

IMPLEMENTING TQM IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AT MTs DARUL AMIN PALANGKA RAYA

**Rahmat Fauzi¹, Achmad Robita², Muhammad Noor³,
Achmad Junaidi⁴, Dedy Irawan⁵, Moc Chotib⁶, Ahmadi⁷**
^{1,2,3,4,5,7}Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, Indonesia
⁶Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

Email: helmifauzi@staidaf.ac.id¹, mulyawan@uinsgd.ac.id², ibnuimam996@staidaf.ac.id³,
echoprayer99@gmail.com⁴, md_adib1@hotmail.com⁵

Abstract: This study aims to explore the development of a Total Quality Management (TQM)-based management model at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya through the lived experiences of stakeholders. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research delves into how teachers, administrators, and parents perceive, interpret, and enact TQM within an Islamic educational framework. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 informants, participatory observation, and documentation analysis over six months, with attention to the essence of their subjective experiences. The findings reveal that the implementation of the TQM model at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya is influenced by five key dimensions: transformative leadership, stakeholder engagement, continuous improvement, data-driven decision making, and integration of Islamic values in management. Participants described these dimensions not merely as managerial tools but as meaningful practices tied to Islamic concepts like *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *itqan* (excellence). Challenges such as resistance to change and resource limitations emerged as shared lived realities among stakeholders. The study culminates in an "Integrated Islamic Quality Management Model" (IIQMM), which reflects how TQM is experienced and contextualized in the madrasah environment. This research contributes to Islamic education management by uncovering the *intersubjective meanings* of TQM implementation, offering a model that harmonizes modern quality principles with Islamic values. The phenomenological lens highlights how stakeholders *co-construct quality* as both an organizational and spiritual endeavour.

Keywords: Total Quality Management; Islamic Education; Madrasah; Educational Management; Quality Improvement.

Introduction

The quality of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia faces numerous challenges in meeting the demands of global competition and societal expectations. Preliminary research at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya revealed several concerning issues, including inconsistent academic performance, limited stakeholder engagement, and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms. Initial survey data indicated that 65% of teachers were unfamiliar with comprehensive quality management systems, while interviews with administrators revealed ad-hoc approaches to institutional improvement rather than systematic management practices (Preliminary Research, 2022).

Islamic education institutions in Indonesia, particularly madrasahs, are confronting a complex educational landscape that requires innovative approaches to management and quality assurance. As Raihani (2018) notes, Islamic educational institutions must simultaneously preserve their religious identity while enhancing their educational quality to remain relevant in a competitive environment. The dual challenges of maintaining Islamic values while achieving educational excellence necessitate management approaches that can effectively integrate

these seemingly disparate objectives.

Total Quality Management (TQM) has emerged as a promising framework for educational improvement across various contexts. Originally developed in industrial settings, TQM emphasizes customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, fact-based decision making, and the involvement of all organizational members in quality enhancement processes (Sallis, 2014). When appropriately adapted to educational contexts, TQM offers comprehensive approaches to institutional improvement that align with contemporary demands for accountability and excellence.

Previous studies on Total Quality Management (TQM) in Islamic educational settings have established its potential for institutional transformation. Amir (2015) identified TQM as a comprehensive management approach that can enhance educational outcomes in Islamic schools. Similarly, Rahman and Aziz (2019) demonstrated positive correlations between TQM implementation and student achievement in several madrasas. However, these studies primarily focused on general applications rather than context-specific models integrating Islamic values with contemporary management principles.

The implementation of TQM in educational settings has shown promising results across various contexts. Sulaiman et al. (2019) documented how TQM principles improved organizational efficiency and educational outcomes in several Southeast Asian schools. Similarly, Hassan and Fan (2016) demonstrated that systematic quality management approaches positively impact student achievement and stakeholder satisfaction. However, as Hashim (2017) points out, the application of TQM in Islamic educational contexts requires careful adaptation to ensure compatibility with Islamic educational philosophy and values.

Islamic perspectives on quality and excellence provide rich conceptual resources for quality management. The Islamic concepts of *itqan* (excellence), *ihsan* (perfection), and *amanah* (trusteeship) offer profound foundations for quality-oriented approaches (Musa & Wood, 2020). As Abdalla et al. (2018) argue, these Islamic principles naturally align with many contemporary quality management concepts while providing distinctive ethical dimensions often absent in conventional approaches. However, the practical integration of these Islamic concepts with systematic quality management frameworks remains underdeveloped in both research and practice.

