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Received: March 17, 2026

Revised: May 18, 2026

Accepted: June 13, 2026

Talent Sourcing Strategies for Addressing Islamic Religious Education Teacher Shortages: A Case Study at MTs Izzatul Kamilah, Indonesia

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Abstract

The shortage of Islamic Religious Education teachers can disrupt teaching schedules, increase teachers' workloads, and weaken the continuity of religious character-development programmes in madrasahs. This study aimed to analyse the talent-sourcing strategy used by MTs Izzatul Kamilah to address the shortage of Islamic Religious Education teachers. A qualitative approach with a single-case study design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with actors involved in teacher planning, recruitment, placement, and mentoring, supported by non-participant observations and document analysis. The data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, while credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation, audit trails, and researcher reflexivity. The findings revealed that talent sourcing was implemented through teaching-load-based needs mapping, proactive activation of alumni, community, university, and teacher-education networks, competence- and value-based selection, appropriate teaching placement, and initial mentoring. These interconnected practices reduced vacant teaching periods, improved schedule regularity, and supported the continuity of Islamic Religious Education and religious character-development programmes. However, their sustainability was constrained by the limited availability of qualified candidates, uncompetitive incentives, dependence on particular teachers, and inadequate human resource data management. The study concludes that talent sourcing should be integrated with systematic workforce planning, institutional partnerships, professional development, and teacher-retention policies to establish a stable teacher pipeline and sustain the quality of Islamic Religious Education services.

Keywords: Human Resource Deficit; Islamic Religious Education Teachers; Madrasah; Talent Sourcing; Teacher Retention

Introduction

The availability and equitable distribution of teachers is a strategic issue because it directly affects the continuity of services, the stability of school organizations, and the learning outcomes of students, especially when there is a shortage of personnel triggering free hours, class mergers, or non-ideal cross-subject teaching (Castro, 2022; Westphal et al., 2024). At the junior high school and madrasah tsanawiyah levels, the shortage of Islamic Religious Education teachers risks lowering the quality of learning and weakening the development of religious morals and culture, which require educators with adequate pedagogical and religious authority (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty,

2021; Maarif et al., 2024). Teacher vacancies also increase the workload of available teachers and heighten work pressure, which has the potential to disrupt the consistency of teaching and student assistance (Arismunandar et al., 2021; Hascher & Waber, 2021). This condition is influenced by the dynamics of teacher demographics, recruitment and placement policies, job market competition, and competency demands in the digital era, which encourages madrasas to strengthen human resource planning based on projections and capabilities (Bentri et al., 2025; Klassen et al., 2025).

From the perspective of education human resource management, the human resource deficit refers to gaps in numbers, qualifications, competencies, and distribution of personnel, so that schools are not always able to place personnel who meet service needs. (Tuytens et al., 2023; Wanayati et al., 2025). In madrasas, PAI teachers are strategic human resources because they carry the mandate of learning as well as strengthening values, examples, and religious culture that shape students' daily practices (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Usman & Zainuddin, 2021). Handling that is only temporary, such as additional assignments without clear planning, has the potential to aggravate work demands and increase the risk of professional burnout, which correlates with decreased job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession (Arismunandar et al., 2021; Madigan & Kim, 2021). Therefore, meeting the needs of PAI teachers needs to be supported by human resource planning and data-based talent management so that the quality of learning and the sustainability of services are maintained.

The concept of *talent sourcing* in educational institutions refers to the proactive process of identifying, mapping, and attracting potential candidates from internal and external sources to build a *talent pool* and *talent pipeline* that is ready to meet the needs of teachers in a sustainable manner (Connelly et al., 2025; Schinnenburg & Böhmer, 2025). Operationally, this approach can be carried out through strengthening the attractiveness of the institution as an employer, utilizing alumni networks, and developing partnerships that expand candidates' access to relevant teacher preparation pathways (Siem et al., 2025; Thompson-Lee et al., 2025). Its effectiveness increases when institutions use HR analytics to project needs, guide recruitment and placement decisions, and design competency strengthening programs through reskilling and upskilling to maintain pedagogical readiness (Anthun et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024) (Anthun et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024). Thus, *talent sourcing* is a strategy to mitigate the risk of teacher vacancies and maintain the stability of learning services by shifting the fulfillment of needs from a reactive to a preventive, planned approach.

