



Integrating Authentic Assessment into Learning Evaluation to Strengthen School Quality Assurance: A Library Research

Ariski Nuril Indah* , Siti Julaiha

Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, Indonesia

Email : ariskinurilindah@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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ariskinurilindah@gmail.com

This study aims to analyse the integration of authentic assessment into learning evaluation as a strategic effort to strengthen school quality assurance. This research employed a library research design by systematically reviewing relevant books, nationally accredited journals, reputable international journals, and educational policy documents. Data were analysed using content analysis techniques to identify conceptual patterns related to authentic assessment, learning evaluation, and school quality assurance systems. The findings indicate that authentic assessment plays a significant role in providing comprehensive, valid, and meaningful data on students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. Its integration into learning evaluation supports both internal and external quality assurance systems by enhancing accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in schools. Furthermore, authentic assessment encourages reflective teaching practices, strengthens evidence-based decision-making, and aligns learning outcomes with real-world competencies. The implications of this study suggest that schools need to systematically institutionalize authentic assessment within their evaluation policies as part of a sustainable quality assurance culture. This study contributes theoretically to the development of educational quality assurance models and practically to improving evaluation practices in schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance has become a central and critical issue in contemporary educational management, driven by escalating global demands for public accountability, institutional transparency, and sustainable improvements in school performance. In the current educational landscape, schools are required not only to achieve academic excellence but also to rigorously prove that their learning processes meet established quality standards through measurable data.

However, a significant social fact and "gap of reality" persists in the field, where the pursuit of quality assurance is often reduced to fulfilling formal administrative obligations without substantially touching the core of the learning process. As highlighted by Setiawan and Hakim (2024), many educational institutions prioritise the completeness of quality documents over the substantive quality of classroom interactions, creating a disconnect between policy and practice. Furthermore, learning evaluation in many schools still heavily emphasises cognitive achievement through written tests while neglecting the affective and psychomotor domains, leading to biased quality data that does not reflect holistic student ability (Nugraha & Aulia, 2023). This reliance on outdated testing methods creates a paradox in school management: the desire for high standards is not supported by evaluation mechanisms capable of authentically validating them. Consequently, Aditomo and Sopiandiah (2022) argue that without reforming the assessment paradigm, the data used for managerial decision-making remains superficial and fails to drive genuine school improvement.

Authentic assessment has emerged as a robust pedagogical and evaluative counter-approach to traditional testing, emphasising the measurement of students' real-world performance through meaningful tasks, projects, and direct observation. Theoretically, authentic assessment is designed to capture students' competencies holistically, integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which aligns perfectly with the objectives of competency-based education and the philosophy of Islamic education, which emphasises balanced character development. According to Putri and Siregar (2025), this assessment type shifts the focus from "knowing" to "demonstrating," requiring students to apply their knowledge in complex, real-life contexts. This perspective is further supported by Rahman et al., (2024), who posit that in the context of Islamic education management, authentic assessment is the most effective tool for measuring "*insan kamil*" attributes, ensuring that graduates possess not only intellectual intelligence but also moral integrity and practical skills. Therefore, authentic assessment holds a strategic position as the most valid instrument for translating the vision of a curriculum into tangible evaluation practices, ensuring that the "quality" claimed by the school is rooted in students' actual, multifaceted development rather than mere test scores.

In the broader context of integrated quality management, learning evaluation plays a dual strategic role: as a pedagogical diagnostic tool for teachers and as a primary data source for the school's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The scope of this study situates authentic assessment not as an

isolated activity within the classroom but as a critical subsystem that feeds the entire school management system with necessary data. Mahmud and Arifin (2023) warn that without valid and authentic assessment data, the quality assurance cycle, comprising planning, implementation, evaluation, and development, loses its empirical foundation, causing school policies to be misdirected. This context is increasingly relevant in the management of educational institutions that demand high graduate competency standards, where the accuracy of measuring learning outcomes becomes a key indicator of managerial success. As noted by Wijaya (2024), integrating authentic assessment into the quality system enables schools to detect process weaknesses earlier and design data-driven interventions rather than relying on assumptions. Thus, this study frames authentic assessment as a vital bridge connecting micro-level classroom practices with macro-level institutional governance, ensuring that quality assurance is substantive rather than merely ceremonial.

Previous research has provided substantial empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of authentic assessment in improving learning quality, though the focus has remained mainly on instructional outcomes. For instance, recent studies by Lestari and Wardani (2024) found that authentic assessment significantly enhances students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and learning engagement, demonstrating its positive impact on higher-order cognitive processes. Similarly, research by Pratama (2023) found that, compared to traditional testing, authentic assessment is far more effective at measuring twenty-first-century skills, such as collaboration and communication, by exposing students to relevant, real-world challenges. Furthermore, in the Indonesian context, Fauzan and Hidayat (2022) emphasised that authentic assessment is a key component in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, promoting reflective teaching practices among educators. Additionally, Sari and Kusuma (2023) highlighted that teachers who utilise authentic assessment are better equipped to provide personalised feedback, which is crucial for student growth. These studies collectively confirm the pedagogical validity of authentic assessment. However, the existing body of knowledge predominantly focuses on the direct impact on students and teacher performance, often treating assessment as a standalone pedagogical element rather than a systemic managerial tool.

Despite these valuable contributions, a significant research gap remains regarding the systemic function of authentic assessment within school quality assurance frameworks. Most existing studies, as previously discussed, limit their analysis to classroom interaction between teachers and students, paying little

attention to how authentic assessment serves as a mechanism for institutional quality control. There is a scarcity of research exploring the integration of authentic assessment into Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems from a managerial and evaluative perspective. This reveals a "missing link" in the literature, where assessment is viewed as a technical teacher responsibility, while quality assurance is seen as an administrative leadership task. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative perspective, positioning authentic assessment not only as an instructional evaluation tool but as a strategic component of the school quality assurance system. This research proposes that authentic assessment can function as a primary provider of valid data for planning, monitoring, evaluating, and continuously improving school performance, particularly within the unique context of Islamic education management which demands accountability in both academic and moral dimensions.

Based on the identification of these problems and the theoretical gap, this study's primary focus is to investigate the mechanism for integrating authentic assessment into the school's quality management system. Specifically, the research problem is formulated in the question: "How can the integration of authentic assessment in learning evaluation sustainably strengthen the school quality assurance system?" This overarching question is further broken down into three specific objectives: (1) to analyse the conceptual foundation of authentic assessment in learning evaluation; (2) to examine the principles and mechanisms of effective school quality assurance systems; and (3) to explain the model of integrating authentic assessment as an instrument for quality reinforcement. By addressing these objectives, this study aims to dismantle the "black box" that has historically separated classroom assessment practices from management-level quality policies. The findings are expected to provide a clear framework for how schools can utilize authentic assessment as a reliable database to drive proper accountability and transparency, moving beyond superficial compliance to deep, systemic quality improvement.

This study advances the argument that authentic assessment is not merely a curriculum supplement but an absolute prerequisite for creating a credible and accountable school quality assurance system. The working hypothesis is that the systemic integration of authentic assessment will generate valid, comprehensive, and continuous quality data, thereby significantly improving the accuracy of strategic decision-making by school leaders. The original contribution of this research is expected to enrich the theoretical landscape of educational management and quality assurance models by offering a perspective that links the micro-pedagogical realm with the macro-managerial realm. Practically, these

findings will serve as a guideline for school principals, supervisors, and teachers in designing evaluation systems that are not only administratively compliant but also reflective of real-world student competencies. Ultimately, this research asserts that school quality cannot be guaranteed through paperwork alone; it must be rooted in the authenticity of the evaluation processes that occur daily in the classroom, thereby ensuring sustainable educational excellence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach. Library research was selected to systematically examine and synthesize theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and policy perspectives related to authentic assessment, learning evaluation, and school quality assurance. This approach enables an in-depth conceptual analysis to reveal patterns, trends, and theoretical linkages among the key variables under investigation.

Since this study is non-empirical and does not involve field-based participants, the population of this research comprises all scholarly works on authentic assessment, learning evaluation, and school quality assurance published in national and international academic journals. The sample was purposively selected based on relevance, credibility, and scholarly impact. The chosen data sources include peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in reputable databases, accredited national journals, reference books, and official education policy documents. The selection criteria emphasised recency, methodological rigour, and conceptual relevance to educational management and Islamic education contexts.

Data were collected through systematic documentation and literature tracing. The researcher conducted digital searches using academic databases, online journal repositories, and institutional digital libraries. Key search terms included “authentic assessment,” “learning evaluation,” “school quality assurance,” “internal quality assurance,” and “educational management.” Each selected source was carefully reviewed to extract conceptual arguments, research findings, and policy implications relevant to this study's objectives.

In this library research, the researcher functioned as the main instrument in selecting, interpreting, classifying, and synthesising data from various scientific sources. The researcher critically analysed the credibility and relevance of each reference to ensure consistency, academic rigour, and objectivity throughout the research process.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis. This process involved several systematic stages: (1) data reduction through the selection of relevant concepts and findings, (2) data categorisation based on thematic relevance to authentic assessment, learning evaluation, and quality assurance systems, and (3) data interpretation to construct integrative conceptual conclusions. To ensure data validity, source triangulation was applied by comparing findings across multiple references and research contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Benchmarking and Best Practices

The first objective of this study was to analyse the conceptual foundation of authentic assessment and its potential to generate holistic data, thereby revealing a clear superiority over traditional assessment in meeting quality assurance needs. The core finding is that authentic assessment methods such as portfolio analysis, project-based scoring, and performance tasks yield data points spanning the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, unlike standardised tests, which narrowly focus on cognitive recall. This comprehensive data structure is crucial for systems that demand accountability in competency-based education, particularly because the character and skill components are often the most difficult to quantify. As Santoso and Budiarto (2023) affirm, only multi-dimensional data can accurately reflect the complex outcomes required by contemporary curriculum standards, a point reinforced by Sutrisno and Ramadhan (2023) regarding the necessity of affective assessment for character education. The supporting evidence suggests that when authentic assessment is implemented, teachers receive granular insights into student character development and practical skill mastery, information that is entirely absent in conventional assessment reports. This holistic data, therefore, establishes authentic assessment not just as a better pedagogical tool, but as the only reliable source capable of feeding a genuine quality assurance mechanism that adheres to the spirit of balanced educational development.

Documentary Findings on the Core Forms of Authentic Assessment. The analysis of selected documents shows a consistent pattern regarding the dominant forms of authentic assessment applied in learning evaluation. Five major forms emerge repeatedly across the literature: performance-based assessment, project-based assessment, portfolios, structured observation, and self-assessment. These forms are applied to measure students' real-world competencies and character development in a holistic manner.

Table 1. The synthesis of these findings is presented

Type of Assessment	Main Focus	Measured Learning Domain
Performance Assessment	Real-world task execution	Psychomotor and applied skills
Project-Based Assessment	Problem-solving and collaboration	Cognitive and social skills
Portfolio Assessment	Long-term learning documentation	Cognitive and reflective skills
Observation	Attitudes and behavior in learning	Affective and character domain
Self-Assessment	Learner reflection and autonomy	Metacognitive competence

These findings indicate that authentic assessment is predominantly used to measure integrated competencies rather than isolated academic knowledge.

A detailed comparison of assessment utilities further substantiated the argument that authentic assessment provides data inherently more useful for managerial quality assurance than traditional methods. While traditional assessment offers high reliability for cognitive comparisons (standardised scores), it exhibits low validity for real-world competency, and its data are often too general to inform specific management interventions. Conversely, as argued by Amirullah (2024), authentic assessment, despite the perceived challenge of achieving perfect standardisation, offers high ecological validity and rich diagnostic detail, providing school leaders with actionable insights into the effectiveness of the learning process. Darmawan (2025) addresses the debate over the technical standardisation of authentic assessment, noting that validity for real-world tasks should supersede statistical reliability when reporting competency to stakeholders. For instance, data showing high achievement on essay exams but low scores on collaboration tasks reveal a systemic flaw in the learning design. In contrast, general test scores merely indicate a failure to meet a benchmark. The data produced by authentic tasks is inherently qualitative and contextualised, making it an ideal input for the analysis stage of the quality cycle (Evaluation-P), where the "why" behind performance is investigated.

The second objective focused on examining the principles and mechanisms of adequate school quality assurance (QA) systems, particularly the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and its cyclical process (PPEPP). The findings underscore that a functional IQAS must be evidence-based, cyclical, and oriented toward continuous improvement, placing high demands on the quality

and timeliness of assessment data. Kurniawan and Dewi (2022) highlight that the cornerstone of successful IQAS implementation is the rigorous, transparent collection of data on standards achievement. However, in many schools, current mechanisms frequently break the data chain: the evaluation phase is performed, but the resulting data is not effectively channelled into the planning phase for subsequent cycles. Tjahjadi (2024) further illustrates this by comparing local QA systems with international benchmarks, revealing that a lack of robust, process-oriented assessment data is a common point of weakness. This disconnect turns the IQAS into a bureaucratic exercise rather than a reflective management tool. To ensure the integrity of the cycle, the mechanisms must be explicitly structured to receive holistic, diagnostic, and authentic data from the classroom level, making data utility the primary metric for evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment system.

Analysis of the current data landscape in school QA systems revealed significant gaps in data scope and relevance, severely undermining the accountability function. The study found that most IQAS reports rely heavily on administrative compliance checks (e.g., curriculum document completion, teacher attendance) and external achievement metrics (e.g., national exam scores), while neglecting data on the quality of the learning process itself. Widodo (2024) points out that this data deficiency makes it impossible for school leaders to diagnose systemic failures related to skill acquisition, character formation, or pedagogical strategy. For example, suppose the IQAS only tracks written exam results. In that case, it cannot identify problems in poor communication skills or a lack of ethical reasoning, both of which are fundamental to holistic competency-based education. This aligns with the argument made by Aditomo and Sopiansyah (2022) that educational reform is impossible without assessment reform. Therefore, the strategic integration of authentic assessment is not merely an option but a necessary structural reform to bridge this critical data gap and enable evidence-based accountability by providing essential insights into process quality.

The third and central objective was to explain the integration model, which begins with the critical step of aligning authentic assessment tools directly with IQAS standards and indicators. This alignment ensures that every project, portfolio, or performance task serves a dual purpose: pedagogical evaluation and managerial quality measurement. The results demonstrate that effective integration requires school leaders to reform assessment rubrics so that performance criteria are explicitly mapped to the school's predetermined quality standards, such as competence or graduate profiles. Hanafi (2023) emphasises

that this mapping process ensures classroom data can be immediately translated into IQAS metrics, eliminating the need for complex conversions or additional testing. Furthermore, Ariyanto (2023) highlights that teachers' involvement in co-designing these aligned rubrics fosters ownership and ensures that assessment tasks remain contextually relevant and authentic. This strategic alignment turns the teacher from a mere grader into a primary data collector for the quality assurance office, thereby streamlining the entire evaluation process and enhancing its utility for management.

Following alignment, the next crucial step in the integration model involves data transformation and vertical reporting, the mechanism for channelling rich classroom data up to the management level for decision-making. The challenge is converting the descriptive, contextual data generated by authentic assessment into a format that is digestible and actionable for leadership. The findings suggest the adoption of centralised, automated data management platforms that can aggregate assessment data across different classes and grade levels. Jannah and Syafi'i (2025) advocate for platforms capable of generating 'Quality Performance Dashboards,' which display trends in non-cognitive domains alongside academic performance. The role of technology in automating this process, as discussed by Zulkarnain (2022), is crucial for maintaining the fidelity of the raw data while making it immediately useful for managerial analysis. By ensuring the swift and accurate flow of aggregated data, this step bypasses the administrative bottleneck often observed in schools, making quality data readily accessible for strategic planning and evidence-based resource allocation.

The discussion highlights that the successful integration model significantly impacts managerial accountability and external transparency, providing definitive evidence of institutional effectiveness. When assessment data is authentic, school reports move beyond citing mere compliance (as noted by Setiawan & Hakim, 2024) to showcasing genuine student performance against real-world competencies. This transformation meets the growing demand from external stakeholders, including parents and regulatory bodies, for demonstrable evidence of quality outcomes. Riyanto (2023) points out that this verifiable data strengthens the school's overall credibility and trust within the community, especially when presented ethically and transparently, a factor stressed by Fatimah (2023). For example, a school that can present portfolio data showing consistent improvement in students' entrepreneurial skills over four years offers a far stronger case for accountability than one that reports only national exam rankings. Therefore, integrating authentic assessment transforms accountability

from a defensive administrative act into a proactive demonstration of substantive educational value.

