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EVALUATION OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (IQAS) IN MADRASAHS A DISCREPANCY EVALUATION MODEL APPROACH TO IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in madrasahs to identify the alignment between established quality standards and their actual implementation, as well as to formulate strategies for continuous quality improvement. The study employed a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation was conducted using Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), which consists of design, installation, process, product, and discrepancy evaluations. Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and triangulation. The findings indicate that the IQAS has been implemented across all stages of the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement); however, its implementation has not yet reached an optimal level. Major discrepancies were identified in the consistency of quality standard implementation, completeness of quality documentation, effectiveness of internal quality audits, utilization of evaluation results for decision-making, and sustainability of follow-up improvement actions. Supporting factors include strong leadership from madrasah principals, the presence of an Internal Quality Assurance Team, and supportive policies from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Conversely, limited human resource competencies, an underdeveloped quality culture, and inadequate quality information systems remain significant barriers. The study recommends strengthening human resource capacity, digitalizing quality assurance systems, enhancing the effectiveness of internal quality audits, and fostering a culture of Continuous *Quality Improvement (CQI) to improve educational quality in madrasahