

# Challenges and Opportunities for Madrasah in Improving The Competence of Graduate Students

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## Abstract:

This study aims to find out what madrasa strategies are in increasing the competence of graduate students in facing the globalization era at MAN 1 Pekanbaru and the factors that influence it. The informants in this study were school principals, curricula deputy heads, teachers and students of MAN 1 Pekanbaru. The madrasa strategy in increasing the competence of graduate students in facing the era of globalization at MAN 1 Pekanbaru is; 1) Changing the curriculum by adding material related to globalization; 2) Increasing the competence of teacher professionalism; 3) Changing the mindset of the teacher; 4) Improving the quality of madrasahs; 5) Evaluate learning activities. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the madrasah challenges were; 1) There is globalization; 2) Shifting educational paradigm; 3) Low public trust in madrasah productivity; 4) IT-based learning; 5) Curriculum changes; 6) Competence of madrasah graduates; 7) human resources produced by madrasahs; 8) Network and collaboration of madrasah graduates.

**Keywords:** *Graduate Competencies, Opportunities and Challenges, Curriculum Changes*

## Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa saja strategi madrasah dalam meningkatkan kompetensi lulusan siswa menghadapi era globalisasi di MAN 1 Pekanbaru dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhinya. Informan dalam penelitian ini adalah kepala sekolah, waka kurikulum, guru dan siswa MAN 1 Pekanbaru. Strategi madrasah dalam meningkatkan kompetensi lulusan siswa menghadapi era globalisasi di MAN 1 Pekanbaru adalah; 1) Merubah kurikulum dengan menambah materi yang berhubungan dengan globalisasi; 2) Peningkatan kompetensi profesionalisme guru; 3) Merubah pola pikir gurunya; 4) Peningkatan mutu madrasah; 5) Melakukan evaluasi kegiatan pembelajaran. Berdasarkan hasil observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi ditemukan tantangan madrasah adalah; 1) Adanya globalisasi; 2) Pergeseran paradigma pendidikan; 3) Rendahnya kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap produktivitas madrasah; 4) Pembelajaran yang berbasis IT; 5) Perubahan kurikulum; 6) Kompetensi lulusan madrasah; 7) SDM yang dihasilkan madrasah; 8) Jaringan dan kerjasama lulusan madrasah.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kompetensi Lulusan, Peluang dan Tantangan, Perubahan Kurikulum*

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## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is said to be good if it has good input and output values, meaning that these values can later solve societal problems (Liu, 2020; Sasmito et al., 2020; Stephen, 2022). The quality of education in Indonesia still needs to improve compared to other countries in the Southeast Asia region (Azisi, 2021; Shaturaev, 2021; Wahyudi, 2022). However, the government always tries to improve the quality of education for the community to create superior human resources to compete with outsiders (Wahyudi et al., 2022).

Facing current education problems, Indonesia is improving the quality of education and revising the quality of existing education (Gaol, 2018). What determines the quality of education is qualified human resources because they are interconnected with Indonesia's interrelationships in the future (Wang et al., 2021; Trihapsari & Mujahidah, 2021; Basri et al., 2022; Molina et al., 2022). Based on the 2017 World Economic Forum according to Global Human Capital Report data, Indonesia is very concerned because it is ranked 65th out of 130 countries in the field of education; this is due to a lack of interest in learning and literacy interest in reading books so that the quality of education in Indonesia is left far behind by neighbouring countries (Gaol, 2018).

Through its education ministry, the Indonesian government has made efforts to improve the quality of education, including empowering quality teachers and lecturers by increasing the minimum passing score (Mulyana, 2018; Yasin, 2021). To improve the quality of education in Indonesia and equal distribution of education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has launched an independent learning program which was introduced by the Minister of Education, including; USBN (National Standard School Examination), UN (National Examination), RPP (Learning Implementation Plan), and Zoning PPDB (New Student Acceptance) Regulations (kemdikbud, 2019). Improving education in Indonesia is also carried out by improving human resource management, educational services and administrative skill levels (Septiawati & Eftanastarin, 2020).

One of the existing educational institutions is called a madrasah. Madrasah start from elementary, middle to high levels. As Islamic educational institutions, Madrasah have been present for a long time and are more established (Muhammad et al., 2021; Basri et al., 2022). Madrasah exists to equip students with religious knowledge, general knowledge, skills, and the arts and develop students' interests and talents. In order to prepare students who excel in achievement, are intelligent, skilled and have good morals as a form of competition, various efforts have been made to win the hearts of and gain the trust of prospective students as customers (Kurniawan et al., 2021; Norman, 2022; Maranting et al., 2022).

Madrasah play a role in preparing students who are competent in facing globalization. The world of education has become the primary and solid foundation to continue to survive (Suharto, 2017). The main challenge of management is no longer conventional national but must be able to improve student alums' competency. The main factor for quality education lies in the teacher factor because the interaction process between teachers and students

will determine the effectiveness and efficiency of learning objectives (Lamba et al., 2014; Madani, 2019; Susanto, 2020). The quality of education will only succeed with the right strategy for improving the quality of all components. Several problems occur in improving the quality of education, such as teacher professionalism, graduate competency standards, practical learning, and programs that do not support quality achievement (Adilah & Suryana, 2021).

Graduate competency standards have a fundamental role in regulating the curriculum every year; graduate competencies are calculated from the thinking abilities and expertise of each student who aims to evaluate their affective and psychomotor abilities. These graduate competency standards are known in the school environment as the curriculum (Suradi et al., 2022). A curriculum is a tool for establishing relationships that aim to make the education system more systematic and workable in a structured and equitable manner (Baharun, 2017; Reniers et al., 2022).

Improving the quality of education in Madrasah is crucial and very urgent. This is further strengthened by the urgency of education at the Madrasah level for the growth and development of student's potential. Therefore, the quality of madrasah education has a vital, fundamental and crucial role in the success of education at the next level.

Transformation within the madrasah is one of the challenges given the various problems it faces, for example, 1) management capacity, 2) curriculum, 3) limited human resources, 4) academic orientation, 5) national exams, and 6) regional autonomy. Transformation also needs to be carried out simultaneously, considering each region's character in Indonesia and the diverse views that make the form of the madrasa itself not identical. In the context of madrasah aliyah, for example, apart from madrasah aliyah as it is generally known, some madrasahs put their students overnight to deepen their knowledge. Some Madrasah are integrated with Islamic boarding schools.

The quality of the teachers largely determines the success of improving the quality of education in Madrasah. As emphasized by Ace Suryadi, teachers are the most critical factor in realizing superior and quality education (Suryadi, 2014). Therefore, the focus and priority scale for improving teacher competence in Madrasah in Indonesia must be a significant concern.

Meanwhile, Mulyasa (2013) stated that competence is mastery of a task, skill, attitude, and appreciation needed to support success. The essential characteristics of competence can be classified into five types, namely motives, character, self-concept, knowledge, and skills (Amri & Poerwati, 2013).

Several studies on increasing student competency include First Efforts to improve graduate competency standards (Rahman, 2022). Second, the readiness of education and educational staff to welcome the ASEAN economic community (Fatkuroji, 2014). Third, pedagogic and professional competency policies in improving education (Suzanti et al., 2021). Fourth Development of madrasa management adaptability to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Suharto et al., 2019). Fifth, the madrasa head's leadership in improving graduates' quality at MA Nurul Islam Jati Agung (Latifah et al., 2021). Sixth, Management of Improving the Quality of Education at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 02 Lebong

(Erdiyanto et al., 2020). The Seventh Policy of the Madrasa Head in Improving the Quality of Education at the Sendangsari Pajangan Bantul Madrasah (Farizal et al., 2021). Based on previous research studies, this research is different because this study aims to analyze madrasa strategies in increasing the competence of graduate students in facing the opportunities and challenges of globalization at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Pekanbaru Riau.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is field research, which is qualitative (Moleong, 2007). The research subject was Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. Meanwhile, the madrasa strategy aims to increase graduate students' competence in facing the globalization era at MAN 1 Pekanbaru and the factors that influence it. The research informants were all research subjects (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2003), which consisted of madrasa heads, vice principals in curriculum areas, teachers and students.

Observation, interviews, and documentation carry out data collection techniques. Data analysis uses the inductive method continuously during data collection until the end of the study or concluding. Data analysis was carried out through four main activities: data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Madrasah Opportunities to Increase Graduate Competencies of Students

To learn more about madrasah opportunities in facing globalization at MAN 1 Pekanbaru, the authors interviewed school principals, curricula and PAI teachers. The main informant in this study is the principal as a leader in the madrasa. Leadership in the organization plays a crucial role in madrasah management. Therefore, through leadership, the management function can run according to the agreed mechanism to achieve educational goals (Purwanto & Agus, 2010), including in the madrasa strategy to increase the competence of graduate students because there is a direct influence from the leadership of the school principal on the competence of graduates and the quality of the teaching and learning process (Yayuk & Sugiyono, 2019). This is because school principals' management dramatically influences graduate competencies' quality (Siswadi et al., 2020). With quality and professional leadership, it will produce quality education and graduates (Latifah, 2021).

The head of the madrasa has authority in policies regarding applying discipline to students and teachers, providing services to all students and all levels of the institution, establishing good communication, and applying the characteristics of responsibility and tolerance (Farizal et al., 2021). In implementing good planning on the curriculum, infrastructure, and personnel, the principal should involve all stakeholders in the madrasah (Alfarizi, 2023).

If examined further, Madrasah are facing a competitive era based more on problematic aspects, namely related to skills, language skills and the use of technology. In contrast, aspects that are optimistic about the readiness of Madrasah are based more on soft aspects (intangible assets), namely related to aspects of culture, tradition and mentality. In the current context, the ability to manage

intangible assets is the main driver that will survive. To clarify the existence of Madrasah in the era of globalization, can be seen in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Madrasah Opportunities to Increase Graduate Competencies of Students**

	Internal	Strenght	Weakness
<b>External</b>			
<b>Opportunities</b>		<b>ST Strategy:</b>	<b>WT Strategy:</b>
1. Support from the government		1. Government regulations.	1. Lack of Knowledge of educational institution socialization
2. Support from business and industry		2. Knowledge or expertise possessed	2. Graduates who cannot be distinguished from graduates of other educational institutions/educational institutions
3. Community potential that can be developed		3. Graduates generated or unique services	3. The location of the educational institution is remote
4. There is a professional organization		4. The location where the educational institution is located	4. Poor quality of graduates
5. Institutions that continue to grow and education is a necessity for society		5. Quality of graduates or processes	5. Bad reputation
6. The existence of international-based education		6. The number of members is more than enough (quantitative)	6. Lack of communication between members
7. Opportunities because other educational institutions are unable to meet community demands		7. Experienced in several activities (qualitative)	7. The network that has been built is not maximized by all members.
8. The community is interested in environmental reforestation			
9. The issue that is being raised is an issue that is currently the main topic.			
10. In an era of moral crisis and honesty crisis like this, the role and role of Islamic religious education are needed to be more dominant.			
11. In the life of urban and modern society which tends to be consumptive and hedonic, it requires guidance from the soul, so that Islamic religious studies are increasingly needed.			
12. Historically and in reality, the majority of Indonesia's population is the largest Muslim community in the world			

Based on the SWOT analysis above, it is clear that Madrasah have significant strengths to be used in dealing with any change. One is related to the intangible assets owned, namely the values instilled in Madrasah which are also their characteristics. This characteristic is the primary capital that must be strengthened without eliminating the essence of Madrasah as da'wah institutions close to the community. As for the skill aspect, language skills will be easy to get used to if the mental aspect of the santri is by the characteristics of madrasah education.

Suppose globalization is synonymous with quality and competition, while Madrasah are synonymous with simplicity and kinship. In that case, both have relevance where competition requires human resources who are tenacious,



disciplined and willing to keep learning. This means that Madrasah should be able to participate in a competitive era as long as Madrasah run along the corridors of madrasah characteristics full of core values. This also reminds us that Madrasah, whatever their conditions, will be a balance or counterweight to the adverse effects of the changes that have occurred.

### Madrasah Challenges in Improving Student Graduate Competencies

Challenges are the opposite of opportunities; threats include unfavourable environmental factors for an educational institution. If a threat is not addressed, it will become a barrier or obstacle to progress and the role of an educational institution itself. For more details, it can be seen in the table below as follows:

**Table 2. Challenges of Madrasah to Increase Competencies of Graduate Students**

External	Internal	Strenght	Weakness
<b>Threat:</b>		<b>ST Strategy:</b>	<b>WT Strategy:</b>
1. Globalization		1. Strengthen the faith and competence of creative student graduates according to market demand	1. Improving the existing learning system in accordance with IT developments
2. Shifting educational paradigm		2. Conduct IT-based learning	2. Improving the curriculum.
3. Low public trust in school productivity		3. Prepare human resources who are ready to work	3. Providing special skills that support the world of work
4. IT-based learning		4. Establish cooperation with the government and the private sector, as well as companies	4. Conducting MOUs with government and private parties, as well as companies
5. Curriculum changes		5. Setting up advantages that are the advantages of other Islamic educational institutions	5. Providing special skills to students as an advantage of other Islamic educational institutions
6. Competence of madrasah graduates		6. Adjusting the price with the facilities and competencies produced	6. Adjusting the price with the facilities and competencies produced
7. Human resources produced by Madrasah		7. Provide students with good morals	7. Preparing graduates who have creativity.
8. Networking and collaboration with madrasah graduates			8. Prepare students who have good morals
9. There is a new Islamic education institution in the same area.			
10. Price competition with other educational institutions			