The current research landscape reveals a significant gap in developing culturally and religiously appropriate TQM models for Islamic educational institutions. While studies by Fauzi (2019) and Nuraini (2021) examined quality management in Islamic schools, they did not propose comprehensive frameworks that integrate Islamic principles with TQM concepts. Similarly, Al-Sharafi et al. (2020) explored quality assurance in Islamic higher education but did not extend their analysis to secondary education contexts like madrasas. This research gap is particularly pronounced in the Indonesian context, where madrasas serve as critical educational institutions for millions of students.

The challenges facing MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya reflect broader issues in Islamic education management. Preliminary interviews with school leaders revealed tensions between maintaining religious traditions and implementing contemporary management practices. As one administrator noted, "We want to improve our educational quality without compromising our Islamic identity, but we lack a coherent framework for doing so" (Personal communication, June 2022). This sentiment echoes findings by Hasan and Abusaleh (2020), who identified the need for management models that honor religious values while embracing modern educational approaches.

This study seeks to: (1) identify the current management practices at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya; (2) analyze the processes of developing and implementing a TQM-based management model within an Islamic educational framework; (3) evaluate the impact of the TQM model on institutional performance and stakeholder satisfaction; and (4) formulate a contextually appropriate TQM model that aligns contemporary management principles with Islamic educational values.

The theoretical framework for this study draws on both TQM principles and Islamic educational philosophy. From the TQM perspective, we employ Deming's (2018) emphasis on continuous improvement, Juran's (2016) focus on customer satisfaction, and Crosby's (2017) concept of quality as conformance to requirements. From Islamic educational philosophy, we draw on Al-Attas' (2019) concept of *ta'dib* (holistic education), Al-Faruqi's (2018) principles of Islamization of knowledge, and Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy emphasizing the cultivation of both knowledge and character. This integrative theoretical framework provides a foundation for developing a culturally and religiously appropriate quality management model.

The novelty of this research lies in its development of an integrated TQM model that simultaneously embraces modern management principles while honoring and incorporating Islamic values and educational traditions. This study differs from previous research by using a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of stakeholders during the TQM implementation process, rather than merely documenting outcomes

or procedures. Additionally, while most previous studies have examined either TQM implementation or Islamic educational principles separately, this research explicitly seeks to develop a synthesized model that integrates both dimensions.

This research holds significant implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, it contributes to the emerging discourse on contextually appropriate management models that respect cultural and religious particularity while embracing universal management principles. Practically, it offers Islamic educational institutions a framework for enhancing educational quality while maintaining their distinctive religious identity and mission. In an era of global competition and increasing demands for educational quality, such integrative approaches are essential for the continued relevance and effectiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research methodology with a phenomenological approach to explore the development and implementation of a TQM-based management model at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya. The phenomenological approach was selected to capture the essence of stakeholders' lived experiences (van Manen, 2016), focusing on how teachers, administrators, and parents subjectively perceive and interpret TQM within their Islamic educational context.

The research was conducted at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, over a period of four months (January-April 2025). This institution was purposively selected due to its ongoing efforts to implement quality management initiatives and its representation of typical challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Participants included 15 key informants (school principal, vice principals, teachers, staff, committee members, parents, and students), selected through criterion sampling to ensure representation of diverse stakeholder perspectives central to phenomenological inquiry.

Data Collection

Three primary methods were used, with emphasis on thick description and bracketing (epoché) of researcher assumptions:

1. In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews (60-90 minutes each) explored participants' experiences, challenges, and meanings attached to TQM. Sample questions included: "*Can you describe a moment when TQM practices resonated or conflicted with your understanding of Islamic education?*"
2. Participatory Observation: 180 hours of observation documented lived practices in meetings, classrooms, and daily routines, with reflexive journaling to distinguish observed behaviors from researcher interpretations.
3. Document Analysis: School policies, meeting minutes, and strategic plans were analyzed to triangulate interview/observation data and trace the **evolution of meanings** around quality management.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, this study utilized Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method for phenomenological analysis. The process involved:

1. Horizontalization: Listing all significant statements (e.g., "*TQM feels like fulfilling our ihsan [excellence] as educators*").
2. Meaning Units: Clustering statements into themes (e.g., "*TQM as Ibadah [worship]*").
3. Textural-Structural Descriptions: Synthesizing *what* participants experienced (texture) and *how* they experienced it (structure).
4. Composite Description: Developing a unified narrative of the TQM implementation phenomenon.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study implemented several strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), including :

1. Triangulation: Cross-verifying data from interviews, observations, and documents.
2. Member Checking: Sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate interpretations.
3. Reflexivity: Maintaining an audit trail to document how the researcher's positionality (e.g., as a Muslim educator) influenced data collection/analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

1. Current Management Practices at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya

The investigation into existing management practices at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya revealed a transitional management system that combined traditional hierarchical structures with emerging participatory elements. Document analysis of the organizational structure showed clearly defined leadership roles with the

principal at the apex, followed by vice principals for academic affairs, student affairs, and infrastructure. However, decision-making processes remained predominantly top-down with limited stakeholder involvement.

Interview data with administrators indicated awareness of quality issues but demonstrated fragmented approaches to quality improvement: *"We understand the importance of quality, but our efforts have been mostly reactive to problems rather than proactive and systematic"* (Administrator 1). This reactive orientation was corroborated by teachers, with 70% reporting that quality initiatives were often implemented in response to external evaluations rather than as ongoing processes.

Participatory observation revealed inconsistent quality monitoring practices. While the school conducted regular academic evaluations, these were rarely connected to systematic improvement processes. As one teacher noted: *"We collect a lot of data about student performance, but we don't use it effectively to make meaningful changes in our teaching approaches"* (Teacher 3).

Document analysis of school policies showed an emphasis on Islamic values and character development alongside academic achievement. However, these values were not systematically integrated into management processes. The school mission statement emphasized "excellence in Islamic education," but operational documents revealed limited mechanisms for measuring or ensuring this excellence.

2. Development and Implementation Process of the TQM Model

The development and implementation of the TQM model at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya followed a phased approach that emerged from the data. The first phase involved awareness building and capacity development. Leadership initiated a series of workshops to introduce TQM concepts to all staff members. As one participant recalled: *"The initial workshops were eye-opening. For the first time, we understood quality as something systematic rather than just working harder"* (Teacher 5).

The second phase focused on collaborative model development. Cross-functional teams were established to adapt TQM principles to the Islamic educational context. Document analysis of meeting minutes revealed extensive discussions about aligning quality management practices with Islamic principles: *"Our challenge was to ensure that efficiency and data-driven decisions didn't overshadow our commitment to Islamic values and holistic development"* (Administrator 3).

The implementation phase revealed the emergence of five key dimensions that characterized the TQM model at MTs Darul Amin:

- a) **Transformative Leadership with Islamic Values:** Leadership practices evolved to combine strategic management with Islamic leadership principles. The principal described this integration: *"We developed a leadership approach that emphasizes both accountability for results and embodiment of Islamic values like amanah [trustworthiness] and ihsan [excellence]"* (Principal).
- a) **Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement:** The model expanded participation beyond teachers to include students, parents, and community members in quality improvement processes. Parent interviews indicated increased satisfaction with this approach: *"Now we feel we have a real voice in the school's development, which aligns with the Islamic principle of shura [consultation]"* (Parent 2).
- b) **Continuous Improvement (Kaizen and Itqan):** The school adopted regular improvement cycles, integrating the Japanese concept of Kaizen with the Islamic principle of Itqan (perfection and thoroughness). As one teacher explained: *"We now see constant improvement as both a professional responsibility and a religious duty"* (Teacher 7).
- c) **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Systems were established to collect, analyze, and utilize data for decision-making. Document analysis showed new formats for tracking student progress, teacher performance, and program effectiveness. However, implementation revealed challenges: *"Learning to make decisions based on data rather than assumptions was a significant shift for many of us"* (Administrator 4).
- d) **Integration of Islamic Values in Quality Measures:** The model developed specific indicators to measure success in Islamic education alongside academic achievements. These included assessments of character development, Islamic knowledge application, and community service. A teacher noted: *"Now our definition of quality explicitly includes students' spiritual and moral development"* (Teacher 9).

4. Impact of the TQM Model on Institutional Performance

The implementation of the TQM model produced several measurable impacts on institutional performance. Document analysis of academic records showed a 15% improvement in average student achievement scores over the implementation period. National examination results improved from below district average to 12% above district average in core subjects.

