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ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS IN EDUCATIONAL QUALITY TRANSFORMATION DURING MERDEKA BELAJAR

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ABSTRAK

Transformasi mutu pendidikan pada era Merdeka Belajar menempatkan kepemimpinan kepala madrasah sebagai faktor kunci dalam pengelolaan perubahan pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mendeskripsikan kepemimpinan adaptif kepala madrasah dalam menghadapi transformasi mutu pendidikan pada era Merdeka Belajar di MAN 4 Bantul. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi terhadap aktivitas kepemimpinan dan proses pembelajaran, serta studi dokumentasi kebijakan dan program madrasah. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan secara induktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan adaptif kepala madrasah diwujudkan melalui kemampuan merespons perubahan kebijakan secara fleksibel, membangun partisipasi warga madrasah, serta mengintegrasikan penguatan profesionalisme guru dan pemanfaatan teknologi pembelajaran dalam upaya peningkatan mutu pendidikan. Temuan penelitian ini mengindikasikan bahwa kepemimpinan adaptif berperan penting dalam menciptakan tata kelola madrasah yang responsif dan berorientasi pada mutu berkelanjutan. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperkaya kajian kepemimpinan adaptif dalam pendidikan Islam, sedangkan secara praktis memberikan rujukan bagi kepala madrasah dan pemangku kebijakan dalam merumuskan strategi pengembangan kepemimpinan yang adaptif guna mendukung implementasi Merdeka Belajar.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Adaptif; Kepala Madrasah; Mutu Pendidikan; Merdeka Belajar.



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ABSTRACT

The transformation of the quality of education in the Merdeka Belajar era places the leadership of the madrasah head as a key factor in managing educational change. This study aims to analyze and describe the adaptive leadership of the madrasah head in facing the transformation of the quality of education in the Merdeka Belajar era at MAN 4 Bantul. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation of leadership activities and the learning process, and documentation studies of madrasah policies and programs. Data analysis is carried out thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive inference. The results showed that the adaptive leadership of madrasah principals is realized through the ability to respond flexibly to policy changes, build madrasah community participation, and integrate strengthening teacher professionalism and the use of learning technology in efforts to improve the quality of education. The findings indicate that adaptive leadership plays an important role in creating responsive and sustainable quality-oriented madrasah governance. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of adaptive leadership in Islamic education, while practically it provides a reference for madrasah principals and policy makers in formulating adaptive leadership development strategies to support the implementation of Merdeka Belajar.

Keywords: adaptive leadership; head of madrasah; quality of education; Merdeka Belajar

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered the primary foundation for a nation's progress, as the quality of education greatly determines the competitiveness of Indonesia's human resources amid increasingly complex global changes. Social transformations, advances in digital technology, shifts in student characteristics, and the demand for 21st-century skills have prompted the government to implement major reforms in the education sector. One of the most strategic policy initiatives in recent years is *Merdeka Belajar*, established by the Ministry of Education and Culture as an effort to create a more flexible, student-centered learning process that can adapt to the evolving times.^{1 2} This policy has a broad impact on education

¹ Itjen Kemendikbudristek, "Transformasi Pendidikan Indonesia Menuju Masa Depan Yang Berkelanjutan Melalui Merdeka Belajar - Inspektorat Jenderal Kemendikbudristek," <https://dev-itjen.kemdiktisaintek.go.id/transformasi-pendidikan-indonesia-menuju-masa-depan-yang-berkelanjutan-melalui-merdeka-belajar/>, 2024.

² Muhammad Iqbal et al., "Kebijakan Pendidikan Tentang Pelaksanaan Merdeka Belajar," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 2 (2023): 2257–65, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i2.878>.



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management, the role of teachers, curriculum development, and the management of educational institutions.

In this context, madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions cannot escape the need to transform the quality of education. Madrasahs not only serve as places to teach religious teachings, but also have a responsibility to shape the character, intelligence, and skills of students so that they can meet the demands of modern society.³ The paradigm shift in national education has prompted madrasahs to enhance teacher qualifications, strengthen teaching methods, improve internal management, and integrate Islamic values with 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.⁴ This change is not merely technical but represents a fundamental transformation that requires adjustments in organizational culture, continuous innovation, and comprehensive change management.⁵

However, efforts to carry out this transformation still face a number of challenges, such as a lack of human resource competencies, suboptimal use of technology, limited facilities and infrastructure, and resistance to change within the organization. These challenges indicate that improving the quality of madrasahs requires more than just curriculum changes or the implementation of technology alone; it also requires structured, participatory, and continuous management. Furthermore, madrasahs must ensure that every change made remains in line with Islamic values, students' needs, and the demands of societal development. Therefore, change management is a crucial element in guiding the madrasah transformation process so that it can overcome various obstacles, improve the efficiency of institutional management, and realize quality and sustainable education.⁶

Faced with these demands, madrasahs need leaders who not only focus on administrative aspects, but also have the ability to adapt, have a vision for the future, and are able to respond to changes that occur. The concept of adaptive leadership

³ Rusman Langke, "Implementasi Merdeka Belajar Di Madrasah," *Journal of Islamic Education Leadership* 1, no. 2 (2022): 125–35, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jmpi.v1i2.156>.

⁴ Saiful Bahri, "Implementasi Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan Di Madrasah: Tantangan Dan Solusi," *IslamicEdu Management Journal* 01, no. 01 (2024): 13–25, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71259/k4eqbb58>.

⁵ Eristiana, Hamengkubuwono, and Hendra Harmi, "Upaya Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Madrasah Era Digital," *Tadbir Muwahhid* 6, no. 1 (2022): 47–64, <https://doi.org/10.30997/jtm.v6i1.5307>.

⁶ Rozamala Maulida et al., "Analisis Risiko Dalam Manajemen Perubahan Pendidikan Islam Transformatif: Strategi Mitigasi," *J-MPI (Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam)* 10, no. 1 (2025): 80–95.



