



Community-Based Management of Islamic Literacy Centers: Strengthening Non-Formal Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine how community participation is integrated into the management of Qur'anic Learning Centers (TPQ) and to analyze its contribution to strengthening religious education among students. A qualitative research approach was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. The participants included TPQ administrators, teachers, parents, and community members who were directly involved in educational activities. The findings reveal that TPQ management is primarily centered on routine educational programs, while planning and evaluation processes remain insufficiently systematic and sustainable. Community participation is reflected through voluntary services, financial support, and involvement in various activities. However, community engagement in program planning and decision-making processes is still limited. Despite these constraints, community support plays a significant role in maintaining the continuity of TPQ activities and fostering students' religious values and practices. The study implies that a more structured and participatory management model is needed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of religious education. Strengthening collaboration between TPQ management and community stakeholders may contribute to improving educational quality and achieving long-term institutional development.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources is closely associated with educational processes that develop knowledge, skills, character, and moral values (Dimas, 2024; Efendi & Sholeh, 2023). Education is not only expected to improve intellectual capacity but also to cultivate ethical behavior and social responsibility (Ningsih, 2023; Aini & Hakim, 2023). In the perspective of Islamic education, the educational process aims to foster the holistic development of learners, encompassing cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. Religious

education plays a strategic role in shaping moral character and strengthening religious awareness that can be reflected in daily life. As one of the most accessible forms of non-formal Islamic education, Qur'anic Learning Centers (TPQ) contribute significantly to introducing children to Qur'anic literacy and religious practices from an early age. Therefore, strengthening the management of TPQ institutions is important not only for improving educational quality but also for supporting broader social development through the cultivation of religious values and positive character formation among younger generations (Fithroti, 2023; Hakim & Afifah, 2023).

Despite their strategic role, many non-formal Islamic educational institutions continue to face managerial challenges that affect the achievement of educational objectives. Educational success is determined not only by instructional activities but also by the effectiveness of institutional management and stakeholder involvement (Nurhaida & Asdiqoh, 2026). Effective management influences planning, implementation, resource allocation, monitoring, and program sustainability (Akmansyah et al., 2026). At the same time, community participation functions as a crucial supporting factor that strengthens institutional capacity and educational outcomes (Aisyah & Abidin, 2023). However, in many educational settings, community involvement remains limited to material assistance or occasional support during specific events. Such conditions reduce opportunities for collaborative decision-making and weaken institutional responsiveness to community needs. Consequently, the absence of an integrated management approach that actively incorporates community participation may hinder the development of sustainable religious education programs capable of responding to contemporary social and educational challenges (Hidayah & Karim, 2023; Hikmah, 2024).

Field observations indicate that many TPQs continue to operate with limited managerial structures and rely heavily on routine activities. Although educational programs are regularly conducted, strategic planning, systematic implementation (Solehuddin & Yunus, 2022), and comprehensive evaluation mechanisms are often insufficiently developed. Community involvement tends to focus on providing financial assistance, voluntary services, and support for religious events, while participation in planning and policy formulation remains relatively limited (Supriadi & Setyowati, 2023; Jeni & Syafril, 2025). Such conditions create a discrepancy between the ideal concept of participatory educational management and actual institutional practices. From an Islamic perspective, educational responsibility should be shared collectively among educational institutions, families, and communities. This principle is reflected in QS. Al-Ma'idah verse 2, which encourages cooperation in righteousness and piety (Qosim, 2020). Therefore, strengthening community participation within

TPQ management is essential to improving institutional effectiveness and ensuring the sustainability of religious education programs (Zaini & Fitriyah, 2024).

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of management practices in enhancing the quality of Islamic educational institutions. Research has shown that effective planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation contribute significantly to improving educational outcomes and institutional performance (Fauzi & Rahmawati, 2024). Other studies have highlighted the positive influence of community participation on educational sustainability, demonstrating that community support can strengthen institutional resources, increase social legitimacy, and facilitate educational activities. These findings confirm that both management quality and community involvement are essential determinants of successful religious education. However, most existing studies tend to examine management and community participation as separate variables rather than as interconnected components within a comprehensive institutional framework. Consequently, the relationship between participatory management practices and the strengthening of religious education remains insufficiently explored.

