



CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MODEL IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Islamic education in Indonesia currently faces serious challenges in building a sustainable and contextual quality assurance system. The existing quality system tends only to emphasise the administrative aspect and does not fully reflect the core values in Islam, such as *tauhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, and deliberation. The quality approach adopted from the Western paradigm is also often irrelevant to Islamic educational institutions' spiritual and cultural needs. This research aims to conceptualize the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) model in Islamic education that is integrated with Islamic values. The method used is library research with a qualitative approach. Data was collected through searches of national and international scientific journals, academic books, and official documents related to quality management and Islamic education. The research results produced five main components in the Islamic-based CQI model: Islamic basic values, Islamic transformational leadership, sustainable quality culture, the PDCA cycle based on spiritual values, and the collective participation of all institutional components. This model can bridge the gap between modern quality theory and the reality of Islamic education, and serves as a basic framework for building a quality culture more oriented towards sustainability and spirituality. This study concludes that the sustainable quality model based on Islamic values is very relevant to be applied in Islamic education to build superior institutional quality, integrity, and long-term orientation.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education today faces great challenges in responding to the dynamics of rapid change in the times, ranging from the development of information technology, the globalization of values, to the demands of 21st-century competencies. In this context, the need for an adaptive and sustainable quality management system is a must. One of the relevant quality management approaches is continuous quality improvement (CQI), which is a continuous quality improvement model that is systemic and participatory and focuses on process improvement. This model is rooted in the principle of Total Quality Management (TQM) but emphasizes the continuity and sustainability of the quality process in the long term (Deming, 1986). In Islamic education, especially in madrassas and Islamic boarding schools, implementing the quality system still tends to be partial and reactive to problems. In fact, the essence of Islamic education is in achieving curriculum targets, fostering character and morals, and holistically achieving Islam's vision. Therefore, a quality management model is needed that is not only output-oriented, but also quality processes and cultures internalized in the institution (Mulyasa, 2022).

Previous research shows that the application of quality principles in Islamic education still faces organizational culture obstacles and low human resource capacity in understanding sustainable quality instruments (Sari & Wahyudi, 2023). Meanwhile, a study noted that several leading madrassas that have successfully implemented the CQI approach have a management pattern that is collaborative, evaluative, and adaptive to change (Ma'arif, 2022). However, the research has not provided a systematic conceptual model to be applied widely in Islamic education. The study by Fatimah et al. underscores the importance of integration between Islamic values and CQI principles in Islamic education management to create a quality system that is efficient and spiritually meaningful (Fatimah et al, 2023). This shows the need for a more comprehensive conceptualization of a sustainable quality model that explicitly integrates Islamic values in all aspects of education management.

However, there has not been much research that has examined in depth and conceptually how CQI can be aligned with the Islamic education paradigm. Most of the research is still practical and descriptive, not touching on the conceptualization aspects of integrative and contextual models. In fact, the need for a theoretical framework that can bridge Islamic spiritual values with a contemporary quality system is very important to answer the challenges of modernizing education (Suyatno, 2022). In addition, the CQI approach in industry and health services has developed rapidly, as shown in a study by Purnomo and Lestari. However, its adoption into education, especially Islamic education, is still very limited and poorly documented academically (Purnomo & Lestari, 2023). On the other hand, the madrasah accreditation system currently used tends only to measure administrative aspects and has not described the continuous improvement process that is the spirit of CQI.

The quality model of Islamic education that is currently being developed still depends on the conventional evaluative approach. Models such as

Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) or PMP-Madrasah from the Ministry of Religion have not fully adopted the principles of systematic and participatory sustainable improvement (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Therefore, model innovation is needed to answer the need for continuous quality improvement based on Islamic values and principles.

The limitations of understanding and implementing the CQI concept in Islamic education create a gap between the expected quality ideals and institutional reality. If there is no effort to build a strong and contextual conceptual model, then Islamic education will be left behind in building its competitiveness and relevance amid a changing global society (Muhaimin, 2021). Thus, this study aims to conceptualize the Continuous Quality Improvement Model in Islamic Education, which integrates the principles of CQI with the basic values of Islamic education, such as *ihsan*, *istiqamah*, *muhasabah*, and *shura*'. It is hoped that this model can be a frame of reference in developing the quality of Islamic education that is not only adaptive to global demands but also firmly rooted in local spiritual and cultural values (Nata, 2023).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. This method was chosen to study and develop the conceptualization of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in Islamic education by studying relevant theories and previous research results. Data were obtained from various literature such as scientific journals, academic books, and official documents that discuss quality management and Islamic education. The analysis is carried out through a content analysis approach to formulate a conceptual model that is systematic, integrative, and in accordance with Islamic principles.

RESULT

This study's results show that applying the principle of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in Islamic educational institutions is still partial and has not been formulated in a systematic conceptual model based on Islamic values. Many madrassas and Islamic boarding schools have adopted the principles of quality administratively, but have not touched on the spiritual and cultural aspects of sustainable quality based on *tauhid* and *ihsan*.

A search of 25 literature sources found that five key elements consistently appear in the context of Islamic education quality, namely: Islamic basic values, Islamic transformational leadership, sustainable quality culture, value-based PDCA cycle, and participatory involvement of all institutional citizens (Fadhli, 2022). These five elements form the foundation of the conceptual model proposed in this study.

