

Pesantren-Based School Quality Management: Innovative Strategies towards Superior Accreditation

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Histori Naskah:

Submit: 2026-03-01

Accepted: 2026-03-20

Published: 2026-04-01



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Abstrak:

Madrasah that is integrated with the dynamics of pesantren in the demand to maintain Islamic values while meeting the National Education Standards in order to maintain the title of superior accreditation. This condition requires targeted quality management as a strategic step so that the quality of education remains guaranteed systemically and sustainably. This study applied a qualitative approach with a single case study plan. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document reviews involving madrasah heads, deputy madrasah heads, educators, students, and pesantren managers. The data analysis process refers to the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The findings of the study show that the desire for superior accreditation is formed through the integration between the formal mutual guarantee system and the pesantren culture that gives birth to a sustainable mutual culture. The integration between academic governance and the internalization of religious values is a key factor in maintaining consistency between institutional elements. Theoretically, this study offers an integrative model that combines the SPMI structural approach and the cultural TQM approach in the context of pesantren-based madrasahs. Practically, the results of this study provide an operational framework for madrasah leaders and pesantren managers in harmonizing quality planning, cultural discipline-based supervision, and evaluation that includes academic aspects and character building. The integration between the formal madrasah system and the culture of pesantren is the main determinant in maintaining quality consistency and maintaining superior accreditation in an adaptive and sustainable manner.

Keywords: Culture of Excellence; Internal Quality Assurance System; Pesantren-Based Madrasahs; Quality Management of Education; Superior Accreditation.

Introduction

The development of education in the 21st century requires educational institutions to be responsive to technological advances, socio-economic changes, and the need to master new competencies that include critical thinking skills, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy (Lubis et al. 2023; Mislevy et al. 2020; Saa 2024). These changes encourage educational institutions to strengthen the quality management system in order to maintain the relevance of education and increase the competitiveness of graduates. In the context of Islamic education, madrasahs face double challenges because they must maintain Islamic values while

meeting the National Education Standards which are a reference for institutional quality assessment. Therefore, strengthening quality management is a strategic step in ensuring the desire for quality education and maintaining superior accreditation status (Efendi and Bueraheng 2023; Ubabuddin, Nasikhah, and Subowo 2021).

Various studies show that the implementation of quality management in madrassas still faces obstacles both in the structural and cultural dimensions. Several studies have found that the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System has not been optimally implemented in the entire cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of continuous improvement (Lathifah, Setyaningsih, and Wulandari 2022; Nurhayati et al. 2021). In addition, the application of the principle of Total Quality Management in Islamic educational institutions is also constrained by the readiness of human resources, limited infrastructure facilities, and organizational culture that is not fully quality-oriented (Bahri, Yanto, and Susanti 2024; Sholeh 2023). This condition indicates that quality improvement efforts still often focus on the provision of administrative standards, while the institutional culture dimension that influences quality maintenance practices in the life of educational organizations has not been fully addressed.

The challenge of quality management becomes increasingly complex in madrasahs in the pesantren environment because the institution must unite the formal education system with the pesantren culture that has a distinctive character. MA Nurul Jadid, which is under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, is one of the madrasahs that has obtained superior accreditation. However, this institution still faces a number of dynamics, such as the assignment of teachers who are not fully aligned with the scientific background and integrated budget management in the governance of the Islamic boarding school. On the other hand, boarding life and the process of internalizing religious values are the main forces in shaping character while instilling discipline in students. This condition shows that the desire for superior accreditation is not only determined by the formal management system, but also by the ability of the institution to harmonize educational governance with the institutional culture that develops in the pesantren environment.

Various previous studies have discussed quality management in Islamic educational institutions, including studies on the modernization of Islamic boarding schools (Abdullah and Iskandar 2023), the development model of the Internal Quality Assurance System based on accreditation instruments (Lathifah et al. 2022), as well as boarding school management strategies to improve the quality of learning (Husna and Siregar 2023). However, most of the studies still examine quality management, SPMI, and the dynamics of pesantren education separately. Studies that specifically review the integration between the formal madrasah management system and pesantren culture as a strategy to maintain superior accreditation are still limited. These limitations show that there is a research gap in understanding how the synergy between formal governance and pesantren values can form a sustainable mutual culture.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the quality management strategy in pesantren-based madrasahs in an effort to maintain superior accreditation at MA Nurul Jadid. This research emphasizes the importance of integration between the formal mutual guarantee system and pesantren culture as the foundation for the formation of a sustainable mutual culture, as well as explaining how the integration of the two systems plays a role in maintaining the sustainability of education quality.

