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A Relational And Spiritual Approach To Islamic Religious Education Supervision: A Case Study Of Teachers' Personality Competence At Mts Negeri 1 Sanana

Agusalim Firdaus
Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ternate, Maluku Utara.Indonesia
Melani Hamid
Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ternate, Maluku Utara.Indonesia
M. Yusuf Hamada
Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ternate, Maluku Utara.Indonesia
Jafar Sadik
Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ternate, Maluku Utara.Indonesia
Amran Papua
Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ternate, Maluku Utara.Indonesia
Agus
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ternate, North Maluku, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: *25020006@student.iain-ternate.ac.id*

Abstract

This study describes Islamic Religious Education (PAI) supervision that combines professional guidance with relational engagement and spiritual encouragement at MTs Negeri 1 Sanana, Sula Islands Regency, Indonesia. It employs a qualitative case-study design and draws on four informants: one PAI supervisor (Informant 1), the madrasah principal (Informant 4), an experienced PAI teacher (Informant 6), and a junior government-contract (PPPK) teacher (Informant 8). Data were gathered through interviews conducted on 12, 15, 18, and 20 March 2026, supported by passive participant observation and document analysis. Three patterns emerge from the accounts. First, supervision is described as a space for personal connection and dialogue rather than merely an administrative inspection. Second, messages about trust (amanah), worship, and awareness of accountability before God (muraqabah) are used to help teachers reconsider the meaning of their professional responsibilities. Third, informants associate

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these messages with discipline, patience, exemplary conduct, and responsibility toward students. Geographical and operational constraints that may limit supervisors' visits are also noted. The findings represent the experiences and perceptions of four informants in one madrasah; the study does not measure personality competence longitudinally or establish causal effects. The relational and spiritual approach is therefore understood as a meaningful supervisory practice in this setting, not as a model whose effectiveness has been empirically validated.

Keywords: Islamic religious education supervision; spiritual motivation; teacher personality competence; case study; madrasah.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' responsibilities extend beyond delivering lesson content. In madrasahs, teachers also educate through their conduct, exemplary behavior, communication, and interactions with students (Musa et al., 2026). Personality competence is therefore an important dimension of teachers' professional work. Indonesian national standards identify personality competence as one of the core competencies required of teachers(Crigler et al., 2013). These standards include having a firm, stable, mature, wise, and authoritative personality, serving as a role model, and demonstrating noble character r(Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional., 2007)

Personality competence is not limited to knowing the principles of appropriate conduct. In educational practice, it may be reflected in how teachers carry out their responsibilities, regulate their emotions, communicate with students, and model appropriate behavior. Its development requires more than administrative inspection. Educational supervision may provide a space for professional support, reflection, and dialogue about teachers' responsibilities and conduct(Indrioko, 2020).

Literature on educational supervision emphasizes collegial relationships, interpersonal skills, classroom observation, and professional dialogue as elements of teacher development. Glickman et al., (2001)) describe supervision as a developmental process in which supervisory approaches should be responsive to teachers' needs and levels of professional development. This perspective is relevant to examining supervisory practices that seek to combine professional guidance with open communication and interpersonal support. It does not, however, mean that every relational approach necessarily produces measurable improvements in teaching practice.

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In Islamic education, professional guidance may be accompanied by a strengthening of the spiritual meaning of work(Djafar et al., 2026). Teachers may understand teaching as a trust (*amanah*) and a form of devotion, so that professional responsibility is not viewed solely as an administrative obligation. However, spiritual motivation cannot automatically be equated with intrinsic motivation as defined in psychological theory. Self-Determination Theory holds that the quality of motivation is related to processes of internalization and to the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness Deci & Ryan (2012). In this study, the theory is used only to interpret accounts of meaning-making; it is not used to measure motivation or test causal relationships. Spiritual motivation in Islamic education also has theological foundations that should not be treated as identical to psychological constructs in Self-Determination Theory.

The island context is also relevant to the conditions under which supervision takes place. Inter-island distances, reliance on sea transport, weather conditions, and travel costs may affect access to educational institutions (Manakane et al., 2026). These factors provide a contextual frame for understanding supervision in island settings, but they should not be generalized to all madrasahs in archipelagic regions. Their relevance to the present case must be considered in light of the evidence available from the study.(Djafar et al., 2026).

This study is based on four interviews conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Sanana on 12, 15, 18, and 20 March 2026. The interviews document the experiences of a PAI supervisor, the madrasah principal, and two teachers regarding supervisory practices that foreground silaturahmi (the maintenance of personal bonds), dialogue, and the reinforcement of Islamic values. The four interviews and limited supporting observation and documentation notes do not support broad claims about spiritual motivation as a mediating variable, significant or sustained improvements in teacher competence, or the development of a new supervision model. The study therefore makes no such claims(O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015).

On this basis, the study addresses three questions: (1) How are relational and spiritual approaches experienced in PAI supervision at MTs Negeri 1 Sanana? (2) How do the informants interpret spiritual reinforcement in relation to teachers' professional responsibilities and personality-related conduct? and (3) What contextual constraints are relevant to the implementation of supervision at this madrasah? These questions keep the analysis within the scope of the available empirical material.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case-study design to examine supervisory practice within one educational institution, MTs Negeri 1 Sanana, in the Sula Islands Regency, North Maluku Province. A case-study design is appropriate for examining a practice in its institutional context and for considering the experiences of the people involved (Creswell JW, 1998). The study is bounded by one madrasah and the accounts collected from four informants during March 2026

Four informants were selected purposively on the basis of their involvement in, and knowledge of, PAI supervision at the madrasah: a PAI supervisor (Informant 1), the madrasah principal (Informant 4), an experienced PAI teacher (Informant 6), and a junior PPPK teacher (Informant 8). The numbers 1, 4, 6, and 8 are informant codes retained from the original research records; they do not indicate that eight people participated. Informants are identified by code rather than by name

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews took place on 12 March 2026 with the PAI supervisor, 15 March 2026 with the madrasah principal, 18 March 2026 with the experienced PAI teacher, and 20 March 2026 with the junior PPPK teacher. Interview quotations were translated from Indonesian into English by the authors. Observation and documentation materials were used as supporting sources; they are not treated as a systematic or independently verified measurement of behavioral change.

The analysis was descriptive and theme-oriented. The interview accounts and available supporting notes were reviewed and organized around four areas: relational supervision, the spiritual meaning of professional responsibility, personality-related behavior, and contextual constraints on supervision. The themes presented in the article reflect recurring topics and relevant content in the available material. Miles et al., (2014) informed the general organization and presentation of qualitative data. The study does not claim to have implemented a fully documented, formal coding protocol.

Methodological transparency requires acknowledging limits in the research records. Detailed information is not available for the dates and durations of observations, the complete list of documents analyzed, the interview guide, the step-by-step coding procedure, or informant checking of the findings. Accordingly, the article does not claim member checking, an external audit, intercoder reliability testing, or formal triangulation. The findings are interpreted in

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proportion to the interview accounts and supporting notes that are available.(Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Supervision as a Space for Fellowship and Professional Dialogue

The first theme concerns the personal relationship between the supervisor and teachers. The PAI supervisor (Informant 1) described his approach as "Supervisi Silaturahmi." He explained that the circumstances of teachers in an island region should be understood before guidance is offered on teaching(Riebschleger et al., 2015). In his view, a supervisory visit should not be limited to reprimands or document checks; it should begin with communication that establishes interpersonal closeness.

> "We are well aware that supervising in an island region like Sula cannot be equated with a big city. The teachers here already live with limited facilities and geographical isolation. If we come only to scold them or check their administrative papers, they will become more stressed and lose their enthusiasm for teaching. Therefore, we apply the principle of 'Supervisi Silaturahmi'. We come as an older sibling, as a friend to talk things over with. We touch their hearts first with Islamic values, ask after their families, and only then do we examine together what difficulties they face in the classroom. This kinship approach (ukhuwah) is what we use as our main instrument." (Interview with Informant 1, 12 March 2026)

This account presents "Supervisi Silaturahmi" as the supervisor's own description of his practice. It is not treated here as a formally established or empirically tested supervision model. The account suggests that the supervisor understands personal attention and discussion of teaching problems as connected parts of supervisory interaction. This interpretation is consistent with the collegial and interpersonal dimensions of supervision discussed by Glickman et al., (2001b)). Nevertheless, the available evidence supports a description of the relational experience more strongly than an assessment of the technical quality or overall effectiveness of classroom supervision.