Furthermore, studies on TPQ management generally focus on internal administrative processes, leadership styles, curriculum implementation, and organizational effectiveness. Meanwhile, research concerning community participation primarily examines forms of social engagement, financial contributions, and volunteerism without adequately investigating how such participation can be systematically integrated into institutional management processes (Suryani, 2023). As a result, limited attention has been given to understanding how community involvement can influence planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities within TPQs. This gap restricts scholarly understanding of participatory governance in non-formal Islamic education. Addressing this issue is important because educational institutions increasingly require collaborative approaches that encourage stakeholder engagement and shared responsibility. Therefore, further investigation is needed to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how community participation can be incorporated into management systems to strengthen religious education outcomes (Hidayatullah & Azizah, 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative perspective that combines management functions and community participation within a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that examined these dimensions separately, this research explores how community involvement can be embedded throughout managerial processes, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. This perspective contributes to the development of participatory

management models for non-formal Islamic educational institutions. In addition, the study expands existing knowledge by examining the relationship between participatory management practices and the strengthening of religious education among students. Such an approach is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of Islamic educational management. By offering a more holistic understanding of institutional governance, the study seeks to support the development of sustainable educational practices capable of responding to the needs of communities and learners in contemporary contexts.

Based on the aforementioned issues, this study investigates how community participation is incorporated into TPQ management and how such participation contributes to strengthening religious education. The research focuses on managerial processes, including planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as the forms and impacts of community involvement. This study argues that integrating community participation into institutional management can enhance organizational effectiveness, strengthen stakeholder commitment, and improve the quality of religious education. Accordingly, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on Islamic educational management by proposing an integrative framework that links participatory governance with religious education development. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for educational managers, community leaders, and policymakers seeking to strengthen the sustainability and effectiveness of non-formal Islamic educational institutions through collaborative and participatory management approaches.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of community participation-based management in strengthening religious education within a Qur'anic Learning Center (TPQ). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore social phenomena comprehensively and to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions within their natural settings. The case study design was considered appropriate because the research focused on a specific educational institution as a bounded system, allowing for a detailed examination of management practices and community involvement in the implementation of religious education programs. Through this approach, the study sought to generate a contextualized understanding of how participatory management operates in practice and contributes to educational development.

The research was conducted at TPQ Ar-Rofi'ah, which was purposively selected due to its active role in providing non-formal Islamic education and its engagement with community members in supporting educational activities. Data

were collected from multiple informants, including the TPQ principal, teachers (ustadz and ustadzah), parents of students, and community members involved in TPQ activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the management and implementation of educational programs. Data collection techniques consisted of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Primary data were obtained through interviews and field observations, while secondary data were gathered from institutional documents, activity reports, and relevant literature related to TPQ management and community participation.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data condensation stage, collected information was selected, simplified, categorized, and focused according to the objectives of the study. Subsequently, the data were organized and presented in a narrative-descriptive format to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and emerging themes. The final stage involved interpreting and verifying the findings to develop conclusions consistent with the research objectives. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the study employed source triangulation, technique triangulation, and prolonged engagement. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different participants, while technique triangulation involved cross-checking data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, prolonged observation was undertaken to enhance the credibility, consistency, and accuracy of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Planning of Community Participation-Based TPQ Management

The findings indicate that program planning at the TPQ is primarily based on experiences from previous years rather than formal written planning documents. Educational activities continue to be implemented regularly; however, the institution does not yet possess systematic planning guidelines that clearly define objectives, targets, implementation strategies, and evaluation indicators.

Community participation in the planning stage remains limited. Most community members are involved only during program implementation and are rarely engaged in discussions concerning program formulation or institutional development. As a result, the planning process is largely conducted by the core management team.

In relation to participatory decision-making, the management recognizes the importance of collective consultation in determining educational programs. This principle is reflected in the Qur'anic teaching:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

"And consult them in affairs." (QS. Ali 'Imran: 159)

The findings show that the implementation of this principle has not yet been fully realized within the institutional planning process.

Forms of Community Participation-Based TPQ Management

The study found that management activities have included planning, implementation, and evaluation functions. Nevertheless, these functions are not yet integrated into a comprehensive management system.

Community participation is evident through voluntary labor, financial assistance, attendance at religious activities, and support for educational programs. However, participation in strategic aspects such as policy formulation, decision-making, and program evaluation remains limited.

The management structure is still centered on several key individuals. Consequently, community involvement has not been institutionally organized. The findings suggest that the current management model can be categorized as semi-participatory because community members contribute to operational activities but have limited influence on strategic management processes.

The importance of collective participation is reflected in the following Qur'anic verse:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

"Their affairs are conducted through consultation among themselves." (QS. Asy-Syura: 38)

The findings indicate that this consultative principle has not yet been fully incorporated into all management functions.

Impact of Community Participation-Based TPQ Management on Religious Education Strengthening

The findings demonstrate that community participation contributes positively to the continuity of educational activities. Community support is provided through financial assistance, voluntary services, and attendance at institutional events.

