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Principal Leadership and Integrated Quality Management in an Indonesian Pesantren-Based Madrasah

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examines how the principal and staff of Darul Hikmah, an Islamic school (madrasah) affiliated with an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in Mojokerto, Indonesia, implement integrated quality management. Data were drawn from interviews, observations, and document review and interpreted through a plan-do-check-act framework and ten quality-management elements. The findings identify an annual planning cycle, weekly Thursday evening reporting meetings, and corrective follow-up. Reported practices include learner-oriented services, deliberative decision-making, teamwork, long-term commitment, continuous improvement, staff development, bounded professional autonomy, shared purpose, and staff participation. Class mentors, responsive administration, facility renewal, teacher-developed learning materials, and robotics and informatics activities illustrate how these elements operated in practice. The evidence documents institutional processes but does not establish gains in achievement, well-being, or equitable access. Participant demographics and outcomes for female students were not reported. The study offers a context-specific account of integrated quality management in residential Islamic education and identifies evidence required for future evaluation of service equity and learner well-being.

Keywords: Educational Quality; Madrasah; Pesantren; Principal Leadership; Continuous Improvement; Service Equity

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INTRODUCTION

Educational quality in an Islamic school (madrasah) affiliated with an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) encompasses teaching, residential guidance, administration, and the social conditions in which students learn. Research on quality management in Islamic schools connects institutional goals with service processes, staff capacity, and internal assurance [1], [2], [3]. Studies of madrasah-based management likewise treat planning, implementation, and evaluation as connected tasks rather than isolated administrative events [4], [5]. These perspectives frame the analysis of how a principal coordinates quality across academic and residential functions.

Staff members can enact a shared quality agenda only when leadership is supported by a coherent work culture. Studies of Indonesian madrasahs describe locally grounded work practices, religiously informed leadership, teacher leadership, and strategic management [6], [7], [8], [9]. Service quality also depends on what learners receive and how educators respond to their needs; recent research examines culturally sensitive service assessment and digital innovation in educational management [10], [11]. Evidence from Islamic education on teacher readiness and digital learning materials further shows why professional development and accessible resources matter [12], [13], [14].

Quality systems must also identify which learners benefit from institutional services. Research on pesantren education shows that women's empowerment, gender-responsive policy, female students' experiences, and women's leadership cannot be inferred from general measures of institutional performance [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20]. These studies justify equity-focused evaluation. However, the Darul Hikmah record contains no sex-disaggregated accounts or gender-specific outcomes. The analysis therefore examines the documented institutional process while treating claims about female students' educational opportunity as unresolved.

This study asks: How was integrated quality management organized and enacted at the Darul Hikmah pesantren-based madrasah in Mojokerto? It contributes an evidence-bounded reconstruction of the principal's management cycle and ten reported quality elements, while distinguishing documented practices and participant perceptions from outcomes that were not measured.

METHODS

Research Design and Setting

This qualitative case study examined Darul Hikmah, a pesantren-based madrasah in Sooko, Mojokerto, Indonesia. The analysis covers academic and residential services and organizes the reported practices as an integrated quality-management process. The study record did not specify the exact dates or duration of fieldwork.

Participants and Data Sources

Data sources comprised interviews with educators and staff, observation, and document review. The record identifies a religious teacher, Ustadz Abdurrahman, and two staff references to Rahmat, one as head of administration and one as a teacher; it does not establish whether

these references concern the same person. A complete participant roster, selection criteria, interview count, and demographic profile were unavailable, so no numerical sample description or claim of representativeness is made. The reviewed documents concerned the institutional vision, mission, program planning, and evaluation, although a document inventory was not reported.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through interviews, observation, documentation, and triangulation. Analysis was reported as an iterative process of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. For the present account, the reported statements were organized under a plan-do-check-act cycle and ten quality-management elements. This organization clarifies the written evidence but does not constitute new coding of interview transcripts. The archived materials did not include audio files, interview schedules, field notes, coding files, or an independent audit trail. Because interpretive qualitative research depends on transparency and reflexivity [21], [22], procedures absent from the record are not attributed to the study.

Ethical Considerations

The available study record does not report institutional permission, ethics review, participant consent, student assent, or confidentiality procedures. No new individual-level data were introduced in this analysis. Permission and the treatment of identifiable interview material therefore remain unverified limitations of the record.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

An Annual Plan and Weekly Feedback Cycle

Annual school work meetings enabled each division to prepare a plan with its own team before school-wide deliberation and implementation. Thursday evening meetings then provided a regular forum for reporting the previous week's work and correcting identified problems. This sequence documents a recurring management process, although the record contains no action logs, completion rates, or measured trend in educational quality.

The school also enforced student rules through disciplinary sanctions (ta'zir). This practice cannot be treated as evidence of educational quality because its proportionality, safeguarding procedures, and effects on student well-being were not investigated.

