



Improving the Quality of Islamic Education through the Implementation of Integrated Quality Management

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ABSTRACT

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The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Islamic education has become a crucial issue for improving service quality, learning, and institutional governance amid the challenges of globalization and the digital era. This study aims to explore the implementation of TQM in Islamic educational institutions and identify the barriers and their contribution to improving educational quality. The research method is a descriptive, qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis across several Islamic schools and madrasas that have implemented TQM. The results show that although TQM has excellent potential to improve educational quality, its implementation is still hampered by a hierarchical organizational culture, a mismatch between modern managerial principles and Islamic educational culture, and limited infrastructure and human resources. This study concludes that to increase the effectiveness of TQM in Islamic education, there needs to be a more contextual and adaptive adjustment to the management model, as well as the strengthening of the integration of Islamic values across all managerial aspects. The contribution of this research is the development of a TQM model grounded more in Islamic moral and spiritual values.

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of integrated quality management in Islamic education is a crucial issue that requires attention because educational quality plays a crucial role in shaping a competent and noble generation (Amet, 2023). Islamic education, as an integral part of the national education system, is required to not only develop academic competencies but also foster the character and spirituality of students (Moslimany et al., 2024; Idris et al., 2023). This becomes

increasingly relevant in facing the challenges of globalization, which require Islamic educational institutions to remain competitive at the national and international levels. Based on existing studies, improving the quality of Islamic education through effective quality management can improve services, curriculum, and institutional management, as well as ensure the relevance of education to current demands (Sodikin et al., 2024). Therefore, this research is crucial in contributing to the formulation of an integrated and adaptive quality management system for the context of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of improving the quality of Islamic education, many Islamic educational institutions still face various challenges in implementing an effective quality management system. Some frequently encountered obstacles include limited resources, the lack of a structured evaluation system, and a mismatch between educational vision and existing managerial implementation (Fasinro et al., 2024). Furthermore, many institutions have not fully implemented comprehensive educational quality standards, both at the administrative, curriculum, and human resource management levels (Farid et al., 2025). This results in suboptimal quality of education, making them unable to compete with other educational institutions, both nationally and globally.

In practice, many Islamic educational institutions have attempted to improve educational quality by implementing government-mandated quality and accreditation policies. However, despite these supportive policies, their implementation is often hampered by various factors, such as uneven distribution of facilities and infrastructure, lack of human resource capacity, and problems integrating existing management systems with the needs of Islamic education based on moral and spiritual values (Umami et al., 2024; Gano et al., 2024). In some Islamic schools (madrasah), the implementation of modern quality management systems often clashes with a conservative organizational culture, thus failing to fully support the achievement of ideal educational quality (Siregar et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of implementing total quality management (TQM) in Islamic education. Research by Suriyati et al. (2023) revealed that integrated quality management can help Islamic educational institutions improve the quality of services, learning, and institutional management. However, several studies also indicate that the implementation of TQM in Islamic education is often technocratic and does not fully accommodate the spiritual and moral aspects that are at the core of Islamic education (Norman et al., 2025). On the other hand, research on the Merdeka curriculum indicates that differentiation in Islamic education that combines Islamic values with 21st-century competencies is a relevant step in improving

educational quality (Hajar, 2024).

However, despite efforts to integrate quality management with Islamic values, previous research has not thoroughly examined how values such as itqan, ihsan, and amanah can be integrated into Islamic education quality management systems. This gap in the literature needs to be addressed with more comprehensive, evidence-based research. This research will emphasize how the implementation of integrated quality management focuses not only on technical efficiency but also on strengthening the moral and spiritual dimensions of Islamic education.

This research offers a novel approach in integrating modern quality management principles with the Islamic values that underlie Islamic education. Its novelty lies in its attempt to formulate a quality management model that not only adopts Total Quality Management (TQM) principles such as continuous improvement and a focus on customer satisfaction, but also integrates Islamic ethical values such as itqan, ihsan, and amanah into managerial decision-making. Thus, this research not only addresses the shortcomings of previous research that focused too much on efficiency but also introduces a new, more holistic paradigm in Islamic education quality management.

The main problem to be answered in this research is how the principles of total quality management (TQM) can be adapted and applied in the context of Islamic education to improve the quality of services, learning, and institutional management. This research also aims to evaluate the extent to which the integration of Islamic values in TQM can improve the management of Islamic education and create a higher quality, accountable, and character-based education system. The main contribution of this research is to produce an integrative and adaptive TQM implementation model, which can serve as a reference for the development of a quality assurance system for Islamic education in the future. Therefore, this research is expected to provide concrete solutions for Islamic educational institutions to improve the quality of education in a sustainable, relevant manner, and rooted in profound Islamic values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the primary objective of the study was to understand and describe in depth the implementation process of Integrated Quality Management (IQM) in Islamic educational institutions. A qualitative approach allows researchers to holistically explore managerial phenomena, quality culture, and organizational dynamics, and gain a deeper understanding of experiences and practices that cannot be measured quantitatively. This research focuses on understanding the meaning behind quality management practices and policies in Islamic educational institutions,

involving not only numerical data analysis but also the subjective understandings of the participants.

This research was conducted in several Islamic educational institutions, both madrasahs and Islamic schools, that have implemented the IQM system. The selection of research locations was based on the criteria that these institutions have direct experience in implementing IQM and have a supportive organizational structure. These locations were chosen because they provide an opportunity to directly observe the implementation of quality policies and understand the challenges faced in their implementation. By selecting relevant locations, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive and representative picture of real conditions on the ground.

The data collection techniques in this study utilized three main methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, the head of the quality assurance team, senior teachers, and administrative staff involved in the implementation of MMT. These interviews aimed to explore their perceptions, experiences, and perspectives regarding the implementation of MMT in Islamic educational institutions. Participatory observation was conducted through direct involvement in the institution's daily activities, allowing researchers to gain a more concrete understanding of the dynamics occurring on the ground. Furthermore, document analysis, such as quality standard operating procedures (SOPs), SPMI guidelines, internal evaluation results, and learning supervision reports, was used to provide an objective picture of the implementation of quality policies at the institution. The combination of these three techniques enabled researchers to obtain comprehensive data and strengthen triangulation.

Data collected from interviews, observations, and document analysis will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process begins with data condensation, which involves sorting relevant data and focusing on the research. Next, the selected data will undergo data reduction, which involves grouping categories and coding based on emerging themes. The data will be grouped into categories such as quality culture, school community involvement, planning effectiveness, evaluation, and the integration of Islamic values such as itqan, ihsan, and amanah into management practices. The researchers will then present the grouped data in narrative form, describing the patterns found in the field. The data verification process involves comparing existing findings with relevant literature and conducting discussions with participants to ensure the data aligns with the reality.

To ensure data validity, this study employed various checking techniques proven effective in qualitative research. Source triangulation was used to compare data obtained from various informants, such as principals, teachers, and

administrative staff. Furthermore, technical triangulation was used to compare findings from interviews, observations, and documents. Member checking involved reconfirming the findings with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations align with the informants' intended meaning. Finally, peer debriefing was conducted, involving experts or colleagues with deeper understanding to provide input on the findings and analysis. These steps will strengthen the validity of the data and ensure that this study provides an accurate and accountable picture (Husnullail et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Integrating Islamic Values with Modern Quality Principles

The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Islamic education leads to the integration of Islamic values with modern managerial principles, focusing not only on efficiency but also on developing student character. In this context, the quality of Islamic education is understood as a holistic process, encompassing social skills, digital literacy, creativity, and adaptability in line with global demands. This paradigm shift requires Islamic educational institutions to not only transfer religious knowledge but also integrate technology, artificial intelligence, and innovation into their curriculum and quality management systems. This contrasts with traditional approaches that prioritize lectures and memorization as the primary learning methods.

The principal stated that, "We have implemented some technology in the learning process, but the implementation of data-driven management systems is still minimal. We need more training in digitalization and quality data management." From this interview, the researcher interpreted that despite awareness of the importance of digitalization, there is still a lack of training and implementation of a more structured system. This indicates that despite increasingly stringent accreditation and educational quality standards, data-driven management has not been fully accepted and implemented in the field.

A teacher stated, "Our assessment system relies more on direct observation than on analytical data. This makes it difficult for us to objectively assess student progress." From this interview, the researcher interpreted that there is resistance to data-driven systems that can measure achievement more objectively. This resistance is likely influenced by a lack of understanding of the importance of data analysis and the sophistication of technology that can improve the quality of Islamic education.