Several studies related to teacher shortages show that the shortage of educators not only impacts the learning process, but also forces schools to manage operational consequences such as the closure of free hours, assignment adjustments, and a shift in leadership focus towards handling service crises (Castro, 2022; Thompson-Lee et al., 2025). Several studies also confirm that the shortage condition is related to increased work pressure and professional burnout, which ultimately increases the intention to leave the profession and exacerbates retention problems when organizational support is inadequate (Castro, 2022; Madigan & Kim, 2021). In addition, there are findings that staffing strategies are increasingly geared towards building candidate pathways and improving recruitment processes, including the use of digital innovations to expand search reach, although their effectiveness still depends on competency-based selection and recruitment governance that ensures the quality of teaching (Klassen et al., 2025; Thompson-Lee et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, the study of human resource management in Islamic educational institutions emphasizes the urgency of strengthening planning and recruitment to maintain the quality of madrasas, but studies that specifically capture the development of candidate flows as an operational process for fulfilling teachers, including PAI teachers, are still relatively limited

(Indayanti et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2024).

Departing from this trend, the need to strengthen teacher fulfillment strategies requires a more “upstream” approach, namely the management of candidate resources and pipeline quality so that institutions are not trapped in a patchwork pattern when labor shortages occur. The research gap in this study lies in the lack of studies that empirically map talent sourcing strategies in madrasahs for PAI subjects, including evidence on operational processes (candidate sources, selection, placement, and initial retention) as well as the influence of institutional context (rules, networks, resources, and organizational culture). The study focuses to answering: which sourcing strategies are used, how the process is carried out, which factors support or inhibit it, and how it impacts the fulfillment of PAI teachers and the stability of learning services. With this focus, the study uses MT Izzatul Kamilah as an empirical context to examine talent sourcing practices in madrasahs more operationally and contextually.

In the framework of education human resource management, strengthening teacher fulfillment through a data-based approach and talent governance is considered important to maintaining service quality while reducing the risk of work pressure that can lead to performance sustainability issues. The purpose of this study is to analyze the talent sourcing strategy of madrasah in dealing with the human resource deficit in PAI subjects at MTs Izzatul Kamilah. Theoretical contributions are intended to enrich the literature on madrasah human resource management and talent sourcing in the education sector. In contrast, practical contributions are expected to provide references for madrasah heads, curriculum managers, foundations, and policymakers in designing a more systematic PAI teacher fulfillment. To achieve this goal, this study uses an approach that places the institutional context and operational processes as the main unit of analysis to capture talent sourcing practices in depth.

Method

This research is a qualitative case study at MTs Izzatul Kamilah to understand in depth how the talent sourcing strategy is carried out when madrasahs face a deficit of PAI teachers, from needs mapping and candidate identification to placement selection and initial retention. The case study design was chosen because it allows context-rich explanations of managerial practices and institutional decisions that take place in real-world situations, while relying on multiple evidence (interviews, observations, documents) so that explanations do not rest on a single data source (Greenhalgh, 2025).

The research procedure was carried out gradually and iteratively, starting from the initial mapping of the problem (confirming the form of PAI teacher deficit and its consequences on the division of hours and continuity of service), followed by the determination of key informants, repeated data collection through interviews–observations, documentation, and the writing of analytical memos to improve the focus of questions and deepen the incomplete evidence. This iterative pattern is in line with contemporary qualitative research principles that place data collection and analysis as mutually reinforcing processes so that findings are more consistent with the context of the case, and the traces of evidence can be traced (Forberg & Schilt, 2023; Lim, 2024).

The research subjects or participants were determined *purposively* based on direct involvement in teacher needs planning, recruitment, selection, placement, and initial coaching of PAI teachers. Core participants include the head of the madrasah as a policy maker, the deputy head of curriculum/academic (or equivalent role) who manages the distribution of the workload of hours and schedules, the personnel administration manager or recruitment team (if available), the coordinator/senior teacher of PAI who understands the needs of the madrasah competence and

culture, as well as external actors who influence the candidate's channel (e.g. alumni/community network or LPTK partners) when proven relevant. If in the interview process other key actors are found who master strategic information, the selection can be expanded in a *snowball* to complete the sourcing process map (Greenhalgh, 2025).