Furthermore, the integration model dramatically strengthens the feedback loop necessary for pedagogical and institutional sustainability. Authentic assessment data provides teachers with specific, timely feedback on the efficacy of their instructional strategies relative to measurable student performance across all domains, aligning with the holistic vision championed by Putri and Siregar (2025). This allows for continuous reflection and immediate curricular adjustment at the classroom level, forming the foundational core of institutional improvement. Nugroho (2024) asserts that a quality system is only sustainable if practitioners actively use the data it produces to refine practice. The detailed, multidimensional nature of authentic assessment data facilitates this process, ensuring that the 'Improvement' (P) phase of the IQAS cycle is informed by granular evidence of learning failures or successes, rather than general assumptions. This continuous, evidence-based refinement mechanism ensures that quality improvement is a perpetual process embedded in daily teaching, rather than a periodic intervention imposed externally.

The proposed model contributes significantly to the theoretical framework of educational management, particularly by strengthening the linkage between curriculum governance and institutional quality theory. Prior theories often treated assessment as a peripheral tool for instruction, separate from the core management functions. This study establishes authentic assessment as a core strategic asset and proposes a unified framework in which learning evaluation is inseparable from the IQAS. This moves the theoretical focus from compliance-based QA to performance-based quality culture, aligning with the philosophy emphasized by Wibowo and Hasan (2023) regarding systemic assessment reform. The model provides a robust mechanism for measuring outcomes derived from holistic educational philosophies, thereby offering a crucial theoretical lens for assessing quality in institutions, such as those focusing on character or religious education, where traditional metrics are inadequate. Hartono and Syahputra (2024) further validate this by showing that integrated assessment models lead to higher perceived quality among academic stakeholders.

In practical terms, the findings offer school leaders a clear, actionable roadmap for transitioning from fragmented assessment practices to an integrated quality system. The recommendations include investing in teacher training focused on authentic rubric design and utilizing data aggregation technology to automate the reporting process from classroom to management dashboards.

Crucially, the practical implementation requires a cultural shift where principals recognise assessment data as their primary strategic resource for governance, a leadership mandate clearly articulated by Wahyudi (2024). Wulandari (2025) stresses the importance of pilot programs to ensure smooth adoption and cultural acceptance among faculty. By adopting this integrated model, schools can provide their commitment to educational quality is substantiated by valid, transparent, and continuous data derived directly from students' actual performance.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that authentic assessment serves as a critical strategic asset essential for strengthening school quality assurance systems through its rigorous and systemic integration into the learning evaluation process. The synthesis confirms that authentic assessment methods encompassing performance tasks, portfolios, observation, and project-based scoring uniquely provide comprehensive, valid, and diagnostic evidence across all three learning domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor), information that is vital for measuring true competency against established standards. This data quality directly addresses the critical gap identified in traditional quality assurance (QA) mechanisms by supplying actionable, holistic evidence to inform the Evaluation and subsequent Planning phases of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). By establishing a direct, evidence-based linkage between classroom performance data and managerial oversight, the study affirms that integrating authentic assessment is the foundational step toward building a sustainable, transparent, and evidence-based QA framework that effectively shifts institutional accountability from administrative compliance toward verifiable learning outcomes.

The originality of this study lies in its integrative perspective, which successfully extends the function of authentic assessment beyond its pedagogical utility to establish it as a core component of institutional governance and educational quality theory. This conceptual linkage solidifies the theoretical integration between learning evaluation and management sciences, providing a unified framework crucial for assessing holistic educational models. Practically, the findings strongly recommend that school leaders and policymakers prioritize the institutionalization of authentic assessment by systematically aligning assessment rubrics with IQAS standards and investing significantly in teacher capacity-building programs focused on authentic assessment literacy to ensure consistent and effective implementation. While this study provides a robust

conceptual model based on secondary data analysis, future research must undertake empirical field validation using quantitative or mixed-method approaches to examine the direct, long-term impact of this integrated system on school accreditation outcomes, institutional performance indicators, and sustainable student achievement across all competency domains.

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