
Strategies for Building a Quality Culture in Schools, Madrasahs, and Islamic Boarding Schools to Strengthen the Quality of Education

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Abstract

The development of a quality culture has become a strategic necessity for educational institutions in responding to global challenges, technological transformation, and increasing public expectations regarding educational services. Quality culture is not merely a management concept but a system of values, beliefs, commitments, and behaviors continuously practiced by all members of an educational institution. Total Quality Management (TQM) serves as a comprehensive approach that emphasizes continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, stakeholder involvement, and evidence-based decision-making. Implementing a quality culture in schools, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools requires visionary leadership, stakeholder participation, quality assurance systems, and sustainable evaluation. This study employs a qualitative approach through library research, examining contemporary literature on educational quality management. The findings indicate that quality culture can be strengthened through strategic planning, institutional commitment, professional development, the implementation of quality assurance systems, and collaborative leadership oriented toward continuous quality improvement. The successful implementation of a quality culture contributes significantly to improving institutional competitiveness and educational outcomes.

Keywords

Quality Culture, Total Quality Management, Educational Quality Assurance, School Management, Islamic Education



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary instrument for developing high-quality human resources. The progress of a nation is largely determined by the capacity of its education system to produce a generation with academic competence, twenty-first-century skills, strong character, and the ability to adapt to a changing era. Improving the quality of education has therefore become a central agenda that must be pursued systematically and continuously. The advance of globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and digital transformation have brought significant changes to the

world of education. Educational institutions can no longer focus solely on academic achievement; they must also provide educational services that are of high quality, relevant, and responsive to the needs of society. Within this context, quality culture has become a fundamental factor determining the success of educational institutions in achieving their educational goals.

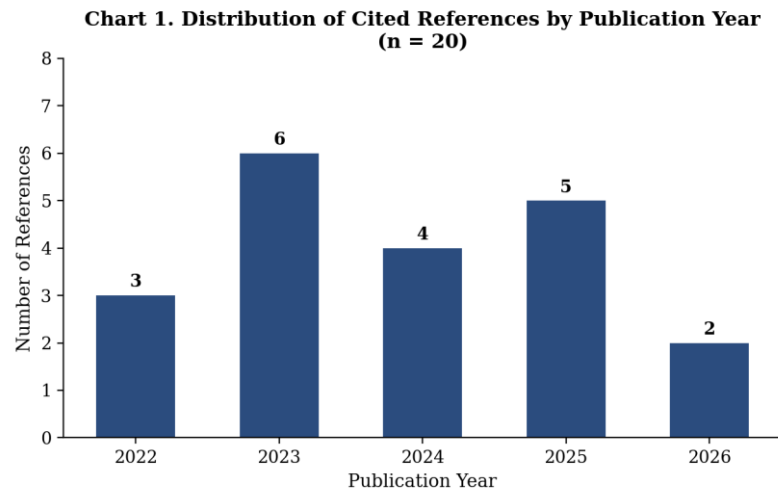
Quality culture is a set of values, norms, beliefs, and habits that develop within an organization and encourage all of its members to continuously pursue improvement and quality enhancement. Quality culture is not merely concerned with the attainment of particular standards; it also encompasses the mindset, behavior, and commitment of every member of an educational institution in providing the best possible service to students and society. In practice, many educational institutions still face a range of quality-related problems, such as low graduate quality, weak evaluation systems, suboptimal educational leadership, low levels of professionalism among educators, and the absence of a quality-oriented work culture. These problems indicate that improving the quality of education cannot be pursued partially, but instead requires a systemic approach involving every component of the educational organization.

One approach widely used in developing a quality culture is Total Quality Management (TQM). This approach emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement, the involvement of every member of the organization, a focus on customers, and decision-making based on data and systematic evaluation. In schools, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) alike, the cultivation of a quality culture is becoming increasingly important because these institutions play a strategic role in shaping the character, competence, and civilization of society. Appropriate strategies are therefore needed to build a quality culture so that educational institutions are able to develop sustainably and produce outstanding graduates.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a library-research approach. Data were obtained through the examination of various scholarly sources, including accredited national journals, scientific articles, books on educational management, educational policy documents, and prior research related to quality culture, Total Quality Management (TQM), and educational quality assurance systems.

Chart 1. Distribution of Cited References by Publication Year (n = 20)



Data analysis was carried out using content-analysis techniques, involving the identification of relevant literature, data reduction, thematic categorization, data interpretation, and the formulation of a conceptual synthesis. This approach was chosen to obtain a comprehensive understanding of strategies for building a quality culture in schools, madrasahs, and pesantren.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Quality Culture in Educational Institutions