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore the order of decisions and the rationality of *talent sourcing practices* (for example, the basis for hour-based needs mapping, external and internal candidate sources, standards for competency suitability and madrasah values, selection and placement mechanisms, and patterns of initial training assistance). The in-depth interview approach was chosen because it effectively captures the details of the process before, during, and after the interview, including probing strategies to obtain concrete examples and avoid normative answers (Xu et al., 2025). Observations focus on real practices that reflect the management of the PAI teacher deficit, such as scheduling, redistribution of teaching hours, substitution practices, mentoring new teachers, and coordination patterns between leaders and teachers. Document studies include planning of teacher needs, division of teaching duties, recruitment archives (announcements, candidate files, selection records, assignment letters), meeting minutes related to teacher fulfillment, and initial coaching documents if available; documents are used to test consistency between interview claims and policy administrative footprint (Cleland et al., 2021; Greenhalgh, 2025).

The research instrument places the researcher as the main instrument, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document checklists. Because the study did not use a reference management application such as Mendeley, citation management was done manually by (a) compiling the master bibliography from the beginning of writing, (b) applying a consistent citation format to the manuscript, and (c) cross-checking citations in the text and the final bibliography to reduce reference errors. This kind of detailed documentation practice is also aligned with the recommendations of *trail audits* and research process tracing to strengthen the traceability of methodological decisions in qualitative research (Forberg & Schilt, 2023; Lim, 2024).

To ensure the connection among research objectives, data sources, evidence indicators, and analysis outputs, instrument grids serve as an operational map for data collection and a guarantee of thematic traceability. These grids help researchers maintain the methodological coherence typical of case studies (integrating various evidence) while facilitating the thematic coding process so that each theme has adequate data support from interviews, observations, and documents (Greenhalgh, 2025; Yin, 2009).

Table 1. Research Instrument Grid

Domain fokus <i>talent sourcing</i>	Interview indicators	Observation indicators	Documents reviewed	Target evidence
Hourly load-based needs mapping	The basis for calculating PAI hours, recruitment triggers, and the "Minimum Needs" standard	Schedule changes; redistribution of hours; Substitution practices	Lesson schedule; division of teaching duties; Teacher Needs Plan	Logic and accuracy of needs mapping
Candidate resources and recruitment channels	Utilizing alumni/community networks, LPTK partnership, and referral mechanism	Candidate search meetings/coordination; Network Communication	Announcement archive; partnership letters/memorandums; List of candidates	Candidate <i>pipeline</i> strength

Selection and placement	Qualification criteria; teaching/microteaching tests; <i>value fit</i> ; Reasons for placement	Orientation practice; initial assistance; Initial supervision	Selection records; letter of assignment; Onboarding Documents	Coherence of criteria–placement outcomes
Supporting and inhibiting factors	Scarcity of candidates; Incentive competitiveness; HR data limitations	Administrative bottleneck points: Visible workload	HR Recap; incentive documents (if any); Archives of Needs	Structure of constraints and opportunities
Implications for the stability of PAI services and quality	Continuity of service; the consistency of religious programs; Workload Impact	Continuity of learning; consistency of PAI activities	Activity reports, supervision records, and Academic Agenda	Impact on stability and quality

Instrument validation is carried out through an assessment of the suitability of the content and the applicability of the field by placing expert analysis as the initial stage to ensure the scope of indicators, editorial clarity, relevance to the objectives, and reducing items that have the potential to lead to answers, then strengthened with brief clarification based on cognitive interviews so that each question is understood according to the researcher's intention; After that, the instruments were tested limited to one to two participants whose characteristics were close to the main informant to assess the flow, duration, and effectiveness of the probing, and then revised as necessary by recording changes as a validation trace (Poll & Petru, 2023; Scott et al., 2021; Teixeira et al., 2024).

Data analysis is carried out using reflexive thematic analysis, starting with interview transcription, archiving observation notes as fieldnotes, and organizing documents into a corpus of evidence. The researcher familiarizes themselves with the data, conducts initial coding, develops and reviews themes, defines themes, and then writes narratives of the findings in an interpretive manner, ensuring coherence among the research questions, data, and analytical claims. This approach was chosen because it provides a systematic framework for building themes while affirming the role of researcher reflexivity in the construction of meaning, as well as quality thematic reporting standards (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Byrne, 2022). To ensure *trustworthiness*, the research applies triangulation of sources and methods, documentation of processes through *trail audits* of coding decisions and theme revisions, and reflection of researchers on assumptions and potential biases to strengthen credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Ahmed, 2024; Nowell et al., 2017).