Observations of the learning process in madrasas indicate that despite efforts to integrate technology into the educational process, data management and evaluation are still carried out manually, particularly for academic and non-academic assessments. This is evident in observations of the examination process and reporting of learning outcomes, which still use paper formats and are not connected to digital information systems that could facilitate more efficient data management. The researcher interpreted that although some Islamic educational institutions are attempting to adopt technology, they still face obstacles in implementing integrated systems, particularly related to the readiness of human resources and adequate infrastructure.

This research shows that although the implementation of TQM/MMT in Islamic education is expected to integrate Islamic values with modern managerial principles, implementation still faces significant challenges. There is a gap between existing policies and practices, particularly in terms of technology use and data management. The data-driven management systems and digitalization promised in Islamic education policies have not been fully adopted by educational institutions, resulting in a lack of objectivity and efficiency in assessment and evaluation.

From interviews and observations, patterns emerge indicating a gap between existing quality policies and implementation in the field, particularly in terms of technology and data-driven management. Despite efforts to keep up with current developments by integrating digital literacy, the results achieved have not been optimal due to cultural barriers, lack of training for human resources, and limited infrastructure. This reflects that despite awareness of adhering to quality standards and accreditation, data- and technology-driven quality management has not been fully internalized in the organizational culture of Islamic education.

The findings of this research indicate that while the implementation of TQM/MMT in Islamic education has significant potential to improve quality, its implementation still faces numerous challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the incompatibility between the modern quality paradigm and the more traditional organizational culture of Islamic education. Therefore, a more contextual, participatory adaptation of TQM is needed, aligned with Islamic values. This will create a management system that is more responsive to socio-technological developments and result in a more comprehensive, high-quality, and highly competitive education.

The Importance of Digital Literacy and 21st-Century Competencies in Islamic Education

The importance of digital literacy and 21st-century competencies in Islamic education refers to students' ability to access, manage, and use information effectively using digital technology, as well as their ability to adapt to the demands of a changing world. Digital literacy, in this context, encompasses not only technical skills, such as the use of digital devices and applications, but also critical thinking skills in evaluating online information. 21st-century competencies encompass the skills necessary for collaboration, effective communication, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving. Islamic education that integrates digital literacy and 21st-century competencies means teaching students to utilize technology while maintaining the moral and spiritual values that are the hallmarks of Islamic education (Amelia, 2023; Nasir et al., 2025).

In an interview with the Principal of Madrasah X, he revealed that digital literacy and 21st-century competencies are increasingly important for students to learn. "We don't just teach religious knowledge, but we also need to ensure that our students are prepared for an increasingly technology-driven world. Therefore, we have begun integrating digital learning into the curriculum and providing technology training to teachers and students." This data shows that on the ground, principals are beginning to realize that the implementation of digital literacy cannot be delayed any longer, as the world of Islamic education also requires adaptation to technological changes to prepare students to compete in the digital age.

A teacher at Madrasah X added, "Islamic education doesn't just teach religious knowledge; it must also teach students how to communicate, think critically, and collaborate in a technology-rich environment. We are now starting to teach coding and the use of educational applications in our lessons." This indicates that technology and 21st-century skills are beginning to be integrated into the classroom, but implementation is still in its early stages in some madrasahs. The researchers interpret that although digital literacy instruction is still new, there is a strong push to introduce technology into Islamic education to keep students up to date.

Observations at Madrasah X revealed the existence of a special class teaching digital skills such as programming and the use of technology-based applications. The researchers noted that although technology is used in learning, there are still obstacles to its optimal use, such as limited infrastructure and training for teachers. On the other hand, teachers and students expressed enthusiasm for learning new skills, and some digital educational applications are beginning to be integrated into religious instruction. The researchers'

interpretation is that, although still limited, the use of digital technology in madrasas has shown positive developments and significant potential for improvement. From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the integration of digital literacy and 21st-century competencies in Islamic education is beginning to be accepted as an urgent need. Although challenges remain in terms of facilities and human resource readiness, many Islamic educational institutions have begun implementing technology as part of the curriculum. Digital-based learning focuses not only on technical skills but also aims to equip students with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly digital world, while still prioritizing Islamic values.