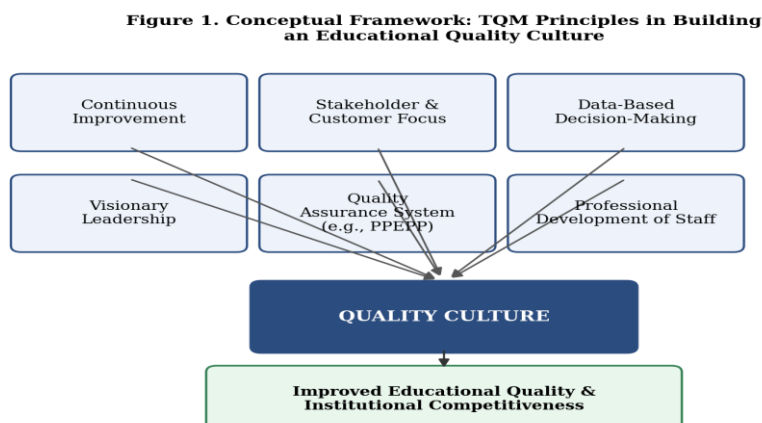


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: TQM Principles in Building an Educational Quality Culture

Quality culture is a value system embedded in the entire range of activities of an educational organization that encourages the creation of continuous improvement. Quality culture does not emerge instantly; rather, it is built through a lengthy process involving leadership commitment, the participation of all institutional members, and a consistent management system. From a TQM perspective, quality culture has several key characteristics: a customer orientation,

continuous improvement, the involvement of every member of the organization, visionary leadership, and fact- and data-based decision-making. These characteristics form the foundation for building an adaptive and competitive educational organization. Quality culture also reflects an organization's level of maturity in managing its various resources. Educational institutions with a strong quality culture typically demonstrate a high level of discipline, a well-structured working system, effective communication, and a strong commitment to achieving organizational goals.

Table 1. Institutional Comparison of Quality Culture Strategies

Institution	Key Leadership Actor	Core Orientation	Distinctive Strategy
School	School Principal	Managerial & academic quality	Internal quality assurance based on the PPEPP cycle
Madrasah	Head of Madrasah	Academic quality integrated with spiritual values	Internalization of amanah, ihsan, and itqan values into TQM practice
Pesantren	Kiai (religious leader)	Character formation & spiritual quality	Balanced development of kitab kuning and formal-curriculum instruction

Strategies for Building a Quality Culture in Schools

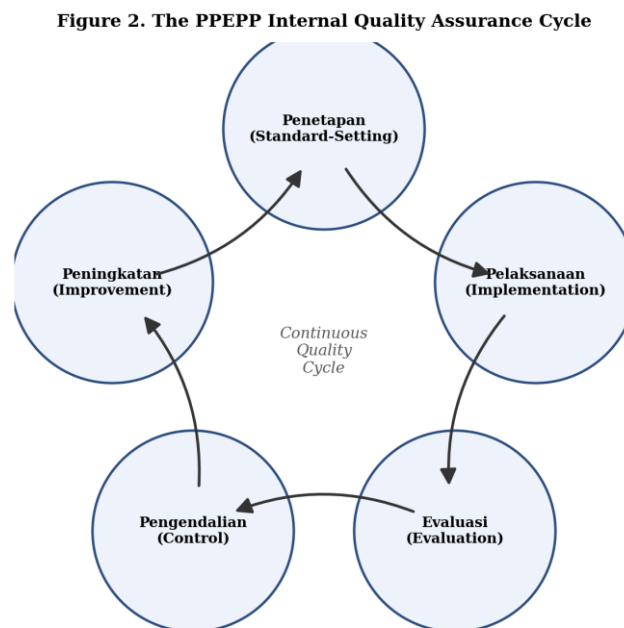
Building a quality culture in schools must begin with the leadership of the school principal. The principal has a strategic role as an agent of change who directs every component of the school toward a quality-oriented work culture. Visionary leadership has proven to be a key factor in the successful implementation of a quality culture in the education sector.

Table 2. Five Strategies for Building a Quality Culture in Schools

No.	Strategy	Focus Area
1	Building a clear quality vision and mission	Shared understanding and internalization by all members of the school community
2	Professional development of teachers	Training, workshops, learning communities, academic supervision
3	Continuous evaluation and monitoring	Learning process, teacher performance, administrative services, student achievement
4	Strengthening stakeholder participation	Involvement of parents, school committees, community, and business sector
5	Internal quality assurance system	Implementation of the PPEPP cycle for continuous quality control

The first strategy is to build a clear quality vision and mission. This vision and mission must be understood, internalized, and made a guiding principle by every member of the school community in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The second strategy is the professional development of teachers through training, workshops, learning communities, academic supervision, and ongoing competency-development programs. The third strategy is the implementation of a continuous evaluation and monitoring system, covering the learning process, teacher performance, administrative services, and student achievement. The fourth strategy is strengthening stakeholder participation. Parents, school committees, the community, and the business sector need to be involved in decision-making and in the development of school programs. The fifth strategy is the implementation of an internal quality assurance system based on the PPEPP cycle (Penetapan/standard-setting, Pelaksanaan/implementation, Evaluasi/evaluation, Pengendalian/control, and Peningkatan/improvement) as an instrument for the continuous quality control of the school.