Literature Studie

Quality management in educational institutions is in principle directed to ensure that the learning process takes place effectively and sustainably. In madrasahs, the management is generally based on the framework of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) which is a continuous cycle of standard-setting,

implementation, evaluation, control, and quality improvement. Through SPMI, educational institutions have a mechanism to design, implement, and assess quality standards in carrying out institutional management. Various studies show that the implementation of SPMI that is carried out consistently is able to strengthen the governance of Islamic educational institutions while increasing the readiness of institutions in meeting the requirements of educational accreditation (Lathifah et al. 2022; Permana et al. 2024). However, a number of studies also reveal that the implementation of SPMI in madrassas often focuses more on providing administrative documents than on strengthening mutual practices in organizational life (Nurhayati et al. 2021). This shows that the effectiveness of a quality assurance system is determined not only by the existence of formal genetics, but also by the organizational dynamics that support its implementation.

The concept of the relationship between SPMI and TQM shows that the two approaches are complementary in the mutual management of education. SPMI provides a structural framework that governs the process of determining, implementing, and evaluating quality standards. On the contrary, TQM functions to strengthen these implementation standards through the development of organizational culture, participatory leadership, and the involvement of all members of the institution. Thus, the success of quality management is determined not only by the existence of formal systems, but also by the extent to which quality values are internalized in everyday institutional practices.

In the context of Islamic education, mutual desires are strongly influenced by the integration between the formal system and institutional culture. Studies on the modernization of Islamic boarding schools show that the management transformation process is needed so that Islamic educational institutions are able to respond to social changes while meeting the demands of improving the quality of education (Abdullah and Iskandar 2023). Research on boarding schools also shows that life in the boarding system contributes to shaping discipline, responsibility, and the habituation of values that support the learning process (Husna and Siregar 2023). In addition, other research confirms that the strength of institutional culture plays an important role in maintaining mutual stability in pesantren-based educational institutions (Wulandari and Fathurrahman 2024).

Accreditation in educational institutions not only functions as an external evaluation instrument, but also as a means of internal reflection to improve the quality of education in a sustainable manner. A number of studies show that the ability of institutions to maintain superior accreditation is greatly influenced by consistency in building a mutual culture and the ability to make continuous improvements through an adaptive management system (Aslamiyah 2025; Putra and Karim 2025). However, most previous studies still separate discussions of formal quality management systems and institutional cultural dynamics.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that quality management in pesantren-based madrassas requires an integrative approach that connects the formal quality assurance system with the institutional culture that develops in the pesantren environment. Therefore, this study seeks to build a synthesis between the structural approach represented by SPMI and the cultural approach embodied in the practice of pesantren life. The integration of these two approaches is the basis of the concept to understand how the synergy between formal and cultural institutional governance can form a sustainable mutual culture in maintaining superior accreditation in pesantren-based madrasahs.

Research Methods

This research applies a qualitative approach with a single case study plan to explore in depth the quality management strategy in pesantren based madrasahs in an effort to maintain superior accreditation. The selection of this approach is based on the focus of the study on the dynamics of quality management in a

certain institutional context that occurs naturally. The research was conducted at MA Nurul Jadid which is located in the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, Probolinggo Regency, in the period from November 15 to December 16, 2025.

The determination of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques by considering direct involvement in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating quality management. The number of informants was 14 people, consisting of 1 madrasah head, 2 deputy madrasah heads, 3 teachers, 5 students, and 3 pesantren administrators. The composition of the informants was chosen to obtain managerial, operational, and factual perspectives on the implementation of quality culture in the madrasah and pesantren environment.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. Interviews are used to obtain information about policies, strategies, and obstacles in joint management. The observation was directed to take a direct picture of the implementation of the program and the habituation of quality culture in the daily activities of students. The documentation study was used to examine the Internal Quality Assurance System documents, annual work plans, evaluation reports, and other supporting documents relevant to the focus of the research.

Data analysis Refers to Miles and Huberman's interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis is carried out thematically through several steps. First, interview transcripts and observation notes were reviewed repeatedly to find units of meaning related to the focus of the research. Second, open coding is carried out by labeling informant statements related to joint planning, program implementation, evaluation, integration systems, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. Third, codes that have a close meaning are classified into categories, such as planning strategies, monitoring and evaluation, value internalization, and structural constraints. Furthermore, these categories are synthesized into main themes that represent quality management strategies in maintaining superior accreditation.

