



PDCA Cycle-Based Quality Management in Islamic Education and Its Alignment with Educational Management Standards

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of quality management in Islamic educational management based on the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle and its alignment with the Educational Management Standards stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 47 of 2023. This study employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school principals, teachers, and educational staff. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, while data credibility was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that quality management has been implemented systematically through the four stages of the PDCA cycle. The planning stage focused on educational program design, quality target setting, and religious program development. The implementation stage integrated academic learning, religious activities, character education, and an Islamic school culture. Evaluation was conducted through supervision, monitoring, and regular review meetings, while continuous improvement emphasized teacher professional development, program refinement, and educational innovation. These findings imply that integrating the PDCA cycle with national educational management standards provides a sustainable framework for strengthening institutional governance, improving educational quality, and supporting continuous quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational quality has become a strategic concern for governments, educational institutions, and society because it determines schools' ability to prepare graduates who are academically competent, morally responsible, and

capable of responding to increasingly complex social and technological changes (Jalilov et al., 2025; Saini et al., 2023). As educational systems continue to transform rapidly, stakeholders expect schools not only to improve learning outcomes but also to establish accountable governance that sustains institutional excellence. Consequently, quality management has evolved from an administrative function into a strategic approach for ensuring continuous institutional improvement. Within this context, the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle has been widely recognized as an effective management framework because it integrates planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement into a systematic process that supports organizational sustainability (Candra & Nurfitriyanti, 2024; Isniah et al., 2020). Likewise, sustainable quality assurance strengthens governance, improves organizational effectiveness, and enhances institutional adaptability to emerging educational challenges (Azza & Yasin, 2025; Yuliana et al., 2026). Therefore, systematic quality management has become essential for maintaining public trust and achieving sustainable educational excellence.

Despite growing awareness of quality assurance, many educational institutions continue to encounter difficulties in implementing quality management as a continuous organizational process (Aldhobaib, 2024; Javed & Alenezi, 2023). In practice, quality improvement is often limited to fulfilling administrative requirements or accreditation standards rather than functioning as an integrated management system that continuously guides institutional development. Planning frequently lacks long-term strategic orientation, implementation is not consistently aligned with predetermined objectives, evaluation remains procedural, and monitoring results are insufficiently translated into corrective actions. These conditions reduce institutional governance effectiveness and limit schools' capacity to respond to educational change (Heaton et al., 2023; Bellei & Muñoz, 2023). Such challenges are even more significant in Islamic educational institutions, where educational quality includes academic achievement, character formation, moral development, and the internalization of Islamic values. Consequently, quality management requires a comprehensive governance model integrating academic excellence with religious values through sustainable institutional improvement. Previous studies demonstrate that educational quality is strengthened through systematic management, collaborative leadership, and continuous institutional commitment to quality improvement (Setyowati et al., 2024; Susilowati et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, educational management at the primary and secondary levels is guided by the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 47 of 2023 concerning Educational Management Standards. The regulation emphasizes that

educational management should be implemented through an interconnected cycle consisting of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and continuous follow-up. This policy reflects the fundamental principles of continuous quality improvement by encouraging educational institutions to establish sustainable governance systems based on evidence-based decision-making (Ghozali & Syafiih, 2024; Sholehah & Ichsan, 2025). Nevertheless, translating these regulatory standards into daily institutional practices remains a considerable challenge, particularly for Islamic secondary schools that simultaneously pursue academic quality and Islamic character education. In many institutions, the implementation of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement varies according to organizational capacity and leadership commitment, resulting in different levels of institutional effectiveness (Tohet & Nuraini, 2026; Tsoka, 2026). These practical circumstances highlight the importance of investigating how educational management standards are operationalized through the PDCA framework to create sustainable quality improvement while preserving the distinctive educational mission of Islamic schools.

Recent studies have increasingly emphasized the importance of continuous quality improvement as the foundation of sustainable educational management (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024). Rather than perceiving quality assurance as a periodic evaluation process, contemporary research views it as a continuous organizational cycle that integrates strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and institutional learning. Within Islamic education, this perspective has been expanded by highlighting the integration of managerial effectiveness with Islamic values to achieve both academic excellence and character development. Studies have demonstrated that continuous quality assurance contributes to organizational effectiveness when institutional leaders establish systematic governance supported by collaboration, stakeholder participation, and evidence-based decision-making (Azza & Yasin, 2025; Yuliana et al., 2026). Likewise, research on the implementation of the PDCA cycle indicates that quality management becomes more effective when planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement are conducted as interconnected activities rather than independent managerial functions (Candra & Nurfitriyanti, 2024; Isniah et al., 2020). Collectively, these studies suggest that sustainable educational quality depends on the consistency of institutional management rather than on isolated quality initiatives.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into quality assurance and educational management, several limitations remain evident (Aldhobaib, 2024; Mouta et al., 2024). Most investigations have examined Total Quality Management, organizational governance, or continuous quality