Research ethics are upheld by obtaining *informed consent* after the researcher clearly explains the objectives, procedures, benefits, and potential risks, and emphasizes that participation is voluntary and can be stopped at any time without consequences. Confidentiality is maintained through identity anonymization, restricting data access to research purposes, and securing transcripts, *fieldnotes*, and supporting documents, along with ethical reflexivity to manage power relations and potential bias during fieldwork.

Results

The findings of the study show that madrasah leaders understand the human resource deficit of PAI teachers at MTs Izzatul Kamilah to be not only a problem of formation vacancies but also a condition that directly affects the stability of learning services, the distribution of workloads, and the consistency in fostering students' religious character. In operational practice, the deficit is

reflected in dynamic scheduling, the redistribution of teaching hours to cover shortages, and adjustments when teachers are unable to teach or when PAI hours are not fully met. At the policy level of the education unit, this situation is identified as an operational risk that can compromise service quality, so talent sourcing is pursued as an active strategy to maintain the continuity of PAI learning through a more agile and responsive mechanism than waiting for long-term formal fulfillment.

The next findings show that the talent sourcing strategy begins with practical, load-based need mapping. The mapping was carried out by reading the distribution of PAI hours, the availability of qualified teachers, and the ability of madrasas to realistically allocate teaching loads. However, needs mapping doesn't stop at calculating the number of hours; Curriculum leaders and managers also consider the continuity of the PAI program inherent in madrasah culture, such as teachers' involvement in religious development, worship assistance, and character agendas. Thus, the needs of PAI teachers are understood as the need for teaching capacity and the need for "value matching" with the institution's culture, so that the professional and institutional dimensions go hand in hand in the process of needs planning.

Regarding candidate sources, the findings show that madrasahs use both internal and external channels simultaneously. Internal channels are dominated by alumni networks, recommendations from the surrounding community, and references from figures closely connected to the madrasah environment. This channel is considered effective because it accelerates the fulfillment of needs, reduces costs, and increases the opportunity to obtain candidates who understand the culture of madrasahs or have social closeness to the local educational community. Meanwhile, external channels are established through partnerships with teacher training institutions, campus networks, and professional communities. Interestingly, such partnerships are not always formalized as an MoU; some rely on personal communication among stakeholders who know each other and leverage institutional reputation as trust capital.

The findings also confirm a pattern of "network activation" when madrasahs enter a phase of teacher shortages. Network activation means that madrasahs do not passively wait for applicants but instead take proactive steps, such as contacting specific alumni, seeking referrals from trusted networks, and identifying candidates deemed suitable. This practice shows that talent sourcing operates as a social relationship-based strategy; Liaison figures such as leaders, senior teachers, or specific network actors play a key role because trust, track record, and reputation are key considerations in accelerating recruitment decision-making.

At the selection and placement stage, the findings show that madrasahs implement selection processes that emphasize two dimensions: the suitability of teaching competence and the suitability of values with the madrasah's culture. Competency suitability is assessed through educational background, teaching experience, ability to develop learning tools, and evidence of mastery of PAI material. The suitability of grades is assessed by how the candidate interprets the role of PAI teachers, their commitment to developing religious character, and their attitude towards discipline and work ethic, which are the institution's expectations. Under certain conditions, the selection is complemented by a teaching practice test or microteaching simulation, although the format and intensity adjust to the candidate's urgent needs and availability. Teaching placement is carried out by considering the timesheet, class needs, and the candidate's readiness to carry out additional tasks that are commonly attached to PAI learning in madrasahs.

The next prominent finding is efforts to strengthen initial capacity through mentoring and training, especially in the initial phase of new teacher assignments. Mentoring is understood as an "adaptation bridge" to help teachers adjust to learning patterns, teaching administration, and work

culture at MTs Izzatul Kamilah. The forms of mentoring include mentoring by senior teachers, initial supervision, guidance in preparing teaching tools, and familiarity with religious coaching programs characteristic of madrasas. At the outcome level, mentoring is considered to help stabilize PAI learning services, particularly by ensuring regularity in the learning process and consistency in evaluations.

