

Strategic Management Practices in Enhancing Administrative Staff Performance

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Received: 17-05-2026

Revised: 25-06-2026

Accepted: 25-07-2026

Info Artikel

Keywords:

Strategic Management,
Administrative
Leadership,
Staff Performance,
Digital Administration,
Madrasah Management

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of strategic management by the administrative head in improving the performance of administrative staff at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. A qualitative case study approach was employed to explore managerial practices, organizational coordination, and administrative performance improvement within the madrasah environment. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving the administrative head, administrative staff, and institutional documents. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that strategic management contributes positively to improving administrative staff performance through clear job descriptions, routine supervision and evaluation, digital administrative systems, and continuous professional development programs. These strategies enhance work efficiency, strengthen administrative accountability, and improve the quality of administrative services. However, the implementation process continues to face challenges, particularly limited technological competence among some staff members and inadequate administrative facilities. This study contributes to the educational management literature by highlighting the strategic role of administrative leadership in strengthening staff performance and organizational effectiveness within Islamic educational institutions. Nevertheless, the findings are limited to a single madrasah and therefore may not be fully generalizable to other educational contexts. Future studies are recommended to involve multiple institutions, adopt comparative or mixed-method approaches, and examine additional organizational factors influencing administrative performance in order to provide broader empirical evidence and strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

Kata Kunci:

Manajemen Strategik,
Kepemimpinan
Administrasi,
Kinerja Tenaga
Administrasi,
Administrasi Digital,
Manajemen Madrasah

Abstrak.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi manajemen strategik oleh kepala tata usaha dalam meningkatkan kinerja tenaga administrasi di MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus untuk mengeksplorasi praktik manajerial, koordinasi organisasi, serta upaya peningkatan kinerja administrasi di lingkungan madrasah. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala tata usaha, tenaga administrasi, serta dokumen kelembagaan. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model analisis interaktif yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi manajemen strategik memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap peningkatan kinerja tenaga administrasi melalui pembagian tugas yang jelas, supervisi dan evaluasi secara berkala, penerapan sistem administrasi digital, serta program pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan. Strategi tersebut mampu meningkatkan efisiensi kerja, memperkuat akuntabilitas administrasi, serta meningkatkan kualitas layanan administrasi di madrasah. Meskipun demikian, implementasinya masih menghadapi beberapa kendala, terutama keterbatasan kompetensi teknologi pada sebagian tenaga administrasi serta belum

optimalnya sarana pendukung administrasi. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian manajemen pendidikan, khususnya mengenai peran strategis kepala tata usaha dalam meningkatkan kinerja tenaga administrasi serta efektivitas organisasi di lembaga pendidikan Islam. Namun, penelitian ini terbatas pada satu lokasi penelitian sehingga hasilnya belum dapat digeneralisasikan secara luas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk melibatkan lebih banyak madrasah atau lembaga pendidikan dengan menggunakan pendekatan komparatif maupun mixed methods, sehingga dapat memberikan bukti empiris yang lebih komprehensif mengenai faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kinerja tenaga administrasi serta efektivitas implementasi manajemen strategik.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of educational systems in the digital era has increased the demand for effective institutional governance and professional administrative services. Educational institutions are no longer assessed solely based on academic achievement but also on the quality of organizational management, administrative effectiveness, public accountability, and responsiveness to stakeholders' needs (Bank, 2018; OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). Effective administrative systems are increasingly recognised as strategic assets that support institutional sustainability, digital transformation, and service quality in educational organizations require effective strategic leadership to improve organizational performance (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hallinger, 2020). Ineffective administrative management may result in delayed public services, poor data governance, weak institutional accountability, and declining stakeholder trust (Anisyah et al., 2025; Hashim et al., 2022).