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proposed by Heifetz is highly relevant in the current educational context.⁷ Adaptive leadership reflects a leader's ability to deal with complex and uncertain situations, encourage school members to step out of their comfort zones, and guide the organization to find creative solutions to problems that cannot be solved using conventional technical methods.⁸ In Islamic educational institutions, adaptive leadership plays a crucial role, as madrasahs must face dual challenges: adapting to national education policies while maintaining their religious identity and Islamic values in the teaching and learning process.⁹

As leaders in the world of education, madrasah principals play a vital role in ensuring the success of this transformation. Various studies show that the quality of madrasah leaders is the key to improving educational standards, strengthening work culture, and achieving success in curriculum implementation.¹⁰ The head of the madrasah serves as an agent of change who motivates all elements of the madrasah to collaborate in facing various challenges, both internal and external.¹¹ In the *Merdeka Belajar* era, this role becomes increasingly complex, as madrasah principals must lead efforts in digitalizing learning, enhance teachers' competencies, manage community involvement, and ensure that educational services remain of high quality.¹²

MAN 4 Bantul, as one of the State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri), is undergoing various educational transformation initiatives. The school exhibits unique dynamics in terms of teaching staff, student characteristics, and social interactions within its community. National-level policy changes in education have prompted MAN 4 Bantul to enhance teacher professionalism, improve curriculum management, strengthen the use of technology in the learning process, and ensure that the quality of educational services continues to meet the standards set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The complexity of these changes

⁷ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁸ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice (Sixth Edition)* (SAGE Publications, 2013).

⁹ Velnika Elmanisar et al., "Implementasi Kepemimpinan Adaptif Kepala Sekolah Untuk Keberhasilan Di Era Disrupsi," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 2 (2024): 2239–46, <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i2.1139>.

¹⁰ Mulyasa, *Menjadi Kepala Sekolah Profesional* (PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).

¹¹ Muwafiqus Shobri, "Peran Kepala Madrasah Sebagai Leader Visioner: Strategi Penguatan Mutu Dan Integritas Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *AKSI: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2025): 191–210, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v3i3.720>.

¹² Saripudin and Muhammad Dzikri Fathur Robbani, "Integrasi Teknologi Dalam Pendidikan Islam:," *EDUTECH: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 23, no. 3 (2024): 1–14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17509/e.v23i3.72163>.



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requires madrasah leadership to apply an adaptive leadership style so that each change can be implemented efficiently, measurably, and sustainably.

Research on madrasah leadership and change management has been conducted by various researchers with diverse focuses. Yuliana, Ridlo, and Subiyantoro (2017) demonstrated that madrasah principals serve as agents of change by enhancing religious activities, parental involvement, and student services.¹³ Sani et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of adaptive leadership in addressing policy changes, performance evaluations, and digital curriculum transformation,¹⁴ while Susanti et al. (2025) highlighted adaptive strategies through leadership, digitization, stakeholder engagement, and strengthening teacher competencies.¹⁵ However, these studies have not specifically examined change management at State Senior High Madrasahs (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri, or MAN) in the context of policy, curriculum, and technology changes, as well as service quality improvements. Therefore, this study focuses on change management at MAN 4 Bantul, specifically the processes of planning, implementation, control, and evaluation of change, as well as the role of the madrasah principal in guiding sustainable educational transformation.

Nevertheless, in-depth scholarly studies examining the adaptive leadership practices of madrasah principals in addressing educational quality transformation particularly in the context of state madrasahs and the implementation of Merdeka Belajar remain very limited. This research is important not only to fill gaps in the literature related to adaptive leadership in madrasahs but also to contribute to the development of leadership models that align with the needs of Islamic education transformation in Indonesia.

In line with this, the study aims to analyze and describe the adaptive leadership of madrasah principals in addressing educational quality transformation in the Merdeka Belajar era at MAN 4 Bantul. It seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence principals in applying

¹³ Anaas Tri Ridlo Dina Yuliana and Subiyantoro, "Peran Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam Dalam Manajemen Perubahan Pada Lingkungan Organisasi Pendidikan Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An- Peran Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam Dalam Manajemen Perubahan Perubahan Dalam Pendidikan Islam Didin Kurniadin Dan Imam," *Tadris* 12, no. 2 (2017): 146–60.

¹⁴ Alfian Sani et al., "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah/Madrasah Di Era Abad Ke-21 Kebijakan Rekrutmen, Evaluasi Kinerja, Dan Transformasi Manajemen Kurikulum Digital," *Jurnal Tarbiyah* 33, no. 1 (2026): 76–87, <https://doi.org/10.30829/tar.v33i1.5407>.

¹⁵ Deli Susanti et al., "Manajemen Perubahan Di Madrasah: Strategi Adaptif Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Muhammadiyah Rejang Lebong," *At-Tadbir : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 90–101, <https://doi.org/10.51700/attadbir.v5i2.1048>.



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adaptive leadership to maintain educational quality, as well as the impact of implementing adaptive leadership on the sustainability of quality management at MAN 4 Bantul. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for madrasah principals, educators, supervisors, and policymakers in formulating strategies for developing adaptive and future-oriented leadership. Thus, research on adaptive leadership at MAN 4 Bantul holds strategic significance from both theoretical and practical perspectives in supporting efforts toward educational transformation at the national level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the adaptive leadership practices of madrasah principals in addressing educational quality transformation during the *Merdeka Belajar* era at MAN 4 Bantul. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the meanings, experiences, and dynamics of leadership in complex real-world conditions, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument in data collection and analysis.¹⁶¹⁷ MAN 4 Bantul was selected as the research site because it represents an educational institution that actively implements educational quality transformation through adaptive and participatory institutional management, and is capable of responding strategically to the *Merdeka Belajar* policy.