The basic values of Islam, such as *tauhid*, *trust*, *ihsan*, and *ikhlas* are moral forces in driving continuous quality improvement. This value animates the entire education management process, starting from planning, implementation, and evaluation (Suyatno, 2022). This is in line with Muhaimin's view that Islamic values are the main normative reference in the development of Islamic education (Muahimin, 2021).

The components of Islamic transformational leadership are crucial elements in building a sustainable culture of quality. Leaders with vision, integrity, and the ability to inspire and empower human resources catalyze sustainable improvement (Mulyasa, 2022). Bass and Avery argue that transformational leadership can create systemic change and adaptive organizational culture.

Furthermore, a culture of sustainable quality in Islamic education includes a quality-conscious attitude, openness to change, commitment to improvement, and spiritual motivation. This culture has not been developed consciously in Islamic educational institutions, even though it is relevant to the principles of *ta'dib* and *tazkiyah* in Islam (Zarkasyi, 2017).

One of the other important results is the finding of compatibility between the *Plan-Do-Check-Act* (PDCA) principle in modern quality management with Islamic teachings on governance (planning), *ikhtiar* (implementation), *muhasabah* (evaluation), and *ishlah* (improvement). With the integration of these values, PDCA becomes not only a technical cycle, but a meaningful spiritual cycle in Islamic education (Ikhsan et al, 2023).

All institutional citizens (participatory) involvement is also an important element in this model. CQI will not be effective if it is only managed top-down. Instead, the active participation of teachers, students, madrasah committees, and guardians of students becomes a social force that supports holistic quality sustainability. This is in line with the deliberation-based participatory management approach in Islam.

This study also found that some of the education quality models adopted so far (such as ISO 9001 or SPMI) have not been fully contextualized with the character of Islamic education. As a result, the implementation of quality is only administrative, not substantial and transformative (Azzam, 2023). This creates a gap between quality documents and the reality of quality in the field.

The final finding is that there is not yet a single CQI model in Islamic education that is conceptually and integratively structured based on theoretical studies. Therefore, this research produces a conceptual model that can be used as a framework for sustainable quality development in accordance with Islamic values and the contextual needs of madrassas and pesantren (Zed, 2004).

This model is expected to be an academic and practical reference in building an Islamic education quality system oriented towards accreditation and continuous spiritual, social, and educational improvement. This model also answers the need for a transcendental, participatory, and contextual quality system in contemporary Islamic education (Misbah, 2024).

DISCUSSION

This research succeeded in formulating five main components that become the basic framework in building a sustainable quality model (Continuous Quality Improvement / CQI) in Islamic education, namely: basic Islamic values (tauhid, amanah, ihsan), Islamic transformational leadership, a culture of sustainable quality, the PDCA cycle integrated with spiritual values, and the participation of all institutional citizens. These results show that the quality approach in Islamic education cannot rely solely on the modern administrative system, but must also be integrated with the ethical, spiritual, and social values inherent in Islamic principles. This model is designed to answer the systemic gap in quality management that has only been oriented towards accreditation and completeness of documents, without touching on the substance of holistic and sustainable quality.

These results corroborate and enrich several previous studies. For example, (Fadhli et.al, 2022) state that madrasas' quality improvement strategies are still reactive and not based on the principles of sustainable quality management. Meanwhile, (Azzam, 2023) found that madrasas' internal quality assurance system is often only carried out as a formality, not yet a culture. This research strengthens these findings by offering a conceptual model that is not only technical but also rooted in Islamic value systems, so that it has the potential to form a more authentic and contextual culture of quality. This is also consistent with the (Misbah, 2024), which emphasizes the importance of the Islamic value-based CQI approach in Islamic education management reform.

In terms of theory, this study supports Deming's theory of Total Quality Management and Continuous Improvement, but provides an expansion of meaning by integrating Islamic values into the PDCA cycle. This research also confirms the relevance of the transformational leadership theory developed by Bass and Avolio, with adjustments to the spiritual and prophetic leadership context. Thus, the developed model corroborates modern quality management theories and offers a new theoretical contribution as a transcendental approach to sustainable quality systems, which has not been explored much in the Islamic educational literature.

Practically, this study's results significantly impact the perspective of Islamic educational institutions, society, and even policymakers. The developed quality model encourages madrasas and pesantren to view quality not only as an administrative framework but as a collective and spiritual ethos that is constantly improved. If applied consistently, this model has the potential to become a foothold for the formulation of Islamic education quality policies at the Ministry of Religious Affairs level, especially in the improvement of the Internal Quality Assurance System which is often generic. In addition, this model also directly answers the gap between Islamic values and modern quality systems that tend to be secular, and emphasizes that the research goals have been achieved by producing a model that can reconstruct the quality approach to be more contextual, Islamic, and sustainable.

As a conclusion of this discussion, it can be affirmed that this study not only succeeded in conceptualizing a sustainable quality model that is in accordance with the characteristics of Islamic education, but also in integrating the theory and practice of quality management with the spiritual foundation and values of Islam. The resulting model can answer various conceptual and practical problems in the Islamic education quality system, as well as provide a new direction in developing a quality strategy that is participatory, transformative, and of noble value.

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