The madrasah principal (Informant 4) also described supervisory visits as opportunities for spiritual encouragement and consultation. In the principal's account, the conversation after classroom observation provided a more open setting in which teachers could discuss how to

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respond to students. The principal therefore experienced guidance not only as formal inspection but also as an opportunity for reflection.

> "The presence of the PAI supervisor at our madrasah always brings spiritual refreshment to the teachers. Unlike supervisors at general schools, who are sometimes rigid, the PAI supervisor always begins the evaluation with words of encouragement, quoting verses of the Qur'an or hadith about the nobility of knowledge. The post-observation discussion is no longer tense but becomes a small halaqah forum where teachers can consult on how to deal with naughty or reactive students with an Islamic approach of patience." (Interview with Informant 4, 15 March 2026)

The principal's comparison between PAI supervisors and supervisors of other subjects should be read as a personal perception, not as an empirical comparison between supervisory groups. The study contains no comparative observations of supervisors from different subject areas. Consistent with the interpretive nature of case-study research, findings from a single case should not be treated as statistically generalizable to wider populations (Flyvbjerg, 2004). Therefore, the evidence supports the narrower interpretation that this principal regarded spiritual encouragement and post-observation dialogue as meaningful features of the supervisory experience at this madrasah.

Spiritual Meaning-Making of Teachers' Professional Responsibility

The second theme concerns the way teachers interpret their professional responsibilities through the concept of amanah. The experienced PAI teacher (Informant 6) connected the working conditions in an island region, limited facilities, and fatigue with the need for moral encouragement. According to his account, the supervisor reminded him that students are a trust from Allah and should be served wholeheartedly. The informant interpreted this message as encouragement to continue fulfilling his teaching responsibilities.

> "Honestly, being on a remote island like Sanana, with a barely adequate salary and a madrasah with very limited facilities, sometimes makes me tired and want to give up. I feel like teaching in a half-hearted way. But every time the supervisor comes and invites us to talk, he reminds us: 'Sir, these children of Sula are a trust from Allah. Set your steps to school as jihad fi sabilillah. If you are sincere, every drop of sweat in this remote region will be a witness for you in the hereafter.' Words that come from the supervisor's sincerity broke down my ego. I felt my heart was touched directly. My motivation rose again, not

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because I fear the performance score from the ministry, but because I fear Allah if I teach without being trustworthy."(Interview with Informant 6, 18 March 2026)

The quotation indicates that the informant connected the supervisor's advice with a renewed interpretation of his professional task. References to trust, sincerity, and accountability before Allah formed a moral vocabulary through which he understood his work. In this article, spiritual motivation refers descriptively to this meaning-making process; it is not a psychological variable that was measured(Flowers et al., 2009). The study did not use a motivation scale, compare motivation before and after supervision, or establish that the supervisor's message was the sole cause of a change in the teacher's attitud

This account can be discussed cautiously alongside the concept of internalization in Self-Determination Theory. Ryan & Deci (2000) explain that values and goals that initially come from outside the individual may become more fully integrated into a person's reasons for acting. This concept offers one interpretive lens for considering how the teacher understood the supervisor's advice as a personally meaningful reason to remain responsible. However, the spiritual meaning of amanah in Islamic education has its own theological basis and should not be equated with the categories of motivation in Self-Determination Theory. Given that the evidence consists of the informant's retrospective account, the interpretation remains contextual and exploratory.