Within Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasahs, the role of the administrative head has become increasingly important due to the growing complexity of educational governance and institutional accountability. Administrative heads are expected not only to supervise routine administrative activities but also to demonstrate managerial competence in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating administrative services effectively (Fullan, 2020; Leithwood, 2020). Strategic administrative leadership contributes to organizational efficiency, work discipline, effective communication, and continuous human resource development, all of which influence institutional performance (Bush, 2020; Hamid & Purnomo, 2025). Therefore, administrative leadership should be viewed as a strategic managerial function rather than merely an operational support service.

Strategic management has become one of the most influential approaches for improving organizational performance within educational institutions. It enables institutional leaders to formulate strategic objectives, analyse internal strengths and weaknesses, evaluate external opportunities and threats, and implement appropriate managerial decisions based on organizational needs (Fred R et al., 2023; Hunger & Wheelen, 2019). In educational settings, strategic management contributes to improving institutional competitiveness, service quality, organizational effectiveness, and employee performance through systematic planning, implementation, and continuous evaluation (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025; OECD, 2023). Consequently, strategic management is increasingly recognised as a fundamental component of sustainable educational governance.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between strategic management and institutional performance in educational organizations (Yugo, 2025) found that management-based educational strategies contribute significantly to improving institutional quality and organizational effectiveness in Islamic education. Likewise (Schein & Schein, 2021; Tantowi et al., 2025) reported that integrating strategic management with digital

administrative systems enhances institutional governance and operational efficiency. (Umami & Yasin, 2024) further argued that strategic human resource management strengthens employee professionalism and organizational commitment. These findings are consistent with international studies suggesting that effective educational leadership improves institutional capacity, organizational learning, and staff performance through strategic planning and collaborative management practices (Fullan, 2020; Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood, 2020).

Despite the growing body of literature on educational leadership and strategic management, studies specifically examining the strategic management practices of administrative heads in improving administrative staff performance remain relatively limited, particularly within Islamic senior secondary schools. Most previous studies have focused on principals' leadership, teacher performance, curriculum management, or institutional quality assurance, while the managerial contribution of administrative heads has received comparatively little scholarly attention (Anisyah et al., 2025; Nasution, 2022). This limitation is important because administrative personnel play a crucial role in supporting institutional effectiveness through data management, public services, and organizational administration (Bush, 2020; Leithwood, 2020). Therefore, further empirical investigation is required to understand how strategic management practices implemented by administrative heads contribute to improving staff performance in the context of madrasah education.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyse the strategic management practices implemented by the administrative head in improving the performance of administrative staff at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The study focuses on the processes of strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and human resource development in administrative management. Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature on strategic educational management by extending discussions on the managerial role of administrative heads, an area that remains underexplored in educational administration research. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for school leaders, policymakers, and educational institutions to strengthen administrative governance and improve institutional service quality through strategic management practices.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how strategic management implemented by the Head of Administration contributed to improving the performance of administrative staff at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi, Jambi Province, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of managerial practices, organizational processes, and administrative interactions within their natural setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles, experience, and direct involvement in administrative management. Participants included the Head of Administration, administrative staff, the madrasah principal, and supporting personnel with relevant knowledge of administrative governance and staff performance.

Participant observations focused on daily administrative activities, staff coordination, digital administrative services, employee supervision, and interactions among administrative personnel to obtain a comprehensive understanding of strategic management practices within the madrasah. Documentary evidence, including annual work plans, administrative reports, attendance

records, organizational documents, performance evaluation records, and official correspondence, was analysed to verify and complement the interview and observation data. The integration of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation and enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data were analysed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2020). consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with continuous verification throughout the research process. SWOT analysis was employed to identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats influencing administrative staff performance. To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers applied source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Table 1. Research Informants

Code	Participant	Position	Data Source
INF-01	Abdul Hakam	Head of Administration	Interview
INF-02	Principal	School Leader	Interview
INF-03	Administrative Staff	Staff	Interview
INF-04	Administrative Staff	Staff	Interview
INF-05	Administrative Staff	Staff	Interview
OBS	Administrative Activities	Observation	Observation
DOC	Institutional Documents	Documentation	Document Analysis

Source: Research data processed, 2025.