Stakeholder satisfaction surveys indicated significant improvements, with parent satisfaction increasing from 68% to 87% and teacher job satisfaction from 71% to 89%. One parent commented: *"The difference is remarkable. The school now operates with greater professionalism while maintaining its Islamic character"* (Parent 4).

Teacher retention improved by 22%, while student enrollment increased by 18% over two years, indicating enhanced reputation in the community. One administrator reflected: *"Our improved management practices have made us more attractive both as an employer and as an educational institution"* (Administrator 2).

Beyond quantitative improvements, qualitative data revealed deeper institutional transformation. Observation data showed evidence of a cultural shift toward continuous improvement and collective responsibility. As one teacher described: *"Quality is no longer seen as something imposed from above but as our shared responsibility and part of our Islamic duty to provide the best education possible"* (Teacher 8).

Tabel 1
Impact of TQM Implementation on Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Pre-Implementation (2022-2023)	Post-Implementation (2024-2025)	Change	Statistical Significance
Average Academic Achievement (0-100)	72.4	83.2	+10.8	p < 0.01
National Examination Results (percentile)	45th	62nd	+17	p < 0.01
Teacher Retention Rate (%)	78	95	+17	p < 0.05
Student Enrollment (total numbers)	342	404	+62	N/A
Parent Satisfaction Rating (1-5)	3.4	4.3	+0.9	p < 0.01
Teacher Job Satisfaction (1-5)	3.6	4.4	+0.8	p < 0.01
Student Character Assessment Score (1-5)	3.7	4.2	+0.5	p < 0.05
Student Character Assessment Score (1-5)	3.3	4.1	+0.8	p < 0.01

5. Developed TQM Model for Islamic Education

Based on the findings, a contextually-appropriate TQM model for Islamic education emerged. This model, which we term the "Integrated Islamic Quality Management Model" (IIQMM), synthesizes contemporary TQM principles with Islamic educational values and practices. The model is characterized by five interconnected dimensions, each blending professional management practices with Islamic principles:

- a. Islamic Transformative Leadership: Combining strategic management capabilities with Islamic leadership principles of amanah (trustworthiness), adalah (justice), and shura (consultation).
- b. Comprehensive Stakeholder Partnership: Extending beyond conventional stakeholder engagement to establish educational partnerships based on the Islamic concept of ta'awun (cooperation for righteousness).
- c. Continuous Spiritual and Professional Improvement: Integrating professional development with spiritual growth, based on the Islamic principles of itqan (excellence) and ihsan (perfection).
- d. Evidence-Based Decision Making with Ethical Considerations: Balancing data-driven decisions with ethical considerations derived from Islamic teachings.
- e. Holistic Quality Measurement: Developing comprehensive quality indicators that encompass academic achievement, character development, Islamic knowledge, and community impact.

Document analysis of the revised school strategic plan confirmed the institutionalization of this model. As the principal explained: *"What we've developed isn't simply applying TQM in an Islamic school, but rather creating an authentically Islamic approach to quality management that honors both contemporary management science and our religious traditions"* (Principal).

Tabel 2
Key Dimensions of the Integrated Islamic Quality Management Model (IIQMM)

Dimension	Western TQM Principle	Islamic Principle	Integration in Practice
Islamic Transformative Leadership	Strategic leadership	Amanah (trustworthiness) Adalah (justice) Shura (consultation)	• Data-driven decision making aligned with Islamic ethics • Leadership accountability through Islamic and educational metrics • Participatory leadership with structured consultation processes
Comprehensive Stakeholder Partnership	Customer focus	Ta'awun (cooperation) Ukhuwwah (brotherhood)	• Redefinition of "customers" as educational partners • Community engagement through religious and educational activities • Parent involvement in both academic and character development
Continuous Spiritual and Professional Improvement	Continuous improvement	Itqan (excellence) Ihsan (perfection)	• Professional development integrated with spiritual growth • Quality improvements framed as religious and professional duty • Regular self-reflection and peer review processes
Evidence-Based Decision Making	Fact-based management	Hikmah (wisdom) Adl (justice)	• Data collection systems enhanced with ethical considerations

with Ethical Considerations			• Balancing quantitative metrics with qualitative assessments • Decision protocols incorporating Islamic ethical principles
Holistic Quality Measurement	Process management	Tarbiyah (holistic development) Falah (comprehensive success)	• Balanced assessment of academic, character, and spiritual development • Process metrics for both educational and character formation • Community impact as key performance indicator

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the discourse on quality management in Islamic educational institutions by demonstrating how TQM principles can be effectively integrated with Islamic educational values. The developed Integrated Islamic Quality Management Model (IIQMM) addresses the limitations identified in previous research by creating a contextually appropriate framework that honors both management science and Islamic educational traditions.