improvement as separate concepts without explicitly explaining how the PDCA framework is operationalized within Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, existing studies generally focus on leadership, organizational culture, or quality assurance practices without evaluating their alignment with the Educational Management Standards mandated by the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 47 of 2023. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the integration of the PDCA cycle with national educational management standards remains limited, particularly within Islamic secondary education. This limitation creates an important research gap because understanding how national standards are translated into daily managerial practices is essential for strengthening institutional governance and achieving sustainable educational quality (Kamilah, 2026; Muslichuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, further investigation is required to provide a more comprehensive understanding of quality management implementation within the context of Islamic education.

This study addresses the identified gap by offering a comprehensive perspective on quality management that simultaneously examines the implementation of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle and its alignment with the Educational Management Standards established under the current national regulatory framework. Unlike previous studies that primarily concentrated on individual dimensions of quality assurance, this research investigates how planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement operate as an integrated management cycle within Islamic secondary education. Accordingly, the study proposes that educational quality should not be interpreted merely as the achievement of predetermined performance indicators but as the outcome of an interconnected governance system that continuously integrates organizational planning, educational implementation, institutional evaluation, and evidence-based improvement. This perspective provides a more holistic understanding of quality management by positioning continuous improvement as the central mechanism through which educational institutions maintain sustainability, strengthen institutional effectiveness, and preserve their distinctive Islamic educational mission.

Based on this perspective, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How is quality management implemented through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle in Islamic secondary education, and to what extent is its implementation aligned with the Educational Management Standards stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 47 of 2023? It is argued that integrating the PDCA cycle with national educational management standards enables educational institutions to establish systematic governance characterized

by continuous planning, effective implementation, evidence-based evaluation, and sustainable institutional improvement. By addressing this issue, the study contributes theoretically to the advancement of quality management literature in Islamic education through an integrated analytical framework that connects continuous quality improvement with national educational governance. Practically, the findings provide school leaders and policymakers with empirical guidance for designing strategic quality management practices capable of strengthening institutional performance while maintaining the balance between academic excellence and Islamic character education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of quality management in Islamic secondary education. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to explore organizational processes, management practices, and participants' experiences within their natural setting, thereby providing comprehensive insights into complex educational phenomena. The study focused on examining the implementation of quality management throughout the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement, as well as its alignment with the Educational Management Standards stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 47 of 2023. The research was conducted at an Islamic private secondary school selected purposively because of its commitment to implementing a systematic quality assurance system that integrates academic excellence with Islamic character development. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and included the principal, vice principal, teachers, and administrative staff who were directly involved in educational management and quality assurance processes (Engle, 2015; Rifka, 2025).

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school leaders, teachers, and administrative personnel to obtain detailed information regarding quality planning, implementation strategies, monitoring mechanisms, evaluation practices, and continuous improvement initiatives. Observations were carried out to examine the implementation of academic activities, Islamic school culture, leadership practices, and quality assurance processes in their natural context. Documentary evidence, including annual work plans, quality assurance documents, internal evaluation reports, school policies, and other institutional

records, was analyzed to corroborate findings obtained from interviews and observations. The integration of these three data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain rich and comprehensive evidence while strengthening the credibility of the findings through data triangulation (Engle, 2015; John W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of four interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, organizing, coding, and categorizing interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documentary evidence to identify meaningful patterns related to quality management implementation. The condensed data were subsequently presented through thematic displays that facilitated comparison across data sources and supported the interpretation of relationships among emerging themes. Finally, conclusions were continuously verified by comparing evidence obtained from different participants and data collection techniques to ensure consistency and trustworthiness throughout the research process. The credibility of the findings was further strengthened through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and continuous verification, ensuring that all interpretations remained grounded in empirical evidence and accurately reflected the participants' experiences (Engle, 2015; John, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study indicate that quality management in Islamic secondary education was implemented systematically through the four stages of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle. The implementation covered quality planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement in accordance with the Educational Management Standards. Table 1 summarizes the main findings of the study, followed by a detailed explanation of each stage.

Table 1. Summary of Findings Based on the PDCA Cycle

PDCA Stage	Main Aspect	Empirical Findings
Plan	Quality Planning	Annual strategic planning meetings were conducted to formulate educational programs, establish quality objectives, allocate institutional resources, and integrate Islamic educational values into academic planning.
Do	Quality Implementation	Educational programs integrated academic learning with Islamic values through classroom instruction, Qur'an memorization, congregational prayers, character education, teacher role modelling, and the development of an Islamic school culture.

Check	Quality Evaluation	Quality evaluation was conducted through academic supervision, routine monitoring, coordination meetings, and continuous assessment of students' academic achievement, religious attitudes, and character development.
Act	Continuous Quality Improvement	Evaluation findings were used to improve educational programs, strengthen teacher professional development, encourage instructional innovation, and refine institutional management through continuous improvement.

Quality Planning (Plan)

The findings indicate that quality planning was implemented systematically through the school's annual strategic planning meeting. This forum involved the principal, vice principal, teachers, and administrative staff in formulating educational programs, establishing quality objectives, and determining the allocation of institutional resources. The planning process was conducted collaboratively to ensure that all stakeholders shared responsibility for achieving the school's vision and educational goals.

The planning stage extended beyond academic achievement by integrating Islamic educational values into the school's quality objectives. Several flagship programs, including Qur'an memorization, congregational prayer, character education, and other religious activities, were incorporated into the annual work plan with clearly defined performance indicators. These programs demonstrate that educational quality was conceptualized as the balanced development of students' academic competence, moral character, and spiritual values.

Furthermore, the planning process reflected the implementation of educational management standards through systematic program formulation, institutional target setting, and continuous preparation for quality improvement. Planning served not only as an administrative requirement but also as the foundation for organizing subsequent management activities throughout the academic year.

Quality Implementation (Do)

The implementation stage demonstrated the integration of academic learning with Islamic educational values throughout school activities. Teaching and learning processes combined general academic subjects with religious education, while various school programs were designed to strengthen students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual development simultaneously.

Daily implementation of quality management was reflected in the consistent practice of congregational prayers, Qur'an memorization, dhikr activities, voluntary fasting programs, and character-building activities. These

religious programs became an integral component of the school's educational process rather than supplementary activities. Consequently, educational quality was assessed not only through academic achievement but also through students' behavioral development and religious commitment.

The implementation of quality management was further supported by teachers who consistently acted as role models in demonstrating discipline, professionalism, responsibility, and Islamic values during classroom instruction and daily interactions with students. Such practices contributed to the establishment of a positive Islamic school culture characterized by discipline, mutual respect, responsibility, and ethical behavior. The integration of curriculum, religious activities, teacher professionalism, and school culture collectively supported the implementation of quality management within the institution.

Quality Evaluation (Check)

The evaluation stage was carried out through continuous supervision, routine monitoring, and periodic evaluation meetings coordinated by the school leadership. These evaluation activities aimed to assess the implementation of educational programs, identify obstacles encountered during implementation, and determine appropriate follow-up actions for quality improvement.

Academic supervision was conducted regularly to monitor teaching quality and ensure that educational programs were implemented according to institutional objectives. In addition, coordination meetings involving school leaders, teachers, and administrative personnel provided opportunities to review program achievements, discuss implementation challenges, and formulate collective decisions regarding future improvements.

Evaluation activities also emphasized students' academic performance alongside the development of religious attitudes, moral behavior, discipline, and character. Teachers continuously monitored students' behavioral development both inside and outside the classroom to ensure that educational objectives related to Islamic character formation were achieved. As a result, evaluation functioned not merely as a measurement process but also as a management tool for continuous institutional improvement.

Continuous Quality Improvement (Act)

The final stage of the PDCA cycle focused on continuous quality improvement through the systematic utilization of evaluation results. Information obtained from supervision, monitoring activities, and evaluation meetings became the basis for identifying weaknesses, determining priorities for improvement, and refining educational programs.

Continuous improvement was implemented through several strategic initiatives. These included revising educational programs, improving instructional practices, addressing implementation challenges, and strengthening programs that had demonstrated positive outcomes. Such improvements were carried out continuously rather than as isolated responses to emerging problems.

Another important aspect of continuous improvement involved enhancing teachers' professional competence. The school encouraged teachers to participate actively in professional development programs, including workshops, educational seminars, technical training, and teacher working group activities. These initiatives aimed to improve pedagogical competence, instructional quality, and teachers' adaptability to educational developments.

Continuous improvement was also reflected in the regular review and innovation of academic and religious programs. School management continuously evaluated existing programs to ensure their relevance to students' needs, institutional goals, and educational developments. Teachers were encouraged to adopt innovative instructional strategies and maximize the use of available educational technology to improve learning quality.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that quality management was implemented systematically through the four stages of the PDCA cycle. Planning established clear institutional objectives, implementation translated those plans into educational practices, evaluation assessed the effectiveness of institutional programs, and continuous improvement ensured that evaluation findings were transformed into sustainable institutional development. This integrated management cycle enabled the school to maintain educational quality while continuously improving both academic performance and Islamic character education.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that quality management in Islamic secondary education has been implemented systematically through the four interconnected stages of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, indicating that quality improvement is embedded as a continuous managerial process rather than as a series of isolated administrative activities. The planning stage established strategic educational objectives by integrating academic development with Islamic values, thereby creating a comprehensive framework for institutional quality improvement. This finding reinforces the argument that continuous quality improvement requires structured planning as the foundation for sustainable institutional development. Previous studies similarly emphasize that educational quality can only be achieved when planning is integrated with clear

quality objectives, stakeholder participation, and continuous organizational commitment (Azza & Yasin, 2025; Setyowati et al., 2024). Furthermore, the systematic application of the PDCA framework confirms that continuous quality management provides educational institutions with a practical mechanism for maintaining organizational effectiveness while responding to changing educational demands (Candra & Nurfitriyanti, 2024; Isniah et al., 2020).

