

Concept of Educational Quality Management from General and Islamic Perspectives

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Abstract: Educational Quality Management (EQM) represents a vital and systematic endeavor to achieve institutional excellence and ensure stakeholder satisfaction. This article undertakes a focused examination of the EQM concept from both general and Islamic perspectives, aiming to analyze and compare their fundamental definitions, targets, and core principles. The study employs a literature review method, relying entirely on the analysis of texts and documents, including academic books, Islamic educational management literature, government regulations, and secondary empirical data such as PISA survey results. The analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis and thematic integration to construct a comprehensive understanding. The findings show that general EQM focuses on effectiveness, efficiency, stakeholder involvement, continuous improvement, and data-driven decision-making. The Islamic perspective enriches this by integrating spiritual values like faith (*iman*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), diligence (*itqan*), excellence (*ihsan*), and accountability. Consequently, educational quality is measured holistically, encompassing both academic achievement and the successful cultivation of noble character and social well-being. The integration of these modern principles with Islamic values is presented as a strategic foundation for strengthening education quality in Indonesia, particularly in addressing persistent challenges like low scores in literacy, numeracy, and creative thinking skills among students.

Keyword: Definition, Educational quality management, Fundamental principles, Islamic values, Objectives

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) was initially introduced in the industrial sector as a strategy to maintain consistent quality and enhance customer satisfaction (Nurhayati, 2014). Over time, TQM principles began to be adapted to the education sector as an effort to ensure that all educational components work synergistically to produce graduates who are both excellent and globally competitive. In the context of education, quality is not merely understood as academic achievement but also encompasses the learning process, the educational environment, and the satisfaction of various stakeholders (Jahari, 2013; Mulyasa, 2019). Consequently, educational quality management emerges as a strategic approach to direct, control, and evaluate the entire educational process so that it aligns with predetermined objectives. Fahmy Alaydroes (2014) further emphasizes that the quality of learning processes is highly dependent on the quality of teaching processes. Teachers are

expected to inspire, motivate, and engage students as active subjects of learning rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Therefore, educational quality management must integrate formal standards with teaching practices that foster creativity and independent learning.

Despite various efforts, the quality of education in Indonesia continues to face significant challenges. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey revealed that Indonesian students scored relatively low in literacy, numeracy, science, and creative thinking skills (OECD, 2024). This condition underscores the urgent need for consistent and integrated implementation of quality management principles within educational institutions. From an Islamic perspective, education is viewed as a means to prepare humans to fulfill their role as khalifah (stewards) on earth, emphasizing spiritual, moral, and eschatological responsibilities (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:13; QS. Al-Mulk [67]:2). Accordingly, the quality of education in Islam is

measured not only by academic success but also by the development of noble character and meaningful social contributions. Given this background, a comprehensive study of the definition, objectives, and fundamental principles of educational quality management from both general and Islamic perspectives is essential to formulate an integrative framework.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review method for a conceptual analysis of Educational Quality Management (EQM) from both general and Islamic perspectives. This approach focuses entirely on the analysis of texts and documents, thus negating the need for defining field research components like specific time, location, population, or sample. The primary data sources for this review include academic books, literature on Islamic educational management, government regulations, and secondary empirical data, specifically the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. The research procedure was executed in three main stages: (1) Identification and Classification of literature related to the definitions, objectives, and principles of EQM; (2) Critical Reading of the selected sources; and (3) Conceptual Synthesis to compare and integrate findings from the general and Islamic viewpoints. The data analysis technique applied is qualitative content analysis with a strong emphasis on the thematic integration of key concepts. Data were analyzed through critical reading and thematic categorization to construct a comprehensive understanding of how modern principles (such as effectiveness and continuous improvement) interact with Islamic values (such as *itqan* and *ihsan*). The ultimate goal of this analysis is to present a solid conceptual framework regarding the definition, objectives, and fundamental principles of EQM

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual Understanding of Quality Management in General and Islamic Perspectives

The findings of the literature review indicate that the concept of quality management has diverse definitions; however, its essence is always related to systematic efforts to achieve the best quality through the effective and efficient

management of resources. Management refers to a series of activities directly aimed at the effective and efficient use of organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals. Meanwhile, *mutu* (quality) in the Indonesian-English dictionary is defined as “quality,” meaning the degree or level of excellence, or the value of something. Thus, *mutu* is interpreted as the quality or value of excellence of a certain matter (Sukirman, Suyono, & Santosa, 2021, pp. 13–14). In the *KBBI* (Indonesian Dictionary), quality management is defined as coordinated activities to direct and control an organization in relation to quality. Mulyasa (2019) emphasizes that educational quality should be viewed from the added value provided by educational institutions to students and stakeholders. Meanwhile, Sallis reminds that quality is a “slippery” concept because its understanding may vary depending on perspective. Therefore, a clear understanding of the variations in the meaning of quality is crucial to ensure that the implementation of quality management does not stop at mere slogans. Nata and Yakub (2023), quoting Edward Sallis, classify quality into three main dimensions:

1. **Absolute Quality** – Quality is regarded as something luxurious, exclusive, and of high value, often associated with social prestige, such as grand houses, luxury cars, or high-value works of art. This absolute quality is frequently linked to religious, philosophical, or cultural norms that are ideal in nature. In Islam, this concept aligns with noble values that place the quality of deeds (*amal*) and piety (*taqwa*) as the true measures of honor in the sight of Allah SWT. Something is considered of quality when it benefits others. Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ...

“Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you.” (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:13).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ

“The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others.” (HR Ath-Thabari).

2. **Relative Quality** – Quality is measured based on predetermined standards, such as technical specifications or formal regulations. A product or service is considered high-quality if it meets the established standards. In Indonesia, educational quality is defined by the National Education Standards as stipulated in Government Regulation No. 32 of 2013. These standards cover curriculum, graduates, educators, infrastructure, financing, management, and evaluation.
3. **Customer-Based Quality** – In this concept, customers are positioned as the rightful party to determine whether a product or service is of quality. Producers cannot impose quality standards if they do not align with customer needs. Thus, quality must be understood as an effort to meet—even exceed—customer expectations, both internal customers (teachers, staff, employees) and external customers (students, parents, society).

Islam places a high priority on quality. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that a small amount of quality is better than a large amount lacking quality. The Qur'an also states that a small group can overcome a larger one with Allah's permission. In worship, Muslims are encouraged to choose the best in terms of time, place, number, and manner. Life itself is seen as a test to determine who performs the best deeds:

أَلَدَىٰ خَلَقَ أَلْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَوَةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

“He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving.” (Q.S. Al-Mulk [67]:2).

The Qur'an describes levels of quality among believers with terms such as *al-muslimun*, *al-mu'minun*, *al-muhsinun*, and *al-muttaqun*. A Muslim is not only obliged to fulfill the pillars of Islam (shahada, prayer, fasting, zakat, and hajj) but also to embody the mission of being a mercy to all creation, as Allah SWT says:

“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.” (Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]:107).

The Islamic perspective enriches these three dimensions with spiritual values. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of quality over quantity, and the Qur'an views life as a test to see who performs the best deeds (Q.S. Al-Mulk [67]:2). Thus, quality management in Islam not only pursues academic excellence but also the perfection of deeds and piety.

The Main Objectives of Educational Quality Management

The analysis indicates that the main goal of educational quality management is to build a culture of continuous improvement involving all members of the educational institution. Dian (2019) emphasizes that every human resource within the organization must collaborate to enhance quality to the maximum level so that customer needs can be fulfilled and long-term success achieved.

In the field of education, these objectives can be detailed as follows:

1. To maintain and continuously improve quality in all aspects of education.
2. To align implementation with Indonesia's socio-cultural context.
3. To cultivate collective awareness of the responsibility for quality among all stakeholders.
4. To make quality management a concrete agenda in improving students' learning outcomes and behavior.

Islam further enriches these objectives with the values of *itqan* (diligence and precision) and *tawhid* (oneness of God) in every managerial process. Thus, education is not only intended to produce intellectually capable generations but also to nurture individuals who are faithful, morally upright, and beneficial to society (Mahmudin, 2018). Based on this foundation, educational quality management requires the integration of knowledge, skills, ethics, and spiritual values in a holistic manner.

Principles of Educational Quality Management

The principles of quality management proposed by Noer Rohmah and Zaenal Fanani (2017) are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Quality Management Principles Based on the Perspective of Noer Rohmah and Zaenal Fanani (2017)

No	Principle	Key Explanation	Example of Implementation
1	Customer Focus	Educational customers include students, parents, society, and the government. Quality is measured by student satisfaction (learning outcomes), parents' trust, and social contributions from schools/universities.	Parent satisfaction surveys, alumni tracer studies to assess graduate quality, communication forums with the community.
2	Total Involvement of Stakeholders	Quality is not only determined by teachers but also involves principals, staff, parents, committees, alumni, and students. A culture of participation and collaboration is required to improve quality.	School-Based Management programs involving all parties in planning, implementation, and evaluation.
3	Continuous Improvement	Education must continuously update curricula, teaching methods, facilities, and services to remain relevant to changing times. The goal is not only survival but also annual growth and improvement.	Semesterly curriculum evaluations, regular teacher training, innovations in digital learning, adoption of new technologies.
4	Process Approach	The learning process is the core of educational quality. If planning, implementation, and evaluation are well maintained, learning outcomes will be of high quality.	Learning cycle: lesson planning (RPP) → teaching and learning activities → assessment → follow-up (remedial/enrichment).
5	Strong Leadership and Commitment	School principals or university leaders must serve as role models and quality drivers, providing vision, support for teachers, and consistent follow-up of evaluation results.	Principals facilitating teacher training, monitoring quality, providing learning facilities, and fostering a quality culture.
6	Fact-Based Decision Making	Educational policies must be based on academic and non-academic data, not assumptions.	Use of exam results, school quality reports, student/parent satisfaction surveys, teacher attendance data for policy decisions.
7	Mutually Beneficial Partnerships	Quality is enhanced through strategic partnerships with parents, government, industry, other universities, and local communities.	Vocational schools collaborating with industries for internships, universities signing MoUs with companies for research and graduate recruitment.