The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, triangulation techniques, and member checks to several key informants to ensure the compatibility between the researcher's interpretation and factual conditions in the field. The flow of the research stages as a whole is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Flow of Pesantren Based Quality Madrasah Management

Research Results

Quality-Based Madrasah Planning in the Islamic Boarding School Environment

Quality planning at MA Nurul Jadid is systematically designed through an internal coordination forum involving various strategic units in the madrasah structure. The forum serves as a means to align educational programs and various supporting activities together with the vision and mission of the institution, as well as with the policy of pesantren as the parent institution. The head of the madrasah explained that the planning process begins by translating the vision and mission of the institution into the work program in each unit through joint coordination, so that the preparation of the program is carried out in an integrated manner and involves cross-units.

"We prepare a work program through joint coordination meetings between units so that each activity remains in line with the vision of the madrasah and pesantren policy." (Munir 2025).

The results of the document show that each program is designed with measurable achievement indicators and is equipped with clear budget planning. The document serves as a reference in the implementation process as well as program control. Thus, planning not only serves as an administrative provider, but also becomes the cornerstone of strategy in the decision-making process and implementation of educational activities.

Implementation of Quality Assurance Program Based

The implementation of quality assurance at MA Nurul Jadid is carried out through a program-based approach that sets goals and achievement indicators in a measurable manner. Each program has a clearly defined person in charge and its implementation is recorded periodically by the madrasah leadership. A teacher said that all activities carried out have the achievement of targets that continue to be monitored consistently, both in the academic aspect and in the training of character participants who are raised.

"Every program we run has a clear target. The evaluation is carried out regularly to see if the program has achieved the set goals." (muzaqqi 2025).

The results of the observation show that the learning process and various programs related to quality maintenance are carried out in accordance with the planning documents that have been prepared previously. Monitoring activities are carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure the compatibility between the plan and implementation, so that the consistency of program implementation can be maintained in the long term.

Quality Control through Continuous Evaluation

Quality control at MA Nurul Jadid is carried out through evaluation activities that are carried out periodically. The evaluation process includes managerial meetings, learning evaluation forums, and monitoring of student development. Through this activity, madrasahs can assess the effectiveness of program implementation as well as identify various obstacles that arise during the implementation process.

"Evaluations are carried out periodically through leadership meetings. From the evaluation, we can see which programs are running well and which ones need to be improved." (Naim 2025).

The meeting minutes document shows that any findings that emerge in the evaluation process are followed by clear follow-up steps. Thus, evaluation does not only stop at administrative records, but acts as a control instrument that ensures that the program is carried out as planned and becomes the basis for improving various weaknesses in the implementation of educational activities.

Madrasah Integration System and Pesantren Culture

The results of the study show that there is an integration between the formal madrasah management system and the pesantren culture. The formal system includes the program planning process, the implementation of educational activities, and periodic evaluations. Meanwhile, cultural pesantren play a role in strengthening character training, enforcing discipline, and habituating religious values in students.

This integration forms a quality culture that is maintained continuously. The dormitory life system is important in the process of internalizing values, so that character formation does not only occur in learning activities in the classroom, but also through the daily activities of students in the pesantren environment.

"Madrasahs focus more on academic learning, while pesantren strengthen character training and student discipline." (Sahlan 2025).

The integration model between the formal madrasah system and pesantren culture in building a quality culture is presented in Figure 2.