Research data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations of leadership activities and the learning process, as well as document studies on madrasah policies and programs related to the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*.¹⁸¹⁹ The research informants included the madrasah principal, the vice principal in charge of curriculum, and teachers. Informants were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement in the leadership process and educational transformation.²⁰ Data analysis was conducted thematically through the

¹⁶ John W. Creswell. and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (SAGE Publications, 2018).

¹⁷ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075>.

¹⁸ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, 36th ed. (Bandung: Pt Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).

¹⁹ Robert K. Yin., *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed (SAGE Publications, 2018).

²⁰ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).



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stages of data reduction, data display, and inductive conclusion drawing to identify patterns and themes that represent adaptive leadership within the madrasah environment.²¹ Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation to guarantee the credibility of the research findings.²²

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this section are based on information obtained through interviews with the madrasah principal, the vice principal for curriculum, and the teachers. This information is also supported by observations of leadership activities and the learning process, as well as a review of the madrasah's policies and programs. All data were collected in accordance with the research methods described in the Research Methods section. In this study, in accordance with the thematic analysis procedure used, the data were first prepared to identify meanings relevant to adaptive leadership. Subsequently, the data were organized according to the emerging themes, and finally, conclusions were drawn inductively. Therefore, the following discussion follows three main topics that emerged from this process: (1) the forms of adaptive leadership practiced by the madrasah principal, (2) the factors that support and hinder its implementation, and (3) the impact of adaptive leadership on the sustainability of quality management at MAN 4 Bantul.

Forms of Adaptive Leadership of Madrasah Principals

Data from interviews and observations indicate that the principal of MAN 4 Bantul practices adaptive leadership, as reflected in the school's ability to respond quickly to every change in education policy during the *Merdeka Belajar* era. As stated by the vice principal in charge of the curriculum during the interview, the madrasah does not position itself as an entity that rejects new policies but rather studies the applicable guidelines and then adapts its teaching practices: "If the curriculum aligns with the government's, we follow and adapt accordingly in our implementation."²³ Every new regulation, including Ministerial Decisions on Religious Affairs (KMA), assessment guidelines, and curriculum policies, is studied directly to ensure that their implementation in madrasahs complies with applicable regulations, as emphasized by the madrasah principal, who noted that

²¹ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (India: SAGE Publications, 2014).

²² Andina Aprilia Prawanti et al., "Desain, Jenis, Dan Metode Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 4, no. 1 (2025): 384–388, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.64464/tarbiyah.v4i1.186>; Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D)*.

²³ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025.



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when guidelines change, “we share the information, and then we invite the supervisor to explain the changes.”²⁴ The researchers’ observations of leadership activities reinforce this finding: changes in national policy have encouraged MAN 4 Bantul to enhance teacher professionalism, improve curriculum management, strengthen the use of educational technology, and ensure that educational services continue to meet the standards set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.²⁵ Based on official documentation from MAN 4 Bantul, the madrasah conducted a Curriculum Review to evaluate and refine its learning programs to align with current trends and the needs of students.²⁶ The principal also positioned this review as an opportunity for collective reflection and improvement.

Adaptive leadership is also evident through the use of data as the basis for evaluating and improving the quality of education. Official documentation from MAN 4 Bantul shows that on June 26, 2026, the madrasah conducted a Public Review of the Madrasah Operational Curriculum, involving the academic community, student representatives, madrasah supervisors, and the Head of the Madrasah Education Division at the DIY Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. During this event, the Education Report Card was used as one of the tools to review quality achievements and identify areas that still need improvement.²⁷ Responsiveness and a willingness to adapt to change are key characteristics of adaptive leadership, as described by Heifetz, wherein adaptive leaders are those capable of navigating complex dynamics through continuous learning, flexible decision-making, and the implementation of appropriate strategic actions.²⁸

Another form of adaptive leadership is evident in the two-way communication established by the madrasah principal with the madrasah community. Interview data show that the primary forum for policy coordination is the monthly staff meeting: “Through the mandatory monthly staff meetings, we coordinate with the other teachers. For example, we discuss what’s planned for this month, what activities are scheduled for tomorrow, and what needs to be

²⁴ Wawancara, Kepala Madrasah MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

²⁵ Observasi MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

²⁶ Fransisca Listiary, “Tingkatkan Mutu Pendidikan, MAN 4 Bantul Lakukan Review Kurikulum,” MAN 4 Bantul, 2026, <https://man4bantul.sch.id/berita/tingkatkan-mutu-pendidikan-man-4-bantul-lakukan-review-kurikulum?>

²⁷ Fransisca Listiary, “MAN 4 Bantul Gelar Uji Publik Kurikulum, Fokus Evaluasi Berbasis Rapor Pendidikan,” MAN 4 Bantul, 2026, <https://man4bantul.sch.id/index.php/berita/man-4-bantul-gelar-uji-publik-kurikulum-fokus-evaluasi-berbasis-rapor-pendidikan?>

²⁸ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.



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communicated to the teachers.”²⁹ In addition to these formal forums, the researchers’ observations noted that coordination also took place through informal channels such as WhatsApp groups, which facilitated the rapid dissemination of information and prompt responses to the needs of all teachers and educational staff. Managing two-way communication is a crucial component of adaptive leadership, as it provides leaders with the opportunity to assess resistance, gather feedback, and foster a collective understanding of the goals of change.³⁰ From a theoretical perspective, Northouse emphasizes that a leader in the context of adaptive leadership needs to act as a dialogue facilitator, ensuring that every individual in the organization understands the reasons and significance of the ongoing changes.³¹

The adaptive leadership of the principal of MAN 4 Bantul is also reflected in systematic efforts to build teachers’ professional capacity. The principal understands that a transformation of the educational paradigm cannot be achieved through administrative adjustments alone, but requires the continuous strengthening of educators’ competencies. The researcher’s observations noted that various competency development programs are held regularly, including internal training, workshops, and instructional support, as well as active encouragement for teachers to participate in Subject Teachers’ Working Groups (MGMP) and online training, including MOOCs provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These observational findings align with what informants stated in interviews: “As for human resources, through professional development, there are training programs, including online training such as MOOC Pintar, and offline teachers participate in MGMP activities, usually once a month. In those forums, they address issues or coordinate with one another regarding the new curriculum, the administration of the new curriculum, and assessment.”³² This approach is in line with research, which emphasizes that adaptive leadership in the context of education needs to be oriented towards collective capacity building. This effort is important so that educators are prepared to meet the demands of more flexible learning that is centered on students.³³

The madrasah principal also demonstrates flexibility in managing the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Although certain changes, such as the

²⁹ Wawancara, guru MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

³⁰ Observasi MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2026

³¹ Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice (Sixth Edition)*.

³² Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 24 November 2025

³³ Rita Dwi Nawanti, Wahyudi Taufan Santoso, and Bambang Sumardjoko, “Transformasi Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Era Disrupsi,” *Didaktika : Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 2 (2024): 2657–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.618>.



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implementation of P5, were initially perceived as increasing the workload, the principal conducted a realistic assessment and adjusted instructional practices according to teachers' capacities and the madrasah's actual conditions. This flexibility reflects the organization's ability to respond to adaptive challenges namely, challenges that are complex in nature and cannot be addressed solely through technical solutions. Such challenges require ongoing dialogue, gradual adjustment, and continuous organizational learning.³⁴

Adaptive leadership is also evident in the ability of madrasah principals to address resistance from teachers. In the early stages of implementing Kurikulum Merdeka, some teachers struggled to understand various administrative aspects, such as developing teaching modules, conducting formative and summative assessments, and learning reporting mechanisms. The researcher's field observations showed that rather than adopting an authoritarian approach, the madrasah principal provided opportunities for dialogue and consultation, guidance through supervision, and opportunities for competency development through MGMPs and workshops. This was corroborated by informants' statements that teachers' confusion usually did not last long because there were many channels available for finding solutions: "If all the teachers are really confused, then bring in the experts to provide guidance, and if there's a problem, we have to find a solution quickly."³⁵ At the madrasah principal level, similar support is provided through the Madrasah/Madrasah Principal Working Group (KKMA/K2MA) forum in collaboration with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, where madrasah principals coordinate with one another and receive briefings on the latest policies. This is in line with the findings, which confirm that leaders need to balance the pressure of change with adequate support so that organizations can adapt effectively.³⁶

The innovative nature of the madrasah principal's adaptive leadership is reflected in his initiatives to drive digital transformation and optimize learning resources despite budget constraints. A review of the madrasah's official publications reveals that on January 23, 2026, MAN 4 Bantul held a Digital Transformation Meeting, during which the principal emphasized that digital transformation represents a shift in mindset and work culture, not merely the use of technological devices, and thus requires commitment and cross-disciplinary

³⁴ Ronald Abadian Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading* (Harvard Business Press, 2002).

³⁵ Wawancara, Kepala Sekolah MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

³⁶ Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*.



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collaboration.³⁷ At the classroom level, the researcher's observations indicate that this optimization of technology intersects with the use of available standard facilities, such as LCD projectors, whiteboards, speakers, and CCTV as tools for monitoring learning activities, accompanied by policies governing students' use of gadgets within a structured and controlled learning framework. This finding aligns with a statement from an informant: "As for classroom facilities, they're basic. Our KPM doesn't have a large budget, so currently the classroom has an LCD projector, a whiteboard, speakers, and CCTV to support classroom instruction."³⁸ The madrasah principal does not view budget constraints as an obstacle but instead strives to make the most of existing facilities and promote a digital-based work culture in a balanced manner. This step is in line with the study, which explains that a quality madrasah is an institution that is able to harmonize the use of technology with Islamic educational values in a proportional and sustainable manner.³⁹

The application of adaptive leadership by the madrasah principal cannot be separated from the context of MAN 4 Bantul as an Islamic educational institution. The principal demonstrates a leadership style grounded in role modeling, deliberative principles (*musyawarah*), and religious values, which in turn strengthens leadership legitimacy and fosters a harmonious organizational culture. These elements enrich the contemporary framework of adaptive leadership by adding spiritual and moral dimensions, as highlighted in studies on Islamic educational leadership.⁴⁰ Thus, adaptive leadership practices at MAN 4 Bantul function not only as managerial responses to policy changes but also as an integrative effort that combines professionalism, innovation, and Islamic values.

The adaptive leadership of the madrasah principal is further supported by a mechanism for continuous quality evaluation. The researcher's review of madrasah curriculum documents revealed that MAN 4 Bantul periodically conducts a Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) as the basis for revising curriculum documents, which must be reviewed and signed by the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the Special Region of Yogyakarta, ensuring that curriculum quality remains under tiered oversight. This was confirmed by an informant:

³⁷ Fransisca Listiary, "Tingkatkan Layanan Dan Mutu, MAN 4 Bantul Matangkan Infrastruktur Digital Madrasah," MAN 4 Bantul, 2026, <https://man4bantul.sch.id/berita/tingkatkan-layanan-dan-mutu-man-4-bantul-matangkan-infrastruktur-digital-madrasah>?

³⁸ Wawancara, Kepala Madrasah MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

³⁹ Eristiana, Hamengkubuwono, and Harmi, "Upaya Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Madrasah Era Digital."

⁴⁰ Eliya Yuliana et al., "Budaya Organisasi Dan Pengambilan Keputusan Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Unisan Jurnal: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan* 4, no. 8 (2025): 80–88.



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“There’s an evaluation every time, called the EDM, the madrasah self-evaluation. After that, we revise the curriculum again, so administratively, we don’t just implement the KPM; there must also be curriculum documents that must be approved all the way up to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.”⁴¹ The informant also mentioned an indicator of success that was directly observable: the increase in the proportion of graduates accepted into public universities from less than 90 percent to about 90 percent in the last year, which, according to the informant, was the result of the combined support of the curriculum, facilities, and teacher performance.