Figure 2. The PPEPP Internal Quality Assurance Cycle



Strategies for Building a Quality Culture in Madrasahs

Madrasahs have a distinctive character because they integrate general education with religious education. Accordingly, strategies for building a quality culture in madrasahs must attend to both academic and spiritual dimensions. The first step is to strengthen Islamic values as the foundation of the quality culture. Values such as amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence in conduct), itqan (thoroughness), discipline, responsibility, and honesty must become the working

culture of every member of the madrasah.

The second step is developing the transformational leadership of the madrasah head, who is able to inspire teachers and educational staff to continuously improve the quality of educational services. The third step is strengthening the academic culture through improvements in the quality of learning, literacy, research, and educational innovation. The fourth step is implementing TQM-based quality management that emphasizes the satisfaction of students, parents, and the community as users of educational services. The fifth step is integrating the quality assurance system with Islamic values, so that quality culture is oriented not only toward meeting formal standards but also toward shaping the Islamic character of students.

Strategies for Building a Quality Culture in Pesantren

Pesantren are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and possess a distinctive culture and educational system of their own. Building a quality culture in pesantren must take into account characteristics unique to these institutions, such as the leadership of the kiai (religious teacher), the scholarly tradition, the value of sincerity (ikhlas), and the character-formation system. The first strategy is to strengthen the leadership of the kiai as a role model for the quality culture. The kiai has a substantial influence in shaping the values and organizational culture of the pesantren.

The second strategy is strengthening the culture of discipline and exemplary conduct. All activities of the santri (students) must be directed toward forming disciplined, independent, responsible, and principled character. The third strategy is the balanced development of the quality of classical Islamic text (kitab kuning) instruction and formal education, so as to produce graduates who possess both religious and academic competence. The fourth strategy is the implementation of a pesantren-based quality-evaluation system that covers academic, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. The fifth strategy is strengthening partnerships with the community, universities, the business sector, and government to support the sustainable development of pesantren quality.

Challenges in Building a Quality Culture in the Digital Era

Digital transformation brings both opportunities and challenges to the development of a quality culture in education. Educational institutions are required to adapt to technological developments, curriculum changes, and rising public expectations regarding educational services.

Several major challenges include the limited digital competence of educators, resistance to change, limited technological facilities and infrastructure, and weak data-based monitoring systems. In facing these challenges, educational institutions need to develop strategies for the digitalization of educational services, improve digital literacy, strengthen management information systems, and cultivate a culture of innovation that supports the continuous improvement of quality.

CONCLUSION

Quality culture is a fundamental foundation for creating educational institutions that are excellent, adaptive, and competitive amid the dynamic development of science, technology, and increasingly complex societal demands. Quality culture should not be understood merely as a set of rules or administrative standards, but as a system of values, beliefs, commitments, and habits embedded in the entirety of an educational institution's activities. Building a quality culture must therefore be carried out in a planned, systematic, and sustainable manner through the involvement of every component of the educational organization.

The application of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles has proven to be an effective approach to building a quality culture in educational institutions. Through the principles of continuous improvement, a focus on customer satisfaction, the involvement of all organizational members, data-based decision-making, and visionary leadership, educational institutions are able to continuously improve the quality of their services, the effectiveness of their management, and the quality of their graduates.

Strategies for building a quality culture in schools can be pursued through strengthening principal leadership, improving the competence of teachers and educational staff, implementing an internal quality assurance system, strengthening an evaluation culture, and optimizing the participation of parents and the community. Schools that are able to consistently develop a quality culture will be better equipped to face the challenges of change and to improve the quality of their educational services. In madrasahs, building a quality culture is oriented not only toward the attainment of academic standards but also toward strengthening Islamic values as the primary foundation for all educational activities. The integration of academic and spiritual quality is a distinctive characteristic that sets madrasahs apart from other educational institutions. Accordingly, quality culture in madrasahs must be built by strengthening the values of amanah, ihsan, itqan, discipline, responsibility, and professionalism grounded in Islamic teachings.

In pesantren, meanwhile, quality culture is built by strengthening the exemplary leadership

of the kiai, shaping the character of santri, developing the quality of both classical-text (kitab kuning) and formal education, and strengthening an evaluation system that covers academic, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Pesantren possess particular strengths in character formation and organizational culture, giving them the potential to become model institutions for sustainable, quality-culture-based education.

The challenges of building a quality culture in the digital era include rapid technological development, curriculum change, demands for twenty-first-century competencies, and rising public expectations regarding the quality of education. Educational institutions therefore need to undertake managerial transformation through the digitalization of services, the improvement of human-resource competence, the strengthening of educational management information systems, and the development of learning innovations oriented toward student needs.

The success of building a quality culture is determined not only by the policies of institutional leadership but also by the shared commitment of every member of the educational institution to apply quality values in every activity. A strong quality culture creates a conducive learning environment, enhances the professionalism of educators, strengthens public trust, and produces graduates with high academic competence, skills, character, and competitiveness. In conclusion, building a quality culture in schools, madrasahs, and pesantren must become a strategic agenda pursued continuously through the application of Total Quality Management (TQM), an educational quality assurance system, transformational leadership, and the collaboration of all educational stakeholders. Through these efforts, educational institutions are expected to become centers for developing quality human resources capable of responding to the challenges of the future.

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