The available data demonstrates a clear pattern regarding the acceptance and adoption of digital literacy in Islamic education. First, there is a growing awareness among school management and teachers of the importance of digital literacy and 21st-century skills. Second, although the implementation of technology in learning is still in its early stages, there are initiatives to integrate technology-based applications and programs into the curriculum. Finally, while challenges such as limited facilities remain a barrier, there is a commitment to addressing these through training and infrastructure improvements. This pattern demonstrates that the implementation of digital literacy in Islamic education is a crucial step in preparing students for future challenges, although the journey still requires more attention.

Obstacles in the Implementation of TQM in Islamic Education

Barriers to the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Islamic education refer to the challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions in adopting modern TQM principles, which focus on continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and team collaboration. In practice, these obstacles often arise from the incompatibility between TQM principles based on efficiency, transparency, and data-driven decision-making and the organizational culture of Islamic educational institutions, which tends to be hierarchical and traditional. Rigid structures and limited communication patterns are major barriers to TQM implementation, leading to difficulties in formulating shared policies and implementing change at the organizational level.

In an interview with the Principal of Madrasah X, he explained that the implementation of TQM in their madrasah encountered several obstacles, particularly in communication and decision-making. "Most teachers and staff at this madrasah are accustomed to an established structure, where decisions usually come from the leadership without much discussion or feedback. This makes it difficult for us to implement the TQM concept, which requires the active participation of all parties." This data suggests that the hierarchical structure

present in many Islamic educational institutions tends to hinder the adoption of TQM principles, which prioritize the involvement of all parties in decision-making and continuous improvement. This leads to resistance to the changes proposed by TQM, due to the communication patterns that tend to be top-down.

Teachers at Madrasah X stated that they found it difficult to understand and apply TQM principles. "Even though we have received training on TQM, its application in the classroom is not very clear. We are often hampered by the mismatch between the theory taught and the more conservative, daily conditions limited to teaching routines." Researchers interpreted that despite the training, the biggest obstacle came from differences in perspectives and organizational culture. Teachers and staff were more comfortable with a more conventional approach and were less open to a system that prioritizes evaluation and continuous improvement. This indicates a gap between theory and practice in TQM implementation.

Observations at Madrasah X showed that despite efforts to implement TQM principles, the process was still largely hampered by a highly hierarchical managerial structure. In the field, unclear communication between the principal and teachers often occurred, which affected the effectiveness of decision-making and the smooth flow of information. Researchers noted that although TQM principles, such as continuous improvement and customer focus, were taught, their implementation was hampered by resistance to change from more senior levels within the institution. This demonstrates a mismatch between the TQM concept, which emphasizes active participation, and a more traditional organizational culture, where decisions are often made top-down without sufficient input from staff on the ground.

From the data collected, it can be concluded that the main obstacle to TQM implementation in Islamic educational institutions stems from the mismatch between TQM principles and the organizational culture, which tends to be hierarchical and traditional. Although TQM emphasizes collaboration, involvement of all parties in decision-making, and continuous improvement, the implementation of these principles is often hampered by resistance to change and a lack of understanding of the basic principles of TQM, particularly among teaching staff and managers accustomed to more rigid and hierarchical organizational structures. This makes it difficult to translate TQM theory into effective practice in Islamic educational institutions.

The pattern emerging from the data above suggests that the obstacles to TQM implementation in Islamic educational institutions are more related to organizational culture and rigid hierarchical structures than to managerial literacy alone. Despite efforts to introduce TQM through training and managerial policies, resistance to change and limited communication patterns hinder

effective implementation. These data also show that although the principal and administrative staff have the intention to implement TQM principles, the incompatibility between modern managerial philosophy and the traditional culture of Islamic educational institutions is a major obstacle that must be overcome so that TQM implementation can run smoothly.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the main obstacle to TQM implementation in Islamic educational institutions is the incompatibility between modern quality management principles and organizational cultures that tend to be hierarchical and traditional. This finding aligns with a previous study by Kurniawan et al. (2024), which also highlighted that many Islamic educational institutions are hampered in implementing TQM principles due to rigid managerial structures and limited communication patterns. Meanwhile, in other literature, such as the study conducted by Haq et al. (2025), there is an emphasis on the importance of aligning TQM principles with local cultural values, which is also a key issue in the context of Islamic education. A difference that emerges in this study is the recognition of difficulties in digitization and data management, which are additional obstacles not widely discussed in previous studies (Brohi et al., 2023; Cardinali et al., 2023).