Prior to data collection, all participants provided informed consent voluntarily. Their identities were anonymised using participant codes (INF-01, INF-02, etc.) to maintain confidentiality throughout the study.

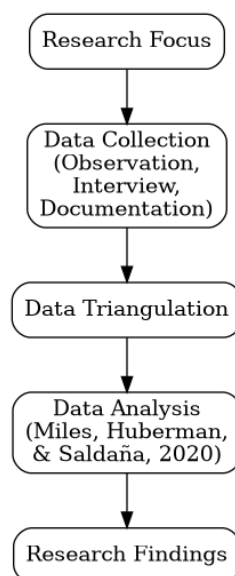


Figure 1. Research Procedure

Source: Developed by the authors based on (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018),

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Strategic Management Practices in Improving Staff Performance

The results of field observations indicate that the Head of Administration implemented strategic management through systematic planning, task delegation, continuous supervision, and periodic performance evaluation. Each administrative staff member was assigned a clear job description according to their responsibilities, enabling a more organized workflow and minimizing overlapping tasks. Routine monitoring was conducted through direct supervision and the evaluation of Employee Performance Targets (SKP).

Furthermore, the researcher observed the gradual implementation of digital administrative systems in student administration, archive management, and state asset documentation, which contributed to improving the efficiency and accuracy of administrative services. Nevertheless, several obstacles were identified, particularly the limited technological competence of some senior staff members and the availability of supporting facilities for digital administration. The observation findings were supported by an interview with the Head of Administration (INF-01), who explained:

To improve the performance of administrative staff, we first established a code of integrity and defined the division of duties according to each employee's job description. We also conduct monthly evaluations through performance appraisal assessments and direct supervision of employees' work. Currently, the administrative system relies heavily on digital systems, particularly for managing archives and government property.

However, the challenge remains that some employees do not yet fully understand the technology, so regular training and guidance are needed. (INF-01-04)

The interview findings were corroborated by institutional documents, including employee assignment letters, job descriptions, monthly SKP evaluation reports, and administrative records demonstrating the implementation of digital administration in archive management and state asset documentation. Documentation also showed that the madrasah regularly organized training and capacity-building programs supported by BOS funds, DIPA, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to enhance staff competencies in digital administration.

Based on these findings, the researcher perceives that the Head of Administration's strategic management functions not merely as a normative managerial tool, but as an adaptive structural intervention in modernizing administrative services. The researcher observes a systematic effort to shift the conventional work culture toward digital governance, where bureaucratic clarity through task division is consistently coupled with continuous evaluation. Although technological resistance emerges as a logical consequence of the generational gap (senior staff), the researcher views the institution's response, utilizing BOS and DIPA funds for training, as a proactive strategic commitment, ensuring that this digital transformation does not stall at system procurement but extends to inclusive human resource capacity building.

Table 2. Strategic Management on Administrative Staff Performance

Strategic Aspect		Implementation Findings	Impact on Staff Performance
Job System	Description	Clear division of administrative duties and responsibilities	Improved work efficiency and accountability
Performance Evaluation		Routine monitoring and SKP assessment	Increased discipline and task completion
Digital Administration		Use of digital archives and administrative systems	Faster document processing and improved data management

Training Programs	Participation in workshops and digital training	Enhanced technological competence
Leadership Supervision	Continuous guidance and organizational communication	Better coordination and work commitment

Source: Data Collection, 2026

The Impact of Strategic Management on Administrative Staff Performance

Field observations revealed noticeable improvements in administrative work performance following the implementation of strategic management practices. Administrative activities were conducted more systematically, document processing became more organized, and service delivery appeared more responsive. Researchers also observed stronger coordination among administrative staff, greater adherence to institutional procedures, and more consistent utilization of digital administrative systems during daily operations.