Supervision and Teachers' Personality-Related Behavior

The junior PPPK teacher (Informant 8) recounted that, at the beginning of his employment, he focused primarily on completing instructional administration. Following a conversation with the supervisor, he came to understand that a teacher's conduct in front of students was also part of professional responsibility. He associated the guidance with an intention to be disciplined, dress neatly, and control his anger when students became noisy.

"As a new teacher, at first my focus was on how to finish all the curriculum administration documents so that my performance assessment would be safe in the eyes of the supervisor. However, after talking directly with the supervisor during clinical supervision, my view was changed completely. He stressed that administration is important as worldly order, but the nobility of our character in front of students in the classroom is the substance for the hereafter. Since then, there has been a moral drive within me to be more disciplined in arriving on time, to dress neatly in a way that reflects the dignity of a Muslim teacher, and to hold back my anger when students are noisy. This change was

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born because I feel I am being watched by Allah (muraqabah), an awareness that the supervisor succeeded in cultivating through his guidance." (Interview with Informant 8, 20 March 2026)

Informant 8's account suggests that supervisory guidance was understood as a reminder that teachers' professional responsibilities extend beyond instructional and administrative requirements to include personal conduct. The aspects of discipline, neatness, and emotional self-control mentioned by the informant are relevant to the personality competence dimension of teacher professionalism. Nevertheless, this account reflects one teacher's experience and understanding following a dialogue with the supervisor. It is therefore more appropriately interpreted as an indication of awareness regarding the importance of professional conduct than as evidence of consistent or sustained behavioral change.

The observation and documentation notes also record several behaviors relevant to professional conduct and personality competence, including punctuality in entering the classroom, neat attire, courteous speech, emotional self-control, and participation in congregational Duha and Zuhr prayers. These records provide descriptive indications of behaviors noted during the research. However, the available documentation does not include systematic observation dates, completed observation sheets, records of the frequency of observed behaviors, or comparative evidence from before and after supervision. Consequently, these observations are treated as descriptive field evidence rather than proof of measurable improvement in teachers' personality competence or sustained behavioral change.

Indonesian national standards describe personality competence in terms that include a firm, stable, mature, wise, and authoritative personality, the ability to serve as a role model, and noble character (Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007). The interview account and field notes in this study address only selected aspects related to discipline, self-control, exemplary conduct, and professional responsibility. They do not provide sufficient evidence to examine all dimensions of personality competence comprehensively. The findings are therefore limited to the aspects reflected in the informant's account and the available field records; they should not be interpreted as an overall assessment of the personality competence of all teachers at the madrasah.

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Geographical Constraints and Limits on Carrying Out Supervision

The geographical characteristics of an archipelagic region provide an important context for understanding the implementation of educational supervision. Inter-island distances, dependence on sea transportation, changing weather conditions, and travel costs may affect the accessibility of educational institutions(Bufalino & Privitera, 2025). These factors are relevant to the practical planning of supervisory activities in island settings(Nomah et al., 2022). However, in the present study, they are not supported by direct interview quotations or independently verified administrative records. They should therefore be treated as contextual considerations rather than as established findings about the frequency or continuity of supervisory visits.

Where direct visits are difficult to arrange, realistic scheduling, communication between visits, and systematic records of follow-up may be considered as practical options. These suggestions are implications for supervisory planning, not evidence that remote or hybrid supervision has already been implemented or shown to be effective at MTs Negeri 1 Sanana. The study does not report a verified average number of supervisory visits per semester. No visit schedule or official travel records were available to substantiate such a figure. Accordingly, no numerical claim about visit frequency is made.

Cross-Theme Interpretation

Taken together, the four interviews indicate that the supervisory experiences described by the informants encompass relational and spiritual dimensions. The relational dimension is reflected in silaturahmi, familial communication, and dialogue about challenges encountered in teaching. The spiritual dimension is evident in reminders about trust (amanah), worship, sincerity (ikhlas), and awareness of accountability before God (muraqabah). The informants described these elements as meaningful sources of encouragement in carrying out their professional responsibilities. These accounts document how the informants interpreted supervisory interactions; they do not establish measurable changes in motivation, teaching performance, or personality competence(Nowell et al., 2017).