In the context of management theory, these findings underscore the importance of adapting the TQM approach to be more contextual and sensitive to local values, in this case Islamic values. For example, the findings indicate that despite awareness of the importance of TQM, its implementation in the field is hampered by resistance to change and a lack of understanding of its fundamental principles. This is relevant to the quality management theories developed by Crosby (1979) and Deming (1986), which state that the adoption of quality principles must involve all levels of the organization and must be adapted to the existing organizational culture and structure (Ochieng, 2025; Santaka et al., 2025). Furthermore, the successful implementation of TQM in Islamic education also requires integration with ethical and moral values derived from Islamic teachings, such as amanah (trustworthiness), itqan (trustworthiness), and ihsan (goodness), to ensure that management focuses not only on efficiency but also on character building.

The theoretical implication of these findings is the need to revise or expand the TQM model to be more inclusive and adaptive for implementation in Islamic educational institutions. TQM, which has traditionally focused on increasing efficiency and customer satisfaction, must be expanded to encompass the moral and spiritual aspects that characterize Islamic education. This aligns with previous research showing that TQM principles must accommodate

cultural and religious values to ensure sustainable implementation in Islamic educational institutions (Norman et al., 2025). Therefore, a more comprehensive TQM theory that integrates technology, data-driven management, and Islamic moral principles is crucial for further development (Husna, 2025).

Practically, these findings provide important insights for Islamic educational institutions to overcome barriers to TQM implementation. One practical step that can be taken is through training and capacity building of human resources in managerial literacy and the use of technology in educational management (Usmar et al., 2025). Digital-based data management should be a priority to improve operational efficiency and assessment quality (Abdurrahman, 2025). Although the introduction of technology in Islamic education remains limited, small steps such as integrating management information systems for evaluation management can help address existing weaknesses and encourage more objective and transparent, data-driven decision-making (Akula et al., 2025).

This research shows that despite high awareness of the importance of TQM, uneven implementation and structural barriers remain key challenges. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of TQM implementation in Islamic education, systematic efforts are needed to foster an organizational culture that is more open to change, collaborative, and based on the participation of all elements of the educational institution. Developing a TQM framework that is more contextual and sensitive to local values and Islamic educational culture is expected to create a management system that is more responsive to socio-technological dynamics and produces higher-quality and highly competitive education, in line with growing global demands.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Islamic education is a crucial step towards improving the quality of services, learning, and overall institutional governance. The main finding of this study is that although TQM has significant potential to improve management and educational quality, its implementation remains hampered by various structural and organizational cultural barriers, such as the incompatibility between modern managerial principles and the traditional hierarchical structures present in many Islamic educational institutions. The lesson learned is the importance of harmonizing Islamic values and modern managerial principles in creating an educational system that is more adaptive and responsive to socio-technological dynamics. Therefore, the implementation of TQM must take into account the unique characteristics of Islamic education and allow for the integration of deep ethical values into every aspect of the

institution's management and operations.

The main contribution of this study is the development of a more contextual and adaptive model for implementing TQM in Islamic education, integrating modern managerial principles with Islamic values such as itqan, ihsan, and amanah. This study highlights that the quality of Islamic education depends not only on efficiency and formal quality standards, but also on character formation and the strengthening of a quality culture in accordance with Islamic teachings. Scientifically, this paper contributes to the development of a more comprehensive theory of Islamic educational management, combining technology and data-driven management with an approach more grounded in moral and spiritual values. This provides an important foundation for further research on quality management in the context of faith-based educational institutions.

A major limitation of this study is its limited coverage of locations within a few Islamic schools and madrasas, which may not fully reflect the diversity of TQM implementation across Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, limitations in infrastructure and human resource readiness also serve as limiting factors in this study. Future research is recommended to conduct broader studies involving more Islamic educational institutions, and to consider variations in size, location, and economic conditions. Future research could also deepen the use of technology-based data analysis to assess the effectiveness of TQM in improving learning outcomes and the quality of management in Islamic educational institutions.

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