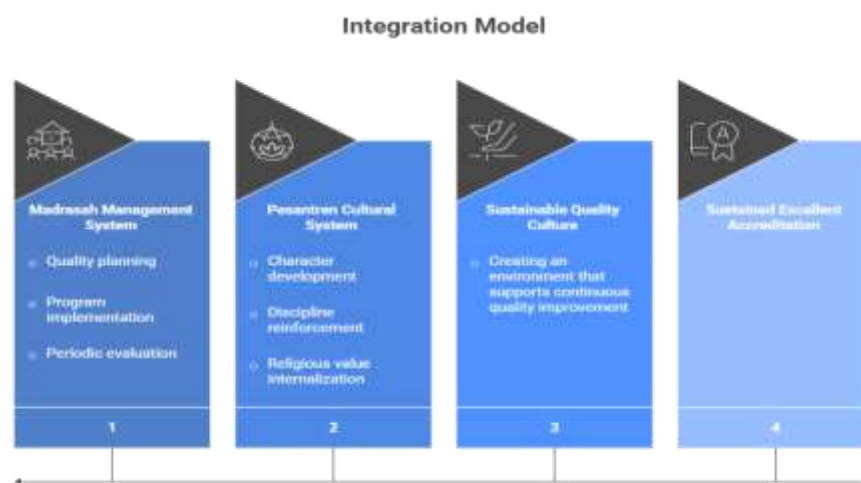


Figure 2. Model of Integration of Madrasah System and Islamic Boarding School Culture in Building a Quality Culture

Challenges and Supporting Factors in Quality Management

The implementation of quality management at MA Nurul Jadid still faces a number of obstacles, especially related to the suitability of teachers' scientific fields and limited budget resources. Most educators have educational backgrounds that are not fully aligned with the subjects they teach, so they require adjustments in learning practices. In addition, the budget management system that is integrated with the governance of the pesantren also interferes with the implementation of several programs that have been planned in advance.

On the other hand, this study found that there are various factors that support the sustainability of quality management in these institutions. These factors include a strong culture of discipline, habituation of religious values in daily life, and a dormitory-based supervision system that allows the character training process to take place intensively. In addition, the commitment of madrasah leaders and close coordination

between madrasah managers and pesantren are important institutional capital in maintaining a common culture in a sustainable manner.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that quality management at MA Nurul Jadid does not only run through formal mechanisms such as program planning, activity implementation, and periodic evaluation, but is also supported by the pesantren culture that is under disciplinary pressure, religious habituation, and boarding life. These results show that the practice of quality assurance in pesantren-based madrasahs has characteristics that distinguish them from formal educational institutions in general.

Within the framework of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI), quality management is carried out through a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of standards. The findings of this study show that the cycle is implemented structurally through planning forums, program implementation based on achievement indicators, and routine evaluation conducted through managerial meetings. However, this study also shows that the effectiveness of the implementation of SPMI is not only determined by the existence of a formal system, but also by the institutional culture that supports mutual practices in the life of the organization.

When viewed from the perspective of Total Quality Management (TQM), the success of quality management is greatly influenced by the participation of all members of the organization and the formation of a work culture that is oriented towards continuous improvement. The results of this study show that pesantren culture plays a role as a mechanism for internalizing values that strengthen the application of TQM principles in educational practice. The boarding life system and religious habituation form a social environment that encourages discipline, responsibility, and a collective commitment to mutual education.

Thus, the results of this study show that the combination of formal quality assurance systems and pesantren culture produces a contextual quality management mechanism. SPMI provides a structural framework that regulates the planning, implementation, and quality evaluation processes of the process. Meanwhile, cultural pesantren act as a cultural foundation that ensures that these standards are implemented consistently in the daily practice of the institution. Through this integration, a mutual culture is formed that is not only administrative, but also embedded in institutional life.

This finding provides a conceptual contribution by emphasizing that the quality management approach in Islamic educational institutions based on pesantren requires a combination of a formal quality assurance system and organizational culture dynamics. Thus, the success of education quality management is not only determined by the effectiveness of formal management mechanisms, but also by the ability of institutions to build a culture of quality that is alive and manifested in daily organizational practices.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the desire for superior accreditation at MA Nurul Jadid is formed through the integration between the formal mutual guarantee system and the pesantren culture. The implementation of planning programs, the implementation of educational activities, and evaluations that take place on an ongoing basis show that the mechanism of the Internal Quality Assurance System is systematically applied in the governance of madrasahs. However, the findings of the study also confirm that the success of the system is not only influenced by administrative procedures, but also by the culture of pesantren that fosters discipline, religious habits, and collective commitment in daily educational life. The integration between formal governance and institutional culture forms a mutual culture that supports the quality of education.

Theoretically, this study shows that quality management in pesantren-based madrassas requires an integrative approach that connects the structural framework of the Internal Quality Assurance System with the cultural dimension that is in line with the principle of Total Quality Management. From a practical perspective, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of continuous coordination between madrassas and Islamic boarding schools in the preparation of programs, strengthening organizational culture that supports mutual practices, and implementing sustainable evaluation as a means of reflection and improvement of educational governance. Further research can examine the integration model in the context of different Islamic educational institutions in order to broaden the understanding of the factors that affect the desire to educate each other.

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