrates the importance of capacity-building programs, including workshops, modeling, and reflective dialogue training, to help teachers internalize coaching as a tool for empowerment rather than scrutiny.

This challenge also echoes Knight's (2007) assertion that without shared understanding of coaching principles, the practice risks becoming performative rather than transformative.

3. Resistance to Change and Comfort Zone Attitudes

Changing entrenched mindsets remains one of the most formidable barriers to educational reform. Coaching, by nature, requires vulnerability, openness to feedback, and a willingness to reflect—traits that may conflict with long-standing professional habits rooted in autonomy and hierarchy. Some teachers, especially senior staff, exhibited subtle forms of resistance, often manifesting as disengagement, silence during reflection, or reluctance to act on feedback.

“Some colleagues feel that asking for input means they are weak. They’re used to handling things alone.”
— *Deputy Head of Curriculum*

This behavioral resistance can be understood through Lewin’s Change Theory (1951), which suggests that unfreezing old mindsets is a critical step before any transformation can occur. Without institutional support and relational trust, such resistance can become normalized, thereby diluting the effectiveness of coaching initiatives.

4. Structural and Cultural Constraints of the Madrasah Context

Unlike general public schools, madrasahs operate under unique structural and cultural conditions. At MAS Ulumuddin, several contextual limitations emerged:

- Administrative obligations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), including strict reporting protocols and compliance standards
- A dual emphasis on spiritual formation and academic delivery, which often leads to prioritizing religious instruction over pedagogical innovation
- Community expectations that equate teacher effectiveness with religious depth rather than instructional creativity

“People outside think madrasahs only need religious strength. But we also need to modernize our teaching. That’s not always understood.” - *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

These systemic constraints often created tension between innovation and tradition. Coaching, while intended to enhance instructional quality, sometimes struggled to gain traction in an environment where innovation was not always seen as urgent or relevant. This highlights the importance of culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa, 2018) that respects tradition while incrementally introducing change aligned with the institution’s core values.

Taken together, these challenges illuminate the fragile yet critical space in which coaching-based supervision must operate. While coaching offers a progressive alternative to authoritarian models of supervision, its success hinges on time availability, organizational support, shared understanding, and a culture that welcomes reflective vulnerability. For madrasahs like MAS Ulumuddin, navigating these tensions requires both visionary leadership and a deliberate process of cultural negotiation.

4.4 Strategic Efforts to Overcome Barriers in Implementing Coaching-Based Supervision

In response to the multifaceted challenges identified during the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision, MAS Ulumuddin undertook a series of strategic interventions aimed at cultivating a sustainable, reflective, and collaborative professional culture. These strategies reflect the institution’s commitment to instructional leadership, cultural adaptability, and continuous improvement within the context of a faith-based educational system. Drawing from both internal resources and broader pedagogical frameworks, the school employed five key strategies to address its challenges effectively.

1. Capacity Building through Internal Workshops and Peer Coaching

Given the initial low awareness of coaching principles, the leadership team at MAS Ulumuddin initiated internal capacity-building workshops. These sessions focused on foundational coaching competencies, including active listening, powerful questioning, empathy, and non-evaluative dialogue. Using participatory methods such as role-playing, simulations, and real-case analysis, teachers were gradually introduced to the core philosophy of coaching supervision.

“We started small, with in-house discussions about what coaching is and how it feels different from evaluation. The goal was to break the fear first.” - *Deputy Head of Curriculum*

Over time, this effort evolved into an informal peer coaching system, where more confident or experienced teachers voluntarily mentored others. This not only helped reduce hierarchical barriers but also aligned with the principles of distributed instructional leadership (Harris, 2004), in which capacity is developed across the teaching staff, not just centralized in the figure of the principal.

2. Integration of Coaching Language into Everyday Communication

To promote mindset transformation, school leaders began intentionally embedding the language of coaching into daily school communication. Rather than directive commands, leaders used reflective prompts such as:

“What do you think worked well?”,

“What’s your next step?”, and

“How can I support you moving forward?”

“Now we talk more like partners. It’s no longer ‘you must’ but ‘let’s try.’ It makes me want to grow.”

— *Junior Teacher*

This linguistic shift played a critical role in normalizing reflective dialogue, breaking down power distance, and cultivating psychological safety among staff. According to Sinek (2014), the language of leadership determines the culture of trust, and in this case, coaching language became a strategic tool to build empowerment and co-agency.