Overall, the triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and documentation indicates that the adaptive leadership of the principal at MAN 4 Bantul is manifested through reflective compliance with regulations, participatory communication, strengthening teachers’ capacity, persuasive management of resistance, proportional optimization of resources, the integration of Islamic values into the decision-making process, and quality assurance based on continuous evaluation. These seven forms are interrelated and are implemented collectively through various consultative forums, both at the teacher level (staff meetings, MGMP) and at the madrasah principal level (KKMA/K2MA in collaboration with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs). These findings indicate that adaptive leadership practices at MAN 4 Bantul have been implemented effectively and serve as a crucial foundation for the madrasah in navigating the paradigm shift in national education during the *Merdeka Belajar* era. Through these capabilities, the madrasah principal is not only able to manage the dynamics of change but also ensure that every change contributes to improving the quality of learning and strengthening students’ character..

Factors that Support and Obstruct Madrasah Heads in Implementing Adaptive Leadership

The adaptive leadership of the madrasah head at MAN 4 Bantul plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of education quality and managing policy changes, especially in the implementation of the *kurikulum merdeka*. Field findings show that the madrasah head applies an adaptive leadership pattern through participatory communication strategies, teacher mentoring, strengthening collaborative culture and administrative and instructional adjustments according to the needs of change. This pattern is in line with the concept of adaptive leadership,

⁴¹ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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which emphasizes the leader's ability to deal with uncertainty, empower school members, and overcome adaptive challenges collectively.⁴²

Research findings at MAN 4 Bantul also show that the effectiveness of adaptive leadership implementation is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors originating from both the internal and external environments of the madrasah. Both types of factors contribute significantly to determining the extent to which the head of the madrasah is able to manage change, particularly in the implementation of the *kurikulum merdeka* and efforts to maintain the quality of education on an ongoing basis.

a. Supporting Factors of Adaptive Leadership

1) Collaborative culture in the teacher environment

Field findings show that collaborative culture is the strongest supporting factor in the implementation of adaptive leadership at MAN 4 Bantul. Teachers routinely engage in knowledge exchange through monthly meetings, subject teacher meetings (MGMP), madrasah working groups (KKMA/K2MA), small group discussions, and forums for formulating teaching tools based on the *kurikulum merdeka*.

As stated by the Deputy Principal for Curriculum (WKM), the *MGMP* forum serves as the primary platform for teachers to coordinate with one another regarding the independent curriculum. "The teachers already have their own community called MGMP... they usually meet once a month. In that forum, they discuss and coordinate with one another regarding the new curriculum, the administration of the new curriculum, or assessments."⁴³

This pattern of interaction not only improves the quality of learning, but also strengthens collective agency so that any policy changes can be responded to together and structured. Through these various forums, teachers can share experiences related to the implementation of the *kurikulum merdeka*, discuss innovative teaching methods, and obtain information updates on new policies.⁴⁴⁴⁵

⁴² Windi Nur Oktaviani et al., "Kepemimpinan Adaptif Kepala Sekolah: Tinjauan Pustaka Tentang Tantangan Teknologi Dan Globalisasi Dalam Pendidikan Abad 21.," *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education* 6, no. 2 (2025): 906–915, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i2.3787>.

⁴³ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁴⁴ Afyah Nur Kayati, "Kolaborasi Guru Dalam MGMP Sebagai Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Di MTs Unggulan Pondok Pesantren Amanatul Ummah Pacet Mojokerto.," *Syaikhuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam* 11, no. 1 (2020): 31–47, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36835/syaikhuna.v11i1.3839>.

⁴⁵ Helmiah and Jamali, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Guru Dalam Mengimplementasikan Kurikulum Merdeka Melalui Kegiatan MGMP Di MAN 3 Aceh Timur Tahun 2024," *Jurnal Aktual Pendidikan Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 17–24, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58477/api.v3i1.259>.



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In addition to the teachers' forum, madrasah principals are also members of a similar forum at the leadership level, namely the KKMA/K2MA, as stated by the Deputy Head of the Curriculum Division: "There are many training sessions organized by the Regional Office and also by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for madrasah principals."⁴⁶

A strong collaborative culture provides space for madrasah principals to apply adaptive leadership more effectively, because the adaptation process is no longer individualized but takes place through mutually reinforcing collective work. In educational organizations, this pattern is characteristic of a learning organization, which is a school that continues to learn and adapt continuously.⁴⁷ This is confirmed by Sari and Agustini which states that adaptive leadership will be successful when leaders are able to encourage the involvement of school members in a joint problem-solving process.⁴⁸ Therefore, collaboration and professional support become important catalysts that strengthen the effectiveness of adaptive leadership, especially in increasing the capacity and readiness of teachers in facing adaptive challenges that arise due to curriculum changes. Thus, the collaborative culture that has taken root in the MAN 4 Bantul teacher environment is not only social capital, but also a strategic foundation that supports the effectiveness of adaptive leadership in maintaining the quality of education in the Merdeka Belajar era.

2) Open communication between the principal and the entire school community

An important strategy in supporting adaptive leadership at MAN 4 Bantul is the creation of open two-way communication between the principal and the entire madrasah community. The principal implements a participatory communication pattern by providing forums or opportunities where teachers, educational staff, and other staff can express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions regarding current policies or programs.

The Deputy Principal explained that two-way communication at MAN 4 Bantul is structured through monthly staff meetings. As stated, "There is always a monthly staff meeting for coordination among the teachers. Usually, various types of information are shared in that forum, such as what activities are planned for this

⁴⁶ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁴⁷ Lukaman Cahyadi, "Memahami Learning Organization," *Forum Ilmiah* 18, no. 3 (2021): 381–190, https://digilib.esaunggul.ac.id/public/UEU-Journal-23061-11_2176.pdf.