During field observations in the administrative office, the researcher noted a more dynamic and structured workflow following the implementation of strategic management practices. Administrative staff were observed proactively handling incoming documents without repeated instructions, visibly reducing waiting times for students and external visitors. Furthermore, the researcher observed that the utilization of the digital administrative system had minimized physical paperwork on desks, creating a more organized office environment and significantly expediting document retrieval during urgent situations.

Since we implemented regular evaluations, clearer work distribution, and digital administration, our staff's performance has improved significantly. Employees have become more disciplined, more responsible, and more aware of the importance of providing quality administrative services. (INF-01)

Comprehensive documentation analysis robustly corroborates these empirical findings, drawing from a diverse array of institutional records such as Employee Performance Target (SKP) reports, monthly evaluation ledgers, biometric attendance logs, digital archive repositories, and annual institutional performance reviews. A meticulous examination of these administrative artifacts indicates quantifiable improvements in task completion rates, heightened administrative accuracy, reduced employee absenteeism, and seamless execution of digital administrative services following the adoption of strategic management practices.

Within the framework of qualitative methodology, these documentary evidences serve as objective, non-reactive data indicators that effectively substantiate the subjective accounts gathered during the interview phases. By analyzing these official records, the researcher can map the trajectory of behavioral shift from a traditionally passive administrative routine into a highly accountable, metrics-driven output. This administrative evolution is clearly reflected in the progressive increase of monthly SKP scores and the reduction of bureaucratic errors in archive management.

Our work has become more organized because everyone understands their responsibilities. Digital systems help us complete administrative tasks more quickly, while routine supervision encourages us to maintain discipline and improve our performance. (INF-03)

Ultimately, the robust convergence of empirical evidence extracted from direct field observations, semi-structured interviews, and rigorous institutional documentation unequivocally demonstrates that the implementation of strategic management practices has substantially elevated administrative staff performance at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The symbiotic integration of strategic planning, continuous supervisory mechanisms, digital administrative workflows, and targeted

professional development initiatives collectively strengthened employee discipline, enhanced organizational accountability, maximized operational efficiency, and optimized public service quality within the institution.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon illustrates how structured managerial interventions can reconstruct the internal culture of an educational bureau, turning strategic mandates into internalized professional values. This meticulous alignment of triangulated findings therefore provides conclusive empirical confirmation that strategic management does not operate as an isolated administrative framework or a temporary technical patch. Instead, it functions as an integrated, holistic managerial approach capable of simultaneously driving individual employee performance, bridging the technological generational gap, and enhancing overall organizational effectiveness within the distinct educational and administrative ecosystem of the madrasah.

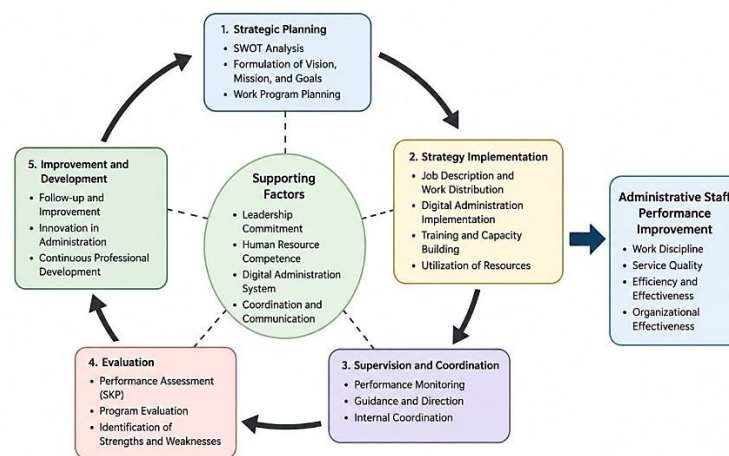


Figure 2: Strategic Management Cycle in Improving Administrative Staff Performance

DISCUSSION

Strategic Management as a Driver of Administrative Performance

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of strategic management by the administrative head at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi has become a fundamental factor in improving the performance of administrative staff and strengthening institutional effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the strategic management theory proposed by (Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Fred R et al., 2023), who argued that strategic management is a dynamic process involving strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation to achieve organizational goals effectively. According to. (Fred R et al., 2023), organizations capable of integrating these three managerial stages tend to demonstrate greater organizational adaptability, better resource allocation, and stronger institutional performance.