Students consistently participate in activities such as Qur'anic recitation, memorization of daily prayers, and worship practices. Parents also contribute by encouraging attendance and supporting learning activities at home.

However, the strengthening of religious education remains focused primarily on Qur'anic reading skills. Programs specifically designed to develop moral character, Islamic understanding, and practical religious behavior have not yet been systematically integrated into the management framework.

The findings further reveal that positive relationships and mutual trust exist between TPQ administrators and community members. This social capital provides significant opportunities for strengthening participatory management in the future.



Figure 1. Conceptual Overview of the Impact of Community Participation-Based TPQ Management

Figure 1. The figure illustrates the relationship between community participation, management implementation, and religious education outcomes. Community support in the form of financial assistance, voluntary services, and involvement in activities contributes to the sustainability of TPQ programs. However, limited participation in planning and evaluation restricts the broader impact of management on strengthening religious education.

Discussion

The findings reveal that planning practices remain predominantly experience-based and are not supported by systematic written documents. The absence of structured planning limits institutional capacity to establish measurable goals and sustainable development strategies. Educational

effectiveness depends on the integration of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling functions, and weaknesses in one of these functions may reduce institutional performance. Similar conditions have been identified in non-formal educational institutions where inadequate planning often results in the dominance of routine activities over innovation-oriented programs. This similarity indicates that planning remains a major challenge in many non-formal Islamic educational institutions.

The study also demonstrates that community participation is largely concentrated in operational support rather than strategic management. Community involvement mainly takes the form of financial assistance, voluntary contributions, and support for educational activities, while participation in decision-making and institutional planning remains limited (Febriana & Mulyadi, 2023). Such conditions indicate that community participation has not yet reached a level that enables stakeholders to influence organizational development significantly. Consequently, participatory management has not been fully institutionalized within the TPQ management system, resulting in relatively passive forms of community engagement (Sari & Wahyudi, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce participatory management theory, which emphasizes that stakeholder involvement contributes to organizational effectiveness, sustainability, and institutional accountability. The results suggest that educational management should not rely solely on internal administrators but should also involve external stakeholders as active partners in institutional development. Furthermore, effective educational management requires the integration of managerial functions with values such as trust, consultation, shared responsibility, and collaboration. These findings support the growing discourse on participatory governance within non-formal Islamic educational institutions (Jalil & Kurniasari, 2025).

Practically, the findings imply that TPQ managers should establish structured mechanisms that facilitate stakeholder participation throughout all stages of management, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Community involvement should extend beyond operational assistance and be incorporated into strategic decision-making processes. The existence of positive social relationships and strong community trust represents an important social capital that can be utilized to strengthen participatory governance and improve institutional sustainability. Such efforts may increase community ownership, institutional accountability, and the effectiveness of religious education programs (Ningsih & Zakiyah, 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of management functions and community participation within a single analytical framework. Previous studies have generally examined TPQ management and community

participation as separate dimensions, resulting in limited understanding of how both aspects interact within educational institutions (Fauzi & Rahmawati, 2024). In contrast, this study demonstrates how community participation influences planning, implementation, and evaluation processes while simultaneously contributing to the strengthening of religious education. This integrative perspective offers a more comprehensive understanding of participatory management in non-formal Islamic educational settings and expands existing discussions in the field of Islamic educational management (Suryani, 2023).

This study contributes to the literature by identifying the existence of a semi-participatory management model in which community members actively support institutional operations but remain minimally involved in strategic governance (Nur & Fauzi, 2024). The findings indicate that community participation contributes positively to institutional sustainability and the development of students' religious habits; however, its impact on broader educational improvement remains limited. Therefore, transforming passive participation into empowered participation is essential for enhancing the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of religious education (Sari & Nurjanah, 2026). This contribution provides a foundation for future research and practical efforts aimed at developing more inclusive and participatory management models within non-formal Islamic educational institutions (Rahman & Khodijah, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that community participation plays a significant role in supporting the management of Qur'anic Learning Centers and contributes positively to strengthening religious education through the cultivation of students' religious habits and community support. However, the findings also reveal that participation remains concentrated in program implementation, while involvement in planning and evaluation processes is still limited. The key lesson from this study is that religious education can be strengthened more effectively when community participation is integrated across all management functions in a systematic and sustainable manner. Academically, this study contributes to the field of Islamic educational management by proposing an integrated perspective that links management functions with community participation and by identifying a semi-participatory management model within non-formal Islamic educational institutions. Nevertheless, this research is limited to a single case study, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts. Future studies are therefore encouraged to examine multiple Qur'anic Learning Centers in different socio-cultural settings and employ comparative or mixed-method approaches to develop a more comprehensive understanding of participatory management practices and their impact on religious education outcomes.

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