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Table 1. Summary of themes, informant sources, and the scope of the data

Theme	Informant source	Summary and scope of the data
Supervision as fellowship and dialogue	Informants 1 and 4	The supervisor describes the approach as Supervisi Silaturahmi, while the principal describes post-observation conversations as small, halaqah-style discussions. These accounts support a description of relational supervision as experienced by the informants but do not provide a basis for comparing supervisors or supervisory effectiveness.
Spiritual meaning of professional responsibility	Informants 6 and 8	Teaching is framed as a form of trust (amanah), accompanied by reminders about sincerity (ikhlas) and accountability before God (muraqabah). These accounts illustrate the spiritual meanings associated with professional responsibility rather than measurable changes in teachers' motivation..
Personality-related behavior	Informant 8; observation and documentation notes	Discipline, punctuality, neat attire, emotional self-control, and exemplary conduct are identified as aspects of teachers' professional behavior. The evidence is descriptive and does not establish changes in personality competence over time..
Geographical and operational constraints	Contextual description (no direct interview quotation)	Inter-island transportation, weather conditions, and operational budget limitations are identified as factors that may affect the frequency and continuity of supervisory visits. These contextual factors are presented descriptively and are not supported by independently verified visit-frequency records..

The findings should be interpreted within the empirical and methodological boundaries of this study. The available data do not provide sufficient grounds for developing a new

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supervisory model or establishing a mediating relationship among supervision, spiritual motivation, and personality competence. Such claims would require systematic measurement, comparative evidence, and longitudinal data, none of which were part of the present study. Rather, this article contributes a context-specific account of how four informants experienced and interpreted supervisory practices in one island madrasah. It highlights the relational and spiritual language used in supervisory interactions and how the informants associated these values with their understanding of professional responsibility. This contextual contribution may inform further research on educational supervision in geographically dispersed and culturally distinctive educational settings.

CONCLUSION

This study found that four informants at MTs Negeri 1 Sanana described PAI supervision as a process involving not only administrative review but also silaturahmi, professional dialogue, and the reinforcement of Islamic values. The supervisor was perceived as using messages about trust (amanah), worship, sincerity, and muraqabah to invite teachers to reflect on the meaning of their professional responsibilities. The informants connected these forms of guidance with the importance of discipline, patience, exemplary conduct, and responsibility toward students. The findings identify relational and spiritual dimensions in the supervisory experiences reported by the informants; they do not establish a new supervision model or demonstrate causal effects.

The study does not demonstrate that this approach caused significant or sustained improvements in teachers' personality competence. The evidence is limited to four interviews in one madrasah and a small set of supporting observation and documentation notes whose details are incomplete. The findings should therefore be understood as a context-specific account of experiences and perceptions, not as an assessment of all teachers or all island madrasahs.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. PAI supervisors may maintain communication that respects teachers' experiences and connect spiritual guidance with concrete teaching challenges. Value-based encouragement should complement, not replace, professional feedback, classroom observation, and clear follow-up.

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2. Madrasah principals may support the continuity of supervisory guidance through realistic internal practices, such as reflective dialogue, courteous communication, and reinforcement of teachers' responsibilities toward students.
3. In island contexts, supervisors and madrasahs should maintain records of supervisory visits, follow-up actions, and communication between visits. Such records can help identify access constraints and guidance needs on the basis of evidence rather than recollection or impression.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study has several limitations. First, there were only four informants, all from one madrasah, so the findings are not intended for statistical generalization. Second, the detailed procedures of observation, the list of documents, and the data-analysis process are not fully documented. Third, the available data do not permit measuring changes in personality competence before and after supervision. Fourth, the reported frequency of visits and the geographical constraints still require supporting documents or additional quotations.

Future studies could widen the number and variety of informants, document observations systematically, examine supervision documents, and carry out repeated observations to understand the consistency of teachers' behavior over time. Studies that compare relational and spiritual supervision with other supervisory approaches, or that measure personality competence with appropriate instruments, would also help assess the practical value of the approach described here.

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