Ten Reported Elements of Integrated Quality Management

The case presents ten elements of integrated quality management. Table 1 separates the reported practices from the strength and limits of the available evidence. A reported practice is one described in the study record; the label does not certify effectiveness or consistent implementation.

Table 1. Quality management elements and evidence reported in the Darul Hikmah case

Element	Reported case evidence	Interpretive boundary
Learner focus	Responsive administrative staff, class mentors, facility renewal.	Student satisfaction was not measured.
Quality orientation	Staff attention to instruction and residential guidance.	No achievement series or comparator.
Deliberative decisions	Routine meetings examine problems before decisions.	No decision records supplied.
Long term commitment	Mission and student aspirations repeated at morning assembly.	No longitudinal follow up.
Teamwork	Divisional plans and cross unit work are described.	Specific joint tasks are sparse.
Continuous improvement	Weekly review and new robotics and informatics activities.	No before and after indicators.
Staff development	Formal and informal learning for educators and administration.	Participation and effects unreported.
Bounded autonomy	Teachers developed dictation (imla') approaches and a Qur'an-hadith text.	Adoption or learning effects unknown.
Unity of purpose	Divisions reportedly use the school vision as a guide.	Agreement was not tested across staff.
Participation	Staff take part in work and monthly meetings.	Degree of decision influence unknown.

The most detailed evidence concerns the rhythm of planning and review, learner-facing support roles, and concrete teacher initiatives. Scientific decision-making and staff empowerment are supported mainly by descriptions of meetings and shared purpose. Regular meetings may enable evidence-informed deliberation, but their frequency alone does not demonstrate systematic data analysis or meaningful participation in decisions.

Features of the Residential Education Setting

The residential setting combined religious value formation, national and potentially international curricula, intensive guidance, a supportive physical and social environment, and direction from pesantren leaders. The phrase 'potentially international' reflects the tentative curriculum description and does not establish accreditation or an international program. Claims that graduates entered selective universities or received scholarships were not supported by counts or records and are not used as evidence of effectiveness.

Discussion

Integrated Planning and Corrective Review

The management cycle is consistent with research on quality improvement in Islamic education, where leadership connects curriculum, support services, personnel, and evaluation [23], [24], [25], [26], [27]. The Darul Hikmah case adds a clear temporal pattern: divisional preparation informs an annual school plan, while weekly reporting creates a route for corrective action. Studies of madrasah leadership and staff culture explain why this process depends on

more than a formal timetable [28], [29], [30]. The evidence nevertheless cannot show that reported corrections caused higher achievement or improved well-being.

Staff Capacity and Professional Agency

Mentoring, staff training, and teacher autonomy show the human dimension of service quality. Research on women's transformational leadership and human resource management in Islamic schools identifies conditions that can support staff engagement [31], [32]. Studies of principal supervision, participatory supervision, and teacher workplace culture describe related mechanisms [33], [34], [35]. These studies provide analytic comparisons rather than evidence that Darul Hikmah adopted the same interventions.

Planning and review become more useful when institutional vision is translated into observable service commitments. Research on school-based management, visionary leadership, transformational leadership, and human resource development describes this translation at institutional level [36], [37], [38], [39]. An explicit vision does not by itself demonstrate teacher commitment, as evidence from another school system shows [40]. At Darul Hikmah, the mission was repeatedly communicated, but independent staff accounts were unavailable to establish how consistently it was understood.

Service Equity and Safeguarding

These findings raise a central quality question: who benefits from responsive administration, mentoring, technology activities, and residential rules? The record provides no comparison of female and male students' access, female educators' participation in decisions, safety, or psychosocial support. Gender research [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20] identifies these as consequential evaluation domains but cannot replace missing case data. Future fieldwork should collect sex-disaggregated service and participation evidence, include confidential student perspectives, and examine safeguards associated with disciplinary practices.

CONCLUSION

At Darul Hikmah, integrated quality management was organized through annual divisional planning, weekly review, and corrective follow-up. The ten reported elements include learner-facing support, staff development, professional initiative, and a shared institutional mission. The evidence establishes institutional practices in one case but does not demonstrate gains in learning, well-being, or gender equity. A complete assessment therefore requires documented actions and outcomes together with the perspectives of students, including female students.

LIMITATIONS

The study record does not specify fieldwork dates, participant numbers, sampling logic, interview questions, a documentary inventory, ethics procedures, or an audit trail. The positive interpretation rests on a limited written account without disconfirming cases or independently verified outcome indicators. Participant gender and sex-disaggregated learner outcomes were not reported. These gaps restrict transferability and preclude causal or equity claims. Future research should document recruitment and consent, preserve a traceable analytic record, examine counterexamples, and compare service access and well-being across learner groups.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely for language editing, structural consistency checks, and reference-format review. The author reviewed and verified the scientific content, analysis, interpretation, and citations and accepts full responsibility for the final manuscript.

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