The implementation stage illustrates that educational quality within Islamic schools extends beyond academic performance to encompass character formation, religious development, and the cultivation of an Islamic school culture. The integration of classroom instruction with religious programs, teacher role modelling, and daily spiritual practices demonstrates that quality management in Islamic education adopts a holistic perspective toward student development. This finding supports the view that quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions should integrate managerial effectiveness with Islamic educational values rather than emphasizing academic outcomes alone. Contemporary studies similarly argue that sustainable educational quality is strengthened when institutional governance combines continuous quality improvement with value-based educational management that promotes both organizational effectiveness and moral development (Susilowati et al., 2025; Azza & Yasin, 2025). Likewise, recent research on quality management in Islamic education emphasizes that institutional quality is enhanced through the integration of curriculum, organizational culture, leadership, and continuous quality assurance processes (Jannana et al., 2025; Yuliana et al., 2026).

The evaluation process identified in this study highlights the strategic role of supervision, monitoring, and collaborative evaluation meetings in supporting evidence-based decision-making. Rather than functioning solely as administrative control mechanisms, evaluation activities generated organizational knowledge that informed institutional learning and subsequent managerial improvements. Such findings are consistent with the fundamental principle of the PDCA cycle, which positions evaluation as the critical link between implementation and continuous improvement. Previous studies likewise demonstrate that regular monitoring and cyclical quality assurance contribute significantly to organizational accountability, institutional learning, and sustainable educational development by enabling institutions to identify weaknesses and formulate appropriate corrective actions (Candra & Nurfitriyanti, 2024; Jannana et al., 2025). This systematic evaluation process also reflects the broader concept of continuous quality improvement, in which institutional decisions are increasingly grounded in empirical evidence rather than routine administrative practices (Azza & Yasin, 2025; Yuliana et al., 2026).

Another important finding concerns the implementation of continuous quality improvement through teacher professional development, program refinement, and educational innovation. The school consistently utilized evaluation findings to improve instructional practices, strengthen successful programs, and enhance teachers' professional competencies. These findings indicate that sustainable quality management depends not only on periodic evaluation but also on the institution's capacity to transform evaluation results into practical improvement strategies. This observation is consistent with studies emphasizing that organizational improvement requires continuous organizational learning and systematic follow-up rather than one-time quality initiatives (Isniah et al., 2020; Candra & Nurfitriyanti, 2024). Moreover, continuous professional development and institutional innovation have been recognized as essential components of sustainable quality assurance because they improve institutional adaptability while strengthening long-term educational performance (Setyowati et al., 2024; Susilowati et al., 2025).

Overall, this study contributes to the growing discourse on quality management in Islamic education by demonstrating that the effective implementation of the PDCA cycle can be aligned with the Educational Management Standards stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 47 of 2023. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined quality assurance, Total Quality Management, or continuous improvement as separate organizational concepts, this research provides empirical evidence that integrating the PDCA framework with national educational management standards creates a coherent governance model capable of supporting sustainable institutional quality. The findings therefore suggest that educational quality is strengthened when planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement operate as an integrated management cycle supported by organizational commitment, collaborative leadership, and evidence-based decision-making. Consequently, the PDCA framework offers a practical and sustainable approach for Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance governance quality while maintaining their distinctive educational mission and compliance with national quality standards.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that quality management in Islamic secondary education can be effectively implemented through the integrated application of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, enabling educational institutions to establish a continuous process of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement that supports both academic excellence and Islamic character

development. The findings further reveal that aligning the PDCA framework with the Educational Management Standards stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 47 of 2023 provides a systematic governance model that strengthens institutional effectiveness and promotes sustainable quality improvement. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on Islamic educational management by demonstrating how continuous quality management and national educational standards can be integrated into a coherent framework for institutional quality assurance. Nevertheless, this research is limited to a single qualitative case study, which may restrict the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future studies are therefore encouraged to employ comparative case studies, mixed-methods approaches, or quantitative designs involving different types of Islamic educational institutions to validate, refine, and expand the proposed quality management framework across broader educational settings.

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