According to Sulaiha Annisyaaroh (2022), the basic principles of educational management in Islam are as follows: 1) Faith as the main foundation, guiding all educational activities toward worship of Allah SWT; 2) Sincerity (*ikhlas*) and Benevolence (*ihsan*), meaning that all educational activities are intended solely for Allah, with emphasis on the quality of deeds; 3) Exemplary Leadership, where leaders and educators must model good morals, integrity, and professionalism; 4) Unity of Direction, ensuring that goals and commands in educational management are unified and clear to avoid disorder; 5) Consultation (*shura*), where decision-making is carried out collectively with the involvement of all related parties; 6) Accountability, emphasizing honesty, justice, transparency, and trustworthiness in every leadership mandate; 7) Efficiency and Effectiveness, meaning optimal use of resources

(time, energy, costs, and thought) without waste; 8) Participation, encouraging cooperation and mutual assistance in goodness among members of the educational institution; 9) Responsibility, requiring both leaders and individuals to be accountable for the tasks and mandates they carry; 10) Competence, meaning that leaders and educators must possess abilities relevant to their fields; 11) Cooperation (*ukhuwah*), ensuring synergy among members of the educational organization with a clear division of tasks; 12) Worldly and Hereafter Orientation, where all management is directed toward both worldly welfare and eternal happiness in the hereafter.

Implications for the Quality of Education in Indonesia

The results of the analysis indicate that the implementation of quality management

principles still faces serious challenges in Indonesia. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data confirms the low quality of Indonesian education compared to the OECD average. Indonesian students' scores declined across all main subjects: mathematics (366 vs. OECD average of 472), reading (359 vs. 476), and science (383 vs. 485). Only about 18% of students reached Level 2 in mathematics, far below the OECD average of 69%, and almost none of the students reached the top performer category compared to the OECD average of 9%. In the creative thinking domain, Indonesia's average score was only 19 out of 60 points, with just 31% of students reaching Level 3 and 5% categorized as top performers, while the OECD average was 27% (OECD, 2024).

These findings confirm that quality management in Indonesian education has not yet been fully and effectively implemented, either from the general perspective or from the standpoint of Islamic values. The low levels of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and creativity among students highlight the urgent need for comprehensive improvements in the quality management process, starting from school leadership and stakeholder engagement to data-driven continuous improvement.

Integrative Discussion

The implementation of educational quality management that combines TQM principles with Islamic values provides a more comprehensive framework. Values such as *taqwa* (piety), *ihsan* (benevolence), and *itqan* (diligence and precision) can serve as moral strengths to encourage the involvement of all stakeholders in continuously improving quality. In terms of policy, this integration can be realized through competency- and spirituality-based teacher training programs, curriculum evaluations that balance science and moral values, and the strengthening of school leadership that is both visionary and ethical. With this integrative approach, educational quality management is expected not only to raise academic performance, such as PISA scores, but also to nurture a generation that is intellectually superior, morally upright, and able to contribute positively to society and global civilization.

CONCLUSION

Educational Quality Management (EQM) from a general perspective is fundamentally

understood as a systematic process aimed at enhancing quality through effectiveness, efficiency, comprehensive stakeholder involvement, continuous improvement, and data-driven decision-making. The Islamic perspective significantly enriches this concept by integrating spiritual and ethical values, specifically faith (*iman*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), diligence and precision (*itqan*), excellence (*ihsan*), accountability, and an orientation toward both worldly and hereafter goals. Consequently, educational quality is measured holistically, encompassing not only academic achievement but also the successful cultivation of noble character and the promotion of social well-being. The primary objective of EQM is thus to foster a culture of continuous improvement and collective responsibility among all educational elements, with Islam adding the vital spiritual orientation needed to produce a generation that is not only intellectually excellent but also faithful, virtuous, and beneficial to society. The integration of these modern quality management principles with Islamic values serves as a strategic and necessary foundation for strengthening the quality of education in Indonesia, offering a pathway to effectively address persistent challenges such as the low scores in literacy, numeracy, and creative thinking skills among students.

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