From the perspective of public and educational management, the findings also reinforce (Bryson, 2018; Poister, 2010). A strategic planning framework that emphasizes that strategic management enables public organizations to improve decision-making quality by identifying organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats before determining strategic priorities. The use of SWOT analysis in this study illustrates how the administrative head identified institutional conditions before determining managerial actions to improve administrative performance. Rather than functioning merely as an analytical tool, SWOT became an instrument for directing organizational adaptation, particularly in responding to the increasing demands of

digital administration and service quality within Islamic educational institutions (Mergel et al., 2019; Vial, 2019).

Furthermore, the findings support recent empirical evidence reported by Budiman et al., who found that strategic management contributes significantly to improving institutional sustainability and educational quality by integrating organizational planning, leadership commitment, and continuous organizational evaluation (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025). Instead, organizational effectiveness was achieved because strategic management was translated into daily administrative practices through leadership supervision, work coordination, digital administrative innovation, and employee development programs (Robinson et al., 2008). This finding suggests that managerial success depends largely on the consistency between strategic planning and operational implementation. In other words, strategy becomes meaningful only when organizational members understand their respective responsibilities and receive continuous guidance during implementation.

This finding complements the study of (Mintzberg, 1994; Nasution, 2022), who argued that digital transformation within educational institutions requires not only technological infrastructure but also strategic leadership capable of integrating organizational change with human resource development (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). In the present study, technological innovation was successful because it was accompanied by organizational coordination, supervision, and continuous staff capacity building, demonstrating that digital transformation is fundamentally a managerial process rather than merely a technological change (Robinson et al., 2008). Compared with previous studies, this research provides a broader understanding of strategic management implementation within Islamic educational institutions by highlighting the often-overlooked contribution of administrative leadership (Garavan et al., 2020).

Most previous studies have concentrated on the strategic role of school principals, curriculum management, or instructional leadership, whereas administrative management has received relatively limited scholarly attention (Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Garavan et al., 2020). Consequently, this study broadens the scope of educational management literature by demonstrating that the administrative head plays a strategic role in improving organizational performance through managerial coordination, performance monitoring, and continuous organizational development. This perspective represents an important contribution because administrative effectiveness constitutes one of the essential foundations supporting educational quality and institutional sustainability.

The Role of Administrative Leadership

This finding suggests that effective administrative leadership extends beyond operational management and contributes directly to achieving broader institutional goals. From the perspective of educational leadership, these findings support. (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2022), who argued that leadership effectiveness is reflected not only in decision-making authority but also in the ability to coordinate organizational resources, facilitate collaboration, and create an environment that supports continuous organizational improvement (Van Wart, 2013). Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the concept of strategic human resource management proposed by Armstrong, which emphasizes that organizational performance depends not only on employees' individual competencies but also on leadership practices capable of aligning human resource development with organizational strategy (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

In this study, the administrative head integrated leadership functions with employee development by encouraging administrative staff to participate in training programs, digital literacy workshops, and professional development activities organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Lipham, 1964). Consequently, leadership became an instrument for developing organizational capacity rather than merely supervising administrative compliance. This indicates that administrative leadership contributes significantly to enhancing employees' adaptability, particularly in responding to the increasing demands of digital transformation within educational administration (Bensimon & Others, 1989).