⁴⁸ Desi Puspita Sari and Delli Agustini, "Peran Kepemimpinan Adaptif Dalam Mengelola Perubahan Dan Menumbuhkan Budaya Belajar Berkelanjutan Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Rafflesia* 1, no. 1 (2025): 33–45., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59175/jppr.v1i1.550>.



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month, what those activities entail, and what needs to be communicated to the teachers.”⁴⁹ This forum involves all deputy principals, who take turns presenting information, ensuring that policy information is disseminated evenly to the entire school community.

This open communication serves to build trust and enables the identification and resolution of problems more quickly and accurately.⁵⁰ A communicative principal is also able to create more harmonious working relationships and motivate teachers to actively engage in the process of improving and innovating learning.⁵¹

This approach can also increase ownership of change so that teachers no longer view policy updates as an administrative burden, but rather as part of their shared professional responsibility. Oktaviani et al., (2025) emphasizes that participatory communication is a key characteristic of adaptive leadership, because organizational adaptation will be more effective when leaders open up space for constructive dialogue and involve school members in understanding and responding to change.⁵²

3) External Support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Supervisors

Another supporting factor is the ongoing assistance from madrasah supervisors and training organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The implementation of KMA No. 450 of 2024 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in Madrasahs provides structural guidance for madrasah principals, as well as supporting materials, teaching module guidelines, and training platforms that strengthen the adaptive capacity of madrasahs. It was stated that whenever there is a regulatory change, the madrasah will prepare for it, as indicated in the following interview excerpt: “There is guidance from supervisors, and workshops have already been held, so that teachers and staff can understand the substance of the new policy.”⁵³

This kind of regulatory support is very important considering that adaptive leadership cannot run effectively without a clear policy framework and

⁴⁹ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁵⁰ Zahrotul Mufidah, Nunuk Hariyati, and Wiwin Yulianingsih, “Gaya Kepemimpinan Partisipatif Kepala Sekolah Dalam Peningkatan Profesionalisme Pendidik Dan Tenaga Kependidikan,” *JDMP (Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen Pendidikan)* 8, no. 2 (2025): 120–131, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26740/jdmp.v8n2.p120-131>.

⁵¹ Hamzeh M. Alhawamdeh and Mohammad A. K. Alsmairat, “Strategic Decision Making and Organization Performance: A Literature Review,” *International Review of Management and Marketing* 9, no. 4 (2019): 95–99, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.8161>.

⁵² Oktaviani et al., “Kepemimpinan Adaptif Kepala Sekolah: Tinjauan Pustaka Tentang Tantangan Teknologi Dan Globalisasi Dalam Pendidikan Abad 21.”

⁵³ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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standardized implementation guidelines. In addition, institutional support also makes it easier for school principals to make policy adjustments, integrate learning innovations, and accelerate the process of adapting to curriculum changes⁵⁴.

4) Internal Quality Assurance System (EDM)

The Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) conducted regularly through the official platform of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is an important instrument in supporting the adaptation process. EDM serves as a quality compass that provides an objective picture of the strengths, weaknesses, and achievements of madrasahs. Regarding quality assurance, the Deputy Principal for Curriculum explained that, “We have an internal evaluation called EDM, which stands for madrasah self-evaluation. In this forum, when we revise the curriculum again... administratively, we don’t just implement the KPM; there must also be a curriculum document that must be submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.”⁵⁵

This information enables madrasah principals to formulate adaptive strategies based on factual data, rather than mere perceptions. The online SME platform also provides historical data, quality indicators, and priority recommendations that facilitate the decision-making process in adaptive leadership.⁵⁶ The existence of this system reinforces the consistency of adaptation implementation amid dynamic policy changes.

b. Factors Hindering Adaptive Leadership

1. Teacher resistance to change

There are several senior teachers who feel burdened by the changes in teaching materials, learning methods, and assessment systems in the kurikulum *merdeka*. As mentioned, this gap is influenced by the fact that senior teachers have not yet fully shifted away from old teaching methods. The deputy head of the curriculum division stated, “Sometimes some teachers get stuck in old patterns due to their age, as well as their teaching methods... And while some teachers still teach using the old methods, their numbers have decreased as senior teachers have retired.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Miftahul Huda, “Peran Kepemimpinan Adaptif Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Studi Kasus SMP Nu Al Islami,” *Prosiding: Konferensi Internasional Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2025): 206–19, <https://journal.stainim.ac.id/index.php/Proceeding/article/view/562?>

⁵⁵ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁵⁶ Muhammad Helmi Labib, Ahmad Noor Ihsanuddin, and Ikhrom, “The The Problems of Teachers’ Readiness in Implementing New Curriculum; A Systematic Literature Review,” *Ghancaran: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia* 6, no. 1 (2024): 130–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/ghancaran.v6i1.11277>.

⁵⁷ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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Based on excerpts from the interviews, it was found that some of them are still comfortable with the old approach, which tends to rely on lectures, leading to passive resistance in the form of delayed adaptation or a need for more intensive guidance.⁵⁸ This type of cultural resistance is one of the most difficult adaptive challenges to overcome, as it relates to professional identity and long-established habits.

2. Limited budget and learning facilities and infrastructure

Limited facilities and infrastructure make it difficult for teachers to implement technology-based learning innovations, which are a core part of the *kurikulum merdeka*. The Deputy for Curriculum stated that limitations arise in the procurement of facilities and equipment beyond the minimum standards: “Facilities and equipment are tied to the budget; if we don’t have a large budget, we can’t purchase them, so there are no other innovations beyond facilities such as LCD projectors, whiteboards, and CCTV.”⁵⁹

Findings at MAN 4 Bantul confirm this pattern, in line with the study by Labib et al., (2024) which emphasizes that obstacles to the implementation of the new curriculum arise not only from the readiness of individual teachers, but also from limitations in facilities, infrastructure, and managerial support.⁶⁰ In addition, limited budgets are a significant obstacle to the provision of modern learning facilities. School principals often face a dilemma when they want to upgrade facilities but do not have sufficient funds, so learning innovations are often delayed or can only be implemented to a limited extent.⁶¹ This situation calls for adaptive leadership that is able to prioritize needs, maximize available resources, and seek alternative solutions to maintain the continuity of learning innovation.