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### Strategies and Competencies of Graduates Prepared by Madrasah

Madrasah in the future is determined by how Madrasah face challenges and changes that occur quickly (Zakaria, 2014). The following is the strategy for Madrasah in facing the opportunities and challenges of Globalization from the Ministry of National Development Planning or Bappenas, which the author presents in tabular form.

**Table 3. Madrasah Strategy to Increase Graduate Competencies**

No	Madrasah Strategy to Improve Graduate Competencies
1	Changing the Madrasah Curriculum
2	Teacher professionalism improvement
3	Changing the mindset of teachers
4	Education quality improvement
5	Carry out learning evaluation activities

### **Changing Curriculum**

Education is increasingly seen as preparing young people for work, with a curriculum expected to provide relevant competencies. The notion of competence varies across contexts and over time, exploring the role of competence in different curricula, the relationship between competence and assessment and standards, and how this relates to the importance of increasing accountability in educational systems (Jia et al., 2023)

Graduate competency standards play an essential role in compiling the curriculum every year. Graduate competence is measured by the ability to think, behave, act, and the skills of each student to assess their knowledge and skills. Graduate competency standards are often known in school circles as curriculum. The curriculum as a teaching program device in education is required to compete with technological sophistication every year; curriculum changes will continue to be made according to society's times and needs (Rahman, 2022).

Implementation of curriculum management in improving the competence of curriculum content formulation or content that is adjusted to Content Standards and Graduate Competency Standards so that there is a correlation between groups of general subjects of religion and language, as well as curriculum structure based on student, needs in the short, medium and long term (Syaibani & Zamro, 2021). The contents of the curriculum must be by the expected goals, which refer to the formulation of objectives or in accordance with the vision and mission of education. The curriculum component consists of objectives, learning materials, teaching and learning processes and assessments that must be formulated harmoniously, harmoniously and balanced (Dedy et al., 2022).

### **Teacher Professionalism Competency Improvement**

An increase in teacher professionalism is a change in ability and attitude towards a more competent teacher person, who has better control over the material and learning methodology as well as being able to have the soul of an educator, thereby being able to carry out his teaching profession in a professional manner.

In this regard, Renald Kasali, in the Preface to the book *The Secret of Mindset* by Adi W. Gunawan (2008), revealed, "Change will not succeed before we succeed in changing the perspective and way of thinking of the actors of change. Change is not merely changing tools, technology, systems, organizations, etc. Instead, change the attitude through the way of thinking. In other words, to change teacher professionalism, the primary and most essential thing to do is change the perspective or way of thinking, or what is commonly called a change in mindset first. Thus, all efforts to increase teacher professionalism, whether through training, training, workshops, professional teacher education, teacher certification, or

improving teacher welfare, can function optimally.

According to Adi W. Gunawan (2008), the term mindset consists of two words: mind and set. Mindset, as a term, means belief or a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that influences a person's behaviour and attitude, which will ultimately determine the level of success in life. Thus, to change a person's mindset, the person's belief or set of beliefs must be changed first.

Hadiansah et al. (2021) stated that, as quoted by Erma Suzanti, the teacher competency improvement program is the development of teacher competence in increasing professionalism. Increasing teacher competence in learning aims to increase student competence by coaching teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating learning based on having high-level thinking skills. Program policies for increasing learning competencies are assessed from the results of pedagogic and professional competency tests (Suzanti et al., 2021).

Competent teachers in Islam, according to QS. Al-Qalam: 1-4 has competency characteristics: 1) Mastering and utilizing information and communication technology, 2) Having qualities of patience, self-confidence, courage, enthusiasm, earnestness, and never giving up in carrying out their duties, 3) Responsible fully and with a high work ethic, 4) Having a personality as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam. Teachers' professional competence can solve world problems, including moral problems, so graduates' quality is characterized by religion and cognitive, affective and psychomotor knowledge (Suhartini, 2023). Among the teacher competencies, they also have a positive relationship with their students, can use relevant technology to improve teaching quality, and have active and creative involvement (Enama, 2021; Runge et al., 2023).