Another important interpretation emerging from this study concerns the relationship between leadership communication and organizational commitment. The results indicate that effective communication between the administrative head and staff members strengthened trust, improved coordination, and facilitated faster problem resolution within administrative processes. (Bensimon & Others, 1989; Lipham, 1964). Employees perceived the administrative head not only as a supervisor but also as a facilitator who encouraged participation and collective responsibility in achieving organizational targets. Such findings reinforce organizational leadership theories suggesting that participative communication promotes employee engagement and increases organizational effectiveness by fostering mutual understanding and collaborative decision-making. (Northouse, 2021).

These findings also provide an interesting perspective when compared with previous studies in educational management. Existing research has predominantly examined the influence of principals' leadership on teacher performance, instructional quality, and school effectiveness. For instance, (Hallinger, 2020) highlighted that instructional leadership exercised by school principals significantly influences teaching quality and student learning outcomes. An additional contribution of this study lies in its contextual focus on Islamic educational institutions. Administrative leadership within madrasahs differs from leadership in many general educational institutions because managerial decisions are often influenced by institutional values, government regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the integration of religious principles into organizational practices (Umami & Yasin, 2024).

Overall, this study demonstrates that administrative leadership constitutes a strategic organizational asset capable of improving employee performance, strengthening institutional coordination, and enhancing organizational resilience amid continuous environmental change (Bowling & Wright, 1998). Rather than functioning solely as an administrative supervisor, the administrative head emerged as a strategic manager who integrated planning, communication, human resource development, and organizational evaluation into a coherent management process (Nurulloh et al., 2020; Rofifah et al., 2021). These findings therefore broaden the understanding of educational leadership by emphasizing that effective institutional governance depends not only on instructional leadership exercised by school principals but also on strategic administrative leadership that ensures the sustainability of organizational operations.

Job Description and Performance Evaluation

This finding suggests that organizational effectiveness is strongly influenced by the clarity of work systems established by administrative leaders. From the perspective of Human Resource Management (HRM), role clarity constitutes one of the fundamental determinants of employee performance. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023) argue that employees perform more effectively when organizational expectations, responsibilities, and performance standards are communicated

explicitly. Clear job descriptions reduce ambiguity, improve coordination among organizational members, and provide measurable standards for evaluating employee performance (Leon Rohr, 2016). The implementation of structured job descriptions at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi reflects these theoretical principles, as administrative personnel were able to organize their work more systematically while minimizing duplication of responsibilities.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce the concept of performance management proposed by (Aguinis, 2023; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017), who emphasize that performance improvement is achieved through a continuous cycle consisting of performance planning, monitoring, feedback, evaluation, and professional development. In the present study, the administrative head implemented routine supervision, direct monitoring, and Employee Performance Targets (SKP) as mechanisms to assess employee performance regularly. Rather than being viewed solely as an evaluative process, performance assessment functioned as a developmental strategy that enabled employees to recognize their strengths, identify areas requiring improvement, and enhance their professional competencies (Arvey & Murphy, 1998). This demonstrates that performance evaluation contributes not only to organizational control but also to continuous learning and capacity development among administrative staff (Carliner et al., 2015).

Another important interpretation emerging from this study is that routine supervision fostered a stronger sense of organizational responsibility among employees. The findings revealed that regular monitoring encouraged administrative staff to complete their duties more accurately, adhere to institutional procedures, and maintain higher levels of work discipline (Smith et al., 1990). This outcome can be explained through the performance management perspective, which suggests that continuous supervision creates constructive feedback loops that motivate employees to improve performance while reinforcing organizational accountability. (Aguinis, 2023). Therefore, supervision should not be perceived merely as a mechanism for identifying errors but rather as an organizational strategy that supports continuous performance improvement and institutional learning.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by (Bello & Abdullahi, 2025), which concluded that systematic supervision and structured performance evaluation positively influence employee accountability and organizational effectiveness within educational institutions. Their study demonstrated that employees receiving regular supervision tend to exhibit greater work discipline, stronger organizational commitment, and higher service quality (Suthar et al., 2014). Similarly, the present study found that continuous evaluation and managerial guidance created a supportive organizational environment in which administrative staff became more responsible in completing administrative tasks and maintaining service standards. However, this study extends previous findings by illustrating that the effectiveness of supervision depends not only on monitoring activities but also on integrating performance evaluation with strategic planning, organizational communication, and staff development initiatives.