3. The burden of P5 on students, parents, and madrasah

Findings in the field at MAN 4 Bantul show that the implementation of the P5 program creates an additional burden not only for teachers and madrasah, but

⁵⁸ Wahidmurni Wahidmurni, Samsul Susilawati, and Achmad Anwar Abidin, “Resistance to Curriculum Changes among Teachers of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Indonesia,” *Nidhomul Haq : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 16–27, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v9i1.4300>.

⁵⁹ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁶⁰ Muhammad Helmi Labib, Ahmad Noor Ihsanuddin, and Ikhrom, “The The Problems of Teachers’ Readiness in Implementing New Curriculum; A Systematic Literature Review,” *Ghancaran: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia* 6, no. 1 (2024): 130–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/ghancaran.v6i1.11277>

⁶¹ Annisa Seftiani et al., “Hambatan Dan Tantangan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di MTSN Ogan Ilir,” *Pengertian: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia (PJPI)* 2, no. 2 (2024): 261–168, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61930/pjpi.v2i2.690>.



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also for students and parents. Many students and parents feel that the P5 project requires extra time, resources, and sometimes additional costs. As explicitly stated by the Deputy Principal for Curriculum, the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) was discontinued because “it imposes a heavy burden-both on parents and on the madrasah’s budget.”⁶² Administratively, P5 also places a burden on teachers: “preparing report cards, entering teacher evaluations, and each madrasah implements different forms of P5 activities without a standard format, so there is no standard.”⁶³ Consequently, the P5 curriculum has now been shifted to co-curricular activities, which are more flexible and do not need to be reported in report cards.

This is in line with the findings of Giska et al., (2025) which shows that some parents feel that the implementation of P5 creates an additional burden in terms of guidance, time, and resources, so that their involvement in the project is sometimes limited.⁶⁴

4. Regulatory instability and rapid policy changes

Teachers and principals at MAN 4 Bantul face difficulties when regulations related to the curriculum are frequently updated, such as revisions to learning guidelines, assessments, and administrative formats. Rapid changes in regulations create uncertainty and force the entire school community to adapt in a short period of time, requiring additional energy and sometimes disrupting the stability of learning practices. As the Deputy Principal of the madrasah noted, the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ regulations are constantly evolving: “The latest policy-the love-based curriculum (KBC), was just launched, and the Ministerial Decree (KMA) was only issued this month... it has not yet been officially disseminated by the regional office.”⁶⁵

⁶² Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁶³ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁶⁴ Sherin Tiara Giska et al., “P5 Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka: Mengungkap Hambatan Di Sekolah Dasar,” *Realisasi: Ilmu Pendidikan, Seni Rupa Dan Desain* 2, no. 2 (2025): 124–34, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62383/realisasi.v2i2.596>.

⁶⁵ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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Repeated and poorly planned changes to the national curriculum have been identified as a serious obstacle to consistency in implementation in schools and have the potential to reduce teacher performance and learning quality.^{66, 67}

The Impact of Adaptive Leadership on the Sustainability of Quality Management at MAN 4 Bantul

The implementation of adaptive leadership at MAN 4 Bantul appears to have a strong impact on the sustainability of the madrasah's quality management. The researcher's field observations indicate that the madrasah principal is able to respond to the dynamics of policy and the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* by making adjustments to the learning system, teacher management, and quality assurance mechanisms; teachers have begun to implement active learning, discussions, teaching modules, and differentiated instruction.⁶⁸ This transformation did not occur spontaneously but was the result of guidance, support, and the space for adaptation provided by the madrasah principal, thereby encouraging teachers to explore various strategies and refine teaching approaches that are more relevant to students' needs. The adaptive leadership model, which emphasizes the leader's ability to manage challenges, empower resources, and guide the school community in facing unstable and rapidly changing situations, has proven to be very important in maintaining the quality of education in this era of complex transformation.⁶⁹

One of the most tangible impacts of implementing adaptive leadership is the improved quality of graduates from MAN 4 Bantul. Interview data indicate that the improvement in quality is most evident among the graduates, as one informant stated: "The improvement in quality is evident in the graduates; year after year, more and more of them are excelling and advancing. Last year, around 90 of them were admitted to public universities. So, the curriculum likely supports this, as do other resources and the teachers."⁷⁰ These achievements demonstrate that the changes implemented were not merely administrative in nature but also contributed to improved academic performance. This statement underscores that academic achievements are not solely the result of curriculum policies but rather the result of

⁶⁶ Klemens Mere, "Dampak Perubahan Kurikulum Yang Tak Menentu Terhadap Kinerja Guru Dan Kualitas Pembelajaran.," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 7, no. 4 (2024): 16439–16444, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v7i4.37271>.

⁶⁷ Sopian Tamrin, Syamsu A Kamaruddin, and Arlin Adam, "Diskontinuitas Kurikulum Pendidikan Indonesia," *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan* 13, no. 1 (2025): 48–60, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v13i1.16713>.

⁶⁸ Observasi di MAN 4 Bantul 16 November 2025

⁶⁹ Elmanisar et al., "Implementasi Kepemimpinan Adaptif Kepala Sekolah Untuk Keberhasilan Di Era Disrupsi."