On the constraint side, the findings identified three main barriers that affect the effectiveness of talent sourcing. First, the limitation is the number of candidates who meet the qualifications and align with the institution's needs. This limitation is not only related to the number of applicants but also to the suitability of the field, teaching readiness, and alignment with the demands of PAI tasks, which often extend to the religious guidance of students. This condition puts madrasas in a compromising situation between maintaining quality standards and ensuring that learning services continue to run. Second, the limitations of incentive competitiveness affect the ability to attract and retain candidates, especially when other institutions offer clearer compensation or career certainty. As a result, potential candidates risk not staying long or choosing other alternatives. Third, the limitations of the HR data system affect the accuracy of needs planning and workload monitoring, as well as the consistency of recruitment process documentation.

These constraints encourage the emergence of adaptive strategies to maintain service stability. The adaptive strategies identified include periodically rearranging teaching hours, using available teachers to cover any shortfall in hours, and strengthening internal coordination to ensure PAI learning continues to meet the agreed minimum standards. However, this strategy has consequences, including increased workload for certain teachers and a risk of instability if dependence on individuals is too high. Thus, talent sourcing is understood not as recruitment alone, but as a series of managerial actions to mitigate the risk of a human resource deficit and maintain the continuity of PAI learning services.

In terms of implications, the findings show that a talent sourcing strategy that combines hour-based needs mapping, activation of internal and external networks, partnerships with teacher education institutions, competency-based and value-based selection, and initial mentoring contributes to the stability of PAI learning services. Stability is defined as reduced clock vacancy, increased schedule regularity, and better maintenance of material continuity and evaluation. In addition, the strategy is also related to the quality of learning in an operational sense: the learning process is more structured, the teaching tools are more monitored, and the religious coaching program is more consistent. However, the findings confirm that the quality of learning has the potential to fluctuate if the issue of candidate availability and incentive competitiveness is not addressed; In this context, early retention is a crucial issue because recruitment without retention risks giving birth to a recurring cycle of shortages.

Table 2. Research Results of Madrasah Talent Sourcing Strategy in Facing the Human Resources Deficit of PAI Teachers at MTs Izzatul Kamilah

Focus of Findings	Description of Key Findings	Indicator	Proof of Data
The Meaning of the Human Resources Deficit of PAI Teachers	Deficits are understood as operational risks that affect service stability, workload, and the consistency of religious character development, rather than mere formation voids.	Dynamic schedule; redistribution of hours; adjustments when teachers are in attendance; the fulfillment of PAI hours is not ideal.	Citation of the head of the madrasah/waka curriculum; scheduling observation records; lesson schedule; Teaching assignment distribution documents.

Needs mapping	Teacher needs are mapped based on the number of hours, the continuity of the PAI program, and the compatibility of values with the madrasah culture.	Analysis of the distribution of hours; consideration of involvement in religious programs/character agendas; Setting minimum needs.	Hourly load recap; Minutes of curriculum meetings; division of duties; Basic Citation of Need Calculation.
Candidate resources	Talent sourcing combines internal channels (alumni/community/figures close to the madrasah) and external channels (campus network/LPTK/professional community).	Quick recruitment based on recommendations; expansion of candidate pool through partnerships; relatively cost-efficient.	Candidate list; communication/invitation archives; evidence of campus networking; recruitment announcements; Informant citation about the candidate's source.
Partnerships (formal–informal)	Partnerships are not always formalized in an MoU; they often rely on personal communication and institutional reputation as sources of trust.	Informal coordination; referrals between stakeholders; access to candidates through existing relationships.	Communication archives; Letter of Invitation/Memorandum of Cooperation (if any); meeting notes; Quotes about partnership mechanisms.
Network activation	Madrasahs are proactive: contacting specific alumni, asking for referrals, and searching for candidates deemed suitable.	Inisiatif pimpinan/guru senior; keputusan cepat berbasis kepercayaan dan rekam jejak; jaringan sebagai “jalur cepat”.	Quotes about the process of contacting the network; coordination observation records; contact/referral list; Chronology of the sourcing process.
Candidate selection	The selection emphasizes two dimensions: teaching competence and the suitability of madrasah values/culture.	Assessment of qualifications, experience, teaching tools; assessment of commitment to character development; assessment of discipline and work ethic.	Selection records; candidate files; citation of selection criteria; teaching device documents; Minutes (if any).
Teaching practice test	Microteaching/practice tests are conducted according to candidates' needs and availability (flexible).	Teaching simulations; initial evaluation; adjustment of selection intensity due to urgent needs.	Microteaching notes; assessment sheets; Teaching Experiments; Citation of the decision on the implementation of the practice test.
Teaching placement	Placement considers time maps, class needs, and readiness to perform additional tasks typical of PAI.	Distribution of hours per class; assignment of religious development activities; additional task adjustments.	Assignment letter; division of teaching duties; lesson schedule; Placement consideration citations.
Mentoring and initial training	Mentoring becomes a bridge of adaptation (mentoring, initial supervision, directing teaching tools, habituation of religious programs).	Mentoring of senior teachers; initial supervision; coaching of teaching tools; Adapting to the Work Culture.	Construction minutes; supervision schedule; mentoring records; Mentoring observation; orientation/coaching documents.
Main obstacles	Barriers: limitations of candidates according to qualifications and value fit; less competitive incentives; limited HR data system.	Compromise of standards vs service needs; low retention risk; Recruitment documentation is	Leader/teacher quotes; HR recap; Teacher Register & Teaching Hours; recruitment archives; workload

Adaptive strategies	Periodic rearrangement of hours, the use of teachers to close shortages, and internal coordination are strengthened.	inconsistent. Redistribution of clocks; teaching substitution; coordination meetings; minimum standards of service.	records. Schedule before–after; notes of schedule changes; coordination minutes; workload observation.
Adaptive consequences	The consequences are increased workload for certain teachers and the risk of dependence on individuals.	Overload jam; concentration of tasks in a particular teacher; potential instability when individuals are in a hurry.	Hourly load recap; workload observation; teacher quotes; Task division documents.
Implications on service stability	The combination of strategies contributes to stability: fewer free hours, more organized schedules, material continuity and better evaluation.	Empty hours are decreasing; teaching tools are being monitored more closely; Religious formation programs are more consistent.	Learning schedule; supervision records; PAI activity reports; Quotes about stability changes.
Retention and sustainability issues	The quality of service has the potential to fluctuate if candidate availability and incentives are not strengthened; Early retention is crucial to prevent a repeat of the deficit cycle.	Teacher turnover; uncertainty of sustainability; the need for human resource retention and development.	Employment period/turnover data (if any); quotes about retention; internal evaluation; Repetitive recruitment archives.

Discussion

The shortage of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MTs Izzatul Kamilah is not merely an issue of unfilled teaching positions but also an institutional risk that affects workload distribution, instructional continuity, and the consistency of religious character development. The redistribution of teaching hours and reliance on available teachers to cover vacant classes demonstrate that the shortage has generated operational pressure throughout the madrasah. This finding is consistent with evidence that teacher shortages can hinder instructional delivery and compel school leaders to devote substantial attention to managing staffing gaps and competing organizational demands (Castro, 2022; OECD, 2024). When the additional workload continues without adequate organizational support, it may also increase exhaustion, reduce job satisfaction, and strengthen teachers' intentions to leave their positions (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020).

The needs-mapping process at MTs Izzatul Kamilah combines calculations of teaching hours with assessments of candidates' academic qualifications, pedagogical readiness, and capacity to participate in religious programmes. This finding indicates that teacher workforce planning cannot be limited to identifying the number of vacant hours; it must also determine the types of competence required by the madrasah. Strategic human resource management in schools requires that recruitment, selection, assignment, evaluation, and professional development be connected to institutional planning and individual teachers' needs. Similarly, the management of teacher shortages requires forward-looking information on teaching loads, subject-specific demand, qualifications, and available teacher supply (OECD, 2024; Tuytens et al., 2023). Thus, the needs mapping conducted by the madrasah represents an initial shift from reactive recruitment toward more anticipatory workforce planning.

The use of alumni, community, university, and teacher education institution networks shows that the madrasah does not rely on a single source of candidates. These channels facilitate the rapid identification of prospective teachers and provide preliminary information about their educational backgrounds, experience, and familiarity with the institutional environment. Nevertheless, most

network activation remains informal and depends on personal communication among school leaders, senior teachers, alumni, and external partners. International evidence indicates that no single recruitment intervention can independently resolve teacher shortages; recruitment needs to combine several attraction strategies and provide candidates with clear information about the teaching role. Digital recruitment tools can complement conventional channels by reaching a broader group of prospective candidates and increasing their interest in teaching careers (Klassen et al., 2025; See et al., 2020). Therefore, the madrasah's relational networks should be maintained but strengthened through open recruitment announcements, documented partnerships, digital dissemination, and an updated candidate database.

The selection process combines professional competence with candidates' commitment to the madrasah's religious expectations. Academic qualifications, teaching experience, mastery of PAI content, lesson-planning ability, and microteaching are used to assess pedagogical readiness. At the same time, discipline, work ethic, exemplary behaviour, and commitment to religious character development are considered in assessing candidates' suitability for the broader role of PAI teachers. This dual consideration is relevant because Islamic education teachers do not merely transmit religious knowledge but also model religious conduct and contribute to students' moral, emotional, and spiritual formation (Hastasari et al., 2022; Usman & Zainuddin, 2021). After placement, mentoring by senior teachers, initial academic supervision, and assistance with instructional administration help new teachers adapt to their responsibilities. Induction support is associated with lower migration and attrition among beginning teachers, while systematic coaching can improve instructional practices and student learning (Kraft et al., 2018; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

These findings indicate that talent sourcing at MTs Izzatul Kamilah comprises an interconnected process of needs mapping, candidate-source diversification, competence- and value-based selection, appropriate placement, and early professional support. The strategy contributes to the stability of PAI learning services by reducing vacant teaching periods, improving schedule regularity, and maintaining the continuity of religious programmes. However, recruitment alone cannot ensure long-term stability when the madrasah continues to face limited candidate availability, uncompetitive incentives, excessive dependence on particular teachers, and weak human resource data management. Evidence on teacher turnover shows that compensation, workload, working conditions, organizational support, job satisfaction, and professional-development opportunities influence teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their positions (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020). Talent sourcing should therefore be integrated with retention policies rather than treated as a temporary mechanism for filling vacancies.

The limitation of this study lies in its focus on a single madrasah and the limited exploration of the long-term effects of incentive policies, mentoring, and human resource information systems on PAI teacher retention. The findings are consequently context-specific and should not be generalized directly to madrasahs with different governance structures, financial capacities, and staffing conditions. Future research should compare talent-sourcing practices across several madrasahs and examine the relationships among incentives, workload, mentoring quality, organizational support, and teacher retention. At the practical level, MTs Izzatul Kamilah needs to establish an integrated human resource database, standardize its recruitment and selection procedures, formalize partnerships with teacher education institutions, and connect early mentoring with continuous professional development and long-term retention planning.

Conclusion

The talent-sourcing strategy at MTs Izzatul Kamilah addresses the shortage of Islamic Religious Education teachers through teaching-load-based needs mapping, proactive activation of alumni, community, university, and teacher-education networks, competence- and value-based selection, appropriate placement, and initial mentoring. These interconnected processes help reduce periods of vacancy in teaching, improve the regularity of schedules, and maintain continuity in Islamic Religious Education and religious character-development programmes. Their effectiveness is supported by strong institutional networks, leadership responsiveness, and mentoring by senior teachers, but constrained by the limited supply of qualified candidates, uncompetitive incentives, excessive dependence on particular teachers, and inadequate human resource data management.

These findings confirm that talent sourcing should not be treated merely as an emergency recruitment mechanism, but as part of sustainable teacher workforce management. Madrasahs therefore need to develop an updated candidate database, standardize recruitment and selection procedures, formalize partnerships with teacher education institutions, and integrate initial mentoring with professional development and retention policies. Such measures are essential to establish a stable teacher pipeline and ensure the long-term continuity and quality of Islamic Religious Education services.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to the leadership, Islamic Religious Education teachers, administrative staff, and other informants of MTs Izzatul Kamilah who contributed their time, experiences, and institutional information during the data-collection process. The authors also acknowledge Universitas Islam Nusantara Al-Azhaar Lubuklinggau and Fatoni University for the academic environment that supported the preparation of this study. Appreciation is extended to colleagues and reviewers whose constructive comments contributed to improving the manuscript.

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