### **Changing the Teacher's Mindset**

A teacher's limited competence, professionalism, productivity, welfare, and academic qualifications will lose confidence and be eliminated and left out if they do not have a positive mindset to face competition. One of the positive and essential mindsets for dealing with globalization includes referring to the opinion of Renald Kasali, the mindset of a driver (Sirajuddin, 2014).

The meaning of "driver" here, according to Renald Kasali (2014), is an attitude toward life or a way of seeing that distinguishes him from a "passenger". As a driver, SMA/MA teachers can live wherever they are and always raise hope. As a driver, the high school/MA teacher invites the people around him to develop and escape from old traditions to a new land of hope.

Driver's mentality is an awareness formed by experience and education. So more is needed for a driver to have determination and enthusiasm; he also needs references from academic knowledge. The principles of a driver are initiative, serving, navigation, and responsibility. The implementation for elementary and madrasah teachers in facing competition in the globalization era is: first, teachers must always have initiative. Second, the teacher must be able to serve. Third, teachers must have clear goals and targets (navigation). Fourth, teachers must be willing and able to work responsibly.



## Quality Improvement

Improving the quality of students through debriefing in non-academic fields is also expected to support the production of competitive graduates with an entrepreneurial spirit (such as non-formal education). Madrasah-based management in improving the quality of learning includes management of curriculum and teaching programs, teaching staff, student management, financial management, management of facilities and infrastructure and management of madrasah relations with the community. Factors supporting the implementation of madrasah-based management in improving the quality of learning include: experienced madrasa heads, teacher academic qualifications according to the subjects taught, and teachers who already have professional skills (Septianingsih et al., 2023)

The madrasah development plan generally includes the formulation of the vision, mission, goals, and strategies for implementing the madrasah. In contrast, the school's annual work plan generally includes identifying school goals (madrasah situational goals), selecting the madrasah functions needed to achieve the targets set, SWOT analysis, steps problem solving, and preparation of madrasah annual work plans and programs. The formulation of the vision of the madrasa as the initial basis, namely a clear and measurable vision and mission by seeking to improve the quality of education properly and achieve the goals of madrasah education in the form of implementation by the characteristics, potential and needs of students with superior quality educational services through networking and school sister with good quality schools (Erdiyanto et al., 2020).

If the madrasah's quality is high, it will produce students who have competence. Among the competencies students must have are commitment competencies, relational competencies, opportunity competencies, organizational competencies, personal strength competencies and social responsibility competencies (Antonia et al., 2023). Another student competency is the presence of relevant communication and interpersonal skills. Oral competence is related to confidence in public speaking. Simulation is a valuable strategy for enhancing cognitive learning and behaviour. Practical competencies such as public speaking provide at least one face-to-face session so students can conduct speeches and receive corrective feedback (Roso-Bas et al., 2020). A simulation-based learning experience (SBLE) is known to improve emotional skills. SBLE promotes emotional competence to meet the psychological needs of students (Alghamdi, 2021).

Globalization that takes place gives students the potential to encourage intercultural communication and language skills. Bilingual education is one format that allows challenges to be met but requires a high level of teacher professionalism. The competencies professional teachers need for secondary education are bilingual education (Scherzinger & Taiga Brahm, 2023). Ankica Jurkic (2023) states that mastery of language and social competence is essential for the development of students.

## Implement Learning Management

The madrasa head has a vital role in improving the learning process. Through all the strategies carried out by the head of the madrasa, the aim must be that educational institutions are clearly of higher quality (Mustika Rahayu Fahrani & Nada Shofa Lubis, 2021). So learning management is a process of managing planning, organizing, controlling/directing, and evaluating activities related to the learning process of students by involving various factors in it, in order to achieve educational goals and seek to improve the quality of education (Mukarromah et al., 2021) must be in supervision of the principal.

Evaluation of learning as a measure of the level of student ability in increasing student competency (Syaibani & Zamro, 2021) is an essential requirement to find out the results of the process of all learning activities by matching the relevance of industrial needs so that the community can quickly absorb the competitiveness of graduate students.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussion of the research above, by the SWOT analysis, madrasah have opportunities and challenges in increasing graduate students' competence in the era of globalization. The ability of madrasa principals, in managerial terms, to implement madrasa strategies such as: changing curriculum, increasing teacher competence, changing the mindset of teachers as drivers, not passengers, and improving learning management is believed to be able to increase the competence of graduate students in facing the era of globalization.

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