From an organizational behavior perspective, the improvement in employee performance observed in this study cannot be attributed solely to formal organizational structures. Instead, the effectiveness of job descriptions and performance evaluation resulted from the administrative head's ability to combine clear organizational systems with participatory leadership, continuous communication, and professional development initiatives (Carliner et al., 2015; Smith et al., 1990). Overall, this study demonstrates that clear job descriptions and systematic performance evaluation constitute strategic managerial instruments for improving administrative effectiveness within educational institutions. Compared with previous research, this study contributes a broader

perspective by demonstrating that administrative performance improvement is achieved through the integration of organizational structure, strategic leadership, and human resource management rather than through isolated managerial interventions.

Digital Administration and Organizational Effectiveness

These findings indicate that digital administration should not be understood merely as the adoption of technological tools, but rather as a strategic organizational transformation that reshapes administrative processes, improves information management, and strengthens institutional accountability (Fred R et al., 2023). The findings support the concept of digital transformation proposed by Hashim, who argued that digital transformation in educational institutions extends beyond technological innovation and encompasses changes in organizational culture, managerial processes, and institutional governance (Hashim et al., 2022). According to Garavan, successful digital transformation depends on organizational leaders' ability to integrate technological development with strategic planning and human resource development (Garavan et al., 2020; Hashim et al., 2022). The findings of this study reinforce this perspective because the successful implementation of digital administration at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi was achieved not solely through the provision of digital systems but also through continuous supervision, employee training, and organizational coordination led by the administrative head. (Bryson, 2018).

These improvements reduced administrative errors that commonly occur in conventional paper-based systems and enhanced the reliability of institutional information management. Such findings are consistent with the principles of digital governance, which emphasize that the effective use of information technology improves organizational transparency, accountability, and responsiveness while supporting evidence-based decision-making (Peña-López, 2020). In the context of educational institutions, digital governance therefore represents not only technological modernization but also an important mechanism for strengthening institutional credibility and public trust. An additional interpretation emerging from this study concerns the relationship between digital administration and employee performance (Bryk et al., 2015; Fred R et al., 2023).

Consequently, administrative personnel were able to allocate more time to coordination, service improvement, and institutional support activities rather than focusing solely on document processing. This finding aligns with the study conducted by (Nasution, 2022), which concluded that digital administrative systems improve operational efficiency by minimizing procedural complexity and enhancing work effectiveness within educational organizations (Bryson, 2018). Despite these positive outcomes, the findings also reveal several challenges associated with digital transformation. Some employees experienced difficulties adapting to newly implemented digital systems because of limited technological competence, differences in educational backgrounds, and limited prior experience with digital administration. These findings are consistent with (Tantowi et al., 2025), who argued that human resource readiness remains one of the greatest challenges in implementing digital transformation within Islamic educational institutions.

Another challenge concerns the availability of administrative infrastructure. Although digital systems have been introduced, limited computers, unstable internet connectivity, and occasional technical disruptions affected the consistency of digital administrative services. These findings indicate that successful digital transformation requires balanced investment in both technological infrastructure and human resources (Becker & Huselid, 2006). This interpretation supports (Umami & Yasin, 2024), who emphasized that sustainable organizational development in Islamic educational institutions depends on the integration of technological innovation, institutional

support, and continuous human resource development. Therefore, digital transformation should be viewed as a comprehensive organizational strategy rather than merely a technological project.