3. Digitalization of Supervision Practices

To mitigate time constraints and administrative overload, MAS Ulumuddin adopted a digital supervision platform—the Kurikulum Merdeka Supervision App. This application facilitated various supervisory tasks such as:

1. Scheduling and managing coaching sessions
2. Recording observations and field notes
3. Providing asynchronous feedback
4. Tracking teacher progress over time

“The app helps me keep track of what we discussed and what I promised to follow up. It makes supervision more consistent.”— *Teacher, MAS Ulumuddin*

This approach aligns with technology-enhanced supervision models (Anderson & Dexter, 2005), which advocate for the integration of ICT tools in school leadership to improve efficiency, accessibility, and data-informed decision-making. Additionally, asynchronous feedback loops offered teachers the flexibility to engage in reflection without immediate pressure, encouraging ownership and deeper introspection.

4. Authentic Role Modeling by the Principal

Perhaps the most transformative effort came from the principal’s deliberate modeling of coaching values. Rather than assuming a top-down authoritative stance, the principal openly embraced vulnerability, invited feedback from staff, and regularly engaged in reflective practices in front of the team.

“I can’t ask teachers to reflect if I don’t do it myself. That’s why I make sure I also reflect, and let them see that.”— *Principal, MAS Ulumuddin*

This practice resonates with the principles of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994), where leaders inspire and influence change through authenticity, trust, and shared values. The principal’s example significantly lowered resistance, particularly among teachers hesitant to engage in reflective supervision.

5. Aligning Coaching with the Islamic Ethos of Reflection (Muhasabah)

In order to root coaching practices within the school’s spiritual identity, the leadership reframed coaching as a contemporary application of muhasabah—a Qur’anic principle of self-reflection and self-improvement. By integrating Islamic vocabulary and values into supervision discourse, the leadership reduced cultural dissonance and increased acceptance, particularly among staff with strong traditional orientations.

“We explained that coaching is like muhasabah for educators. It’s not about blame, it’s about improvement in the eyes of Allah.”— *Curriculum Coordinator*

This contextual adaptation is a hallmark of culturally responsive leadership (Gay, 2010), where modern practices are not imposed but harmonized with existing religious and cultural norms. It provided a theological legitimacy to coaching and opened space for both spiritual and pedagogical development to co-exist harmoniously.

Together, these strategic interventions transformed coaching from a theoretical ideal into a practical and culturally grounded model of academic supervision. The blend of leadership modeling, professional learning, technological support, and spiritual alignment illustrates a holistic approach that not only addresses barriers, but actively reimagines supervision as a relational, ethical, and transformative process.

4.5 Alignment with Previous Research and Theoretical Frameworks

The findings of this study resonate with a growing body of educational leadership literature, particularly regarding the transformative role of coaching-based academic supervision in enhancing teacher professionalism and student well-being. Through critical comparison with leading theories and previous research, this section highlights the theoretical grounding and original contribution of the MAS Ulumuddin case. The results also reveal the possibility of contextualizing global coaching frameworks within Islamic schooling systems without compromising spiritual authenticity.

1. Convergence with Knight’s Instructional Coaching Cycle

The implementation of supervision at MAS Ulumuddin closely aligns with Jim Knight’s (2007) instructional coaching model, which emphasizes collaborative goal setting, trust-building, dialogic feedback, and teacher agency. In both theory and practice, MAS Ulumuddin’s approach mirrors Knight’s coaching cycle, adapted into a culturally responsive framework rooted in Islamic values and the madrasah’s dual curriculum.

Key components of this alignment include:

- a) The prioritization of non-evaluative dialogue over directive supervision,
- b) A focus on teacher empowerment through self-reflection,
- c) The development of professional trust between principals and staff.

While Knight’s model was originally designed for secular educational contexts, the MAS Ulumuddin case illustrates its adaptability and relevance in Islamic schooling environments—proving that instructional coaching can transcend cultural boundaries when reframed through context-sensitive values.

2. Support for Aguilar's Transformational Coaching Theory

Elena Aguilar (2013) posits that coaching should not be reduced to technical skill enhancement, but instead, should inspire transformational learning—emphasizing identity work, moral clarity, and deep reflection. The evidence from this study supports Aguilar's thesis, as coaching at MAS Ulumuddin moved beyond classroom techniques to touch the inner beliefs and motivations of teachers.

Teachers expressed a renewed sense of meaning in their roles, viewing teaching not merely as content delivery, but as ibadah (worship) and character formation. In this regard, coaching became a space for spiritual self-purification (tazkiyatun nafs), aligning deeply with Islamic ethics. This integration of spiritual reflection and pedagogical growth constitutes a unique contribution to transformational coaching literature.

3. Embodiment of Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Framework

The leadership role of the principal at MAS Ulumuddin is consistent with Hallinger's (2011) instructional leadership model, which highlights the principal's responsibility in shaping school vision, supervising instruction, and fostering a positive learning climate. Despite structural limitations such as limited time and human resources, the principal demonstrated instructional leadership in the following ways:

- a) Modeling coaching behaviors and reflective practice,
- b) Facilitating collaborative professional learning opportunities,
- c) Embedding spiritual narratives into academic conversations,
- d) Using digital tools to extend the reach and consistency of supervision.

These efforts reflect proactive, transformational leadership that both adapts to context and anticipates future professional learning needs. It confirms the importance of visionary school leaders in sustaining coaching initiatives and promoting institutional change.

4. Reinforcement of Research on Student Well-Being

The results also affirm broader research linking teacher development to student well-being (OECD, 2017; Dweck, 2006; Waters & Loton, 2019). As supervision improved teacher self-efficacy, empathy, and instructional methods, positive effects became evident in student engagement, motivation, and emotional security.

The evidence from MAS Ulumuddin supports the argument that:

- a) Supportive supervision leads to psychologically safer classrooms,
- b) Teachers become more attentive to students' emotions and social needs,
- c) Feedback becomes formative, reducing fear of failure among students.

Moreover, MAS Ulumuddin expands the scope of student well-being research by introducing a faith-informed model that combines emotional, academic, and spiritual health. This culturally grounded lens addresses a notable gap in global discourse, where Islamic perspectives on well-being are often underrepresented.

5. Original Contribution to Madrasah-Based Supervision Reform

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study lies in its demonstration that coaching-based supervision is:

- a) Practically viable in resource-constrained Islamic institutions,
- b) Culturally compatible when framed through Islamic values such as muhasabah and tazkiyah,
- c) A bridge between traditional religious instruction and progressive 21st-century pedagogies.

The case of MAS Ulumuddin illustrates that madrasahs need not choose between preserving spiritual identity and embracing educational innovation. Through strategic leadership and reflective professional culture, they can harmonize both—achieving a holistic model of supervision that nurtures the soul, mind, and character of both teachers and learners.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the findings and data analysis regarding the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision in fostering student well-being at MAS Ulumuddin in Lhokseumawe, several key conclusions can be drawn:

1. The implementation of coaching-based academic supervision at MAS Ulumuddin was carried out systematically through the stages of planning, execution, evaluation, and follow-up. This approach emphasizes partnership between the principal and teachers in a reflective and collaborative environment, thereby enhancing teachers' professional competence. Coaching-based supervision has made a significant contribution to improving student well-being through responsive, participatory, and student-centered learning.
2. Challenges faced by the principal in implementing coaching-based academic supervision include limited supervisory time, teacher resistance toward reflective culture, lack of understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum, and insufficient learning facilities such as multimedia projectors. Nevertheless, the principal demonstrated strong commitment through various follow-up efforts, including training sessions, mentoring, provision of facilities, and routine monitoring.

5.2. Recommendations

1. For School Principals

It is recommended that principals allocate more flexible and scheduled time for the implementation of coaching-based academic supervision to ensure the effectiveness of teacher mentoring. Furthermore, there should be

sustained efforts to strengthen a reflective and coaching culture through ongoing training and professional development programs.

2. For Teachers

Teachers are encouraged to adopt an open attitude toward the coaching approach in academic supervision, engage actively in self-reflection, and develop adaptive, student-centered instructional strategies that support the achievement of student well-being.

3. For the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Foundation Management.

It is advised to provide support in the form of training on the Merdeka Curriculum and adequate learning facilities. Such support is essential to ensure the smooth implementation of academic supervision and the continuous improvement of instructional quality in madrasahs.

4. For Future Researchers

Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of coaching-based academic supervision on student learning outcomes using quantitative methods. Additionally, further investigation into relevant coaching models across different educational levels would contribute to the enrichment of educational supervision practices.

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