⁷⁰ Wawancara, Kepala Madrasah MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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synergistic leadership that coordinates the curriculum, resources, and teacher performance simultaneously. Research by Fajri at al., (2019) and Sumiati at al., (2024) emphasizes that adaptive leadership has been proven to improve teacher performance, resulting in learning that is more responsive, creative, and relevant to the needs of students, which ultimately contributes to improved student achievement.⁷¹⁷²

From the perspective of the quality assurance system, adaptive leadership has proven to promote the sustainability of internal evaluation practices, one of which is through the implementation of the Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM). Interview data confirms that this mechanism is carried out routinely and in stages: “Every year there’s an evaluation called EDM, the Madrasah Self-Evaluation; after that, we revise the curriculum, and it has to be signed off by us at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, so the quality of the curriculum is continuously monitored by the Ministry.”⁷³ The madrasah principal ensures that EDM is not used merely to comply with regulations, but as a tool for ongoing reflection to maintain consistent quality. This approach is in line with findings that schools led adaptively have a more stable quality assurance cycle, as leaders are able to map strategic priorities and effectively translate policy changes into operational procedures even when the external environment changes rapidly.⁷⁴

In the field of education, adaptive leadership has been shown to encourage teachers to transform their teaching methods. Interview data confirm a shift in learning patterns since the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum: “Under the K13 curriculum, teachers were more active, and students would sometimes just listen; but now students are actively engaged, and the change is more noticeable.”⁷⁵ The principal monitors these indicators of student engagement through a review of teaching modules and classroom supervision, as explained by the informant: “You can tell from the modules whether they’re adapted to encourage active learning or not; after all, they’re supposed to spark discussion. The school has to ensure active

⁷¹ Awaliatul Fajri, Imas Kania Rahman, and Santi Lisnawati, “Seterategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dan Kinerja Guru Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Siswa,” *Tawazun: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2019): 78–93, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32832/tawazun.v12i1.1844>.

⁷² Sumiati Sumiati et al., “Linking Principal Adaptive Leadership to Teacher Performance: The Mediating Effect of Collaborative School Culture,” *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 15, no. 4 (2024): 17–41, <https://jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/5723>.

⁷³ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁷⁴ Muharriadi Muharriadi et al., “Kepemimpinan Adaptif Dalam Penerapan Strategi Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Disruptif,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 9, no. 2 (2025): 17041–17047, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v9i2.28555>.

⁷⁵ Wawancara, Guru MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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learning, which is why there's classroom supervision. It assesses the extent to which teachers are teaching in the classroom, including the implementation of differentiated instruction, which requires teachers to be able to distinguish the learning needs of each student.”⁷⁶ This practice demonstrates a shift in mindset as well as an improvement in teachers' pedagogical capacity. The results of the observations show that this transformation did not occur spontaneously but was the result of guidance, support, and the space for adaptation provided by the madrasah principal, which encouraged teachers to explore various strategies and refine teaching approaches that are more relevant to students' needs.⁷⁷ Furthermore, adaptive leadership also strengthens the collective commitment of the madrasah community. The principal emphasizes the importance of maintaining teachers' commitment, fostering a culture of collaboration, and ensuring that all changes implemented are understood as a shared responsibility. Strengthening this commitment serves as the foundation for the sustainability of quality management, as quality cannot be maintained through administrative policies alone but requires the active involvement of all stakeholders so that changes are truly internalized into the school's culture. Yulita et al., (2025) shows that adaptive leadership builds a collaborative climate and increases organizational resilience when facing change.⁷⁸

The sustainability of quality management at MAN 4 Bantul is also supported by ongoing efforts to promote teachers' professional development through various workshops and training sessions. Informants emphasized that teachers' participation in these training sessions is also a tangible expression of their shared commitment to maintaining quality: “Those training sessions are also a form of that commitment.”⁷⁹ Continuous adaptation to curriculum changes requires teachers to develop new skills, so that instruction is not only aligned with policy requirements but also meets the needs of students. Regular training programs demonstrate that madrasahs are not merely reacting to changes but are building internal capacity to better prepare for the dynamics of education in the future. Muharriadi et al. (2025) emphasizes that adaptive leaders encourage organizations

⁷⁶ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025

⁷⁷ Observasi di MAN 4 Bantul 16 November 2025

⁷⁸ Vera Diana Yulita et al., “Kepemimpinan Mutu Dan Kerjasama Tim Pada Satuan Pendidikan,” *Sulawesi Tenggara Educational Journal* 5, no. 1 (2025): 393–99, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54297/seduj.v5i1.1125>.

⁷⁹ Wawancara, Waka Kurikulum MAN 4 Bantul, 16 November 2025



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to learn collectively, strengthen their readiness for change, and create institutional resilience in maintaining quality on an ongoing basis.⁸⁰

Thus, the overall findings indicate that adaptive leadership at MAN 4 Bantul not only serves as a managerial strategy in responding to policy changes but also acts as a driving force in ensuring that educational quality is maintained and continues to improve. The impact of this leadership is evident in the improved quality of graduates, consistent quality assurance through EDM, the transformation of teaching practices toward active and differentiated learning, the strengthening of teachers' collective commitment, and the sustainability of professional development programs. Taken together, these components confirm that adaptive leadership is a relevant and effective approach for maintaining the sustainability of educational quality amid regulatory uncertainty and the complexity of today's educational challenges.

CONCLUSION

Adaptive leadership plays a strategic role in driving change and improving the quality of education at MAN 4 Bantul. The madrasah principal not only carries out administrative functions but also acts as an agent of change who is able to respond to policy dynamics, teachers' needs, and students' characteristics through flexible, participatory, and quality-oriented decision-making aimed at sustainable development. Adaptive leadership practices are reflected in efforts to strengthen teachers' professionalism, adjust curriculum management, and utilize learning technologies in line with the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. These findings affirm that the success of quality transformation in madrasahs is strongly influenced by the leadership capacity of the madrasah principal in managing change collaboratively and contextually. As a recommendation, future research is suggested to examine adaptive leadership of madrasah principals using quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure its impact on educational quality indicators more broadly. In addition, comparative studies across madrasahs or educational levels are needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the variations and effectiveness of adaptive leadership practices in supporting the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy.

⁸⁰ Muharriadi et al., "Kepemimpinan Adaptif Dalam Penerapan Strategi Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Disruptif," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 9, no. 2 (2025): 17041–17047, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v9i2.28555>.



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