Compared with previous studies, this research provides a broader understanding of digital administration by emphasizing the interaction between leadership, organizational culture, and technological innovation. Previous studies generally focused on the technical benefits of digital systems, such as improving administrative efficiency and reducing operational costs. However, this study finds that the success of digital administration depends primarily on strategic leadership capable of coordinating organizational change, motivating employees, and creating a supportive organizational climate for technological adaptation. In other words, digital administration is fundamentally a leadership-driven transformation process rather than simply an information technology initiative (Bryson, 2018).

Overall, the implementation of digital administration at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi illustrates that organizational effectiveness can be significantly enhanced when technological innovation is integrated with strategic management practices. The administrative head played an essential role in ensuring that technological transformation was supported by employee development, organizational communication, and continuous supervision. Consequently, digital administration contributed not only to operational efficiency but also to strengthening institutional governance, improving organizational accountability, and supporting sustainable administrative management within the madrasah. These findings enrich the growing literature on educational management by demonstrating that digital governance should be understood as a strategic organizational capability that combines leadership, technology, and human resource development to achieve long-term institutional effectiveness.

Table 3. Summary of Discussion Analysis

Research Findings	Theoretical Analysis		Previous Studies	Contribution
Strategic management improved administrative staff performance.	Supports	Strategic Management Theory (Fred R et al., 2023) through planning, implementation, and evaluation	Consistent with (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025), but focuses specifically on administrative leadership	Demonstrates that strategic management is effective at the administrative unit level within madrasahs
Administrative leadership strengthened organizational effectiveness.	Reinforces	Educational Leadership Theory (Bush, 2020)	Extends previous studies that predominantly examined principals' leadership	Positions the administrative head as a strategic organizational leader
Clear job descriptions and performance evaluation improved accountability	Supports	Human Resource Management and Performance Management theories (Aguinis, 2023; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023)	Confirms (Bello & Abdullahi, 2025) while emphasizing integration with strategic management	Shows that performance management is more effective when integrated with strategic leadership
Digital administration enhances efficiency and governance.	Supports	Digital Transformation and Digital Governance concepts (Hashim et al., 2022; Peña-López, 2020)	Extends previous studies by emphasizing leadership-driven digital transformation	Introduces digital administration as a strategic management instrument rather than merely a technological innovation

Source: Data Collection, 2026

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the systematic implementation of strategic management encompassing structured planning, task delegation, continuous supervision, periodic evaluations, and digital transformation substantially enhances administrative staff performance and strengthens overall organizational effectiveness at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The integration of clear job descriptions, regular Employee Performance Target (SKP) assessments, and digital administrative systems successfully fosters a metrics-driven work culture, optimizes operational efficiency, and reduces bureaucratic redundancies. Crucially, a SWOT analysis reveals that while the madrasah possesses strong internal assets, including robust leadership commitment and institutionalized coordination, it must actively navigate the challenges of digital transformation and generational competence gaps. This research offers a vital empirical and theoretical contribution to the field of educational administration by providing a comprehensive, triangulated framework on how Islamic educational institutions can successfully modernize their public service delivery. It fills a critical gap in the existing literature by demonstrating that strategic management in a madrasah ecosystem functions not merely as a normative compliance tool, but as a transformative catalyst that bridges the gap between traditional bureaucratic habits and modern digital governance.

Despite these insightful findings, this study possesses inherent limitations that open valuable pathways for future scholarly inquiry. Methodologically, because this research relies on a qualitative single-case study design focused exclusively on MAN 2 Muaro Jambi, the contextual findings and specific behavioral dynamics may lack broader statistical generalizability to other Islamic educational institutions with different geographical or socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, this study primarily captures the immediate, short-term impacts of digital tool adoption rather than mapping its long-term sustainability across several years. To address these limitations, future researchers are highly recommended to conduct multi-site case studies or employ a mixed-methods approach to quantitatively measure the correlation between strategic leadership styles and administrative outcomes on a larger scale. Longitudinal studies are also deeply encouraged to evaluate the enduring efficacy of professional development programs and to track how long-term budget allocations, such as BOS and DIPA funds, directly influence the closing of the digital divide among senior administrative staff over time.

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