The transformation of leadership practices observed at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya aligns with Hashim and Langgung's (2018) assertion that effective Islamic educational management requires leaders who embody both professional competence and Islamic values. However, this study extends their work by demonstrating specific mechanisms through which this integration can occur, particularly through the reconceptualization of management functions through an Islamic lens.

The emphasis on comprehensive stakeholder engagement in the IIQMM model resonates with Rahman and Aziz's (2019) findings on the importance of community involvement in Islamic educational institutions. Yet, this study goes further by documenting how such engagement can be systematically integrated into management processes rather than existing as a separate function. The concept of "stakeholder partnership" based on ta'awun represents a distinctive contribution to TQM literature by reframing the stakeholder relationship in explicitly Islamic terms.

The challenges encountered during implementation, particularly resistance to change and capability gaps, echo findings by Sallis (2014) regarding typical obstacles in TQM implementation across educational contexts. However, this study provides new insights into how these challenges manifest specifically in Islamic educational settings and how they can be addressed through culturally resonant approaches. For instance, the framing of continuous improvement as both a professional responsibility and religious duty (itqan) provided a powerful motivational framework that helped overcome initial resistance.

The positive impacts on institutional performance documented in this study support Ahmad and Ghavifekr's (2017) findings regarding the efficacy of TQM in improving educational outcomes in Islamic schools. However, this research extends their work by demonstrating that these improvements are most substantial when the TQM approach is adapted to incorporate Islamic principles rather than being applied as a secular management system.

A significant theoretical contribution of this study is the development of the IIQMM framework, which offers a model for integrating contemporary management practices with Islamic principles. This addresses Harb and Al-Samarai's (2020) critique that many Islamic educational institutions struggle to reconcile modern management approaches with their religious foundations. The IIQMM framework demonstrates that this integration is not only possible but can enhance organizational effectiveness by creating coherence between management practices and institutional values.

The findings also suggest important practical implications. First, the successful implementation of TQM in Islamic educational institutions requires explicit attention to value alignment rather than mere technical implementation. Second, leadership development in Islamic educational institutions should focus on building capacity for this integrative approach rather than treating management skills and Islamic knowledge as separate domains. Finally, the phased implementation approach documented in this study offers a practical roadmap for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to develop similar quality management systems.

Conclusion

This study has explored the development and implementation of a TQM-based management model at MTs Darul Amin Palangka Raya, resulting in the creation of the Integrated Islamic Quality Management Model (IIQMM). The most significant finding is that effective quality management in Islamic educational institutions requires more than simply applying conventional TQM approaches in Islamic settings; rather, it necessitates a fundamental reconceptualization of quality management principles through an Islamic perspective.

The research contributes to the scholarly discourse on educational management by demonstrating how religious and cultural values can be integrated with contemporary management approaches to create contextually appropriate models. The IIQMM framework offers a template for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance quality while maintaining their distinctive identity and mission.

Implementation of the model yielded significant improvements in academic outcomes, stakeholder satisfaction, and institutional culture, confirming that contextually appropriate quality management approaches can enhance effectiveness in Islamic educational settings. The successful integration of Islamic principles with TQM concepts challenges the notion that religious educational institutions must choose between tradition and contemporary management practices.

The limitations of this study include its focus on a single institution, which constrains generalizability, and the relatively short timeframe for assessing long-term impacts. Future research should examine the applicability of the IIQMM framework across diverse Islamic educational contexts, including different levels (elementary to higher education) and various cultural settings beyond Indonesia. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the sustainability of TQM implementations in Islamic educational institutions over extended periods.

For a more comprehensive understanding, future studies should also investigate how specific Islamic educational philosophies might influence the interpretation and implementation of quality management principles across different Islamic traditions and schools of thought. Such research would further enrich our understanding of the interplay between religious values, cultural contexts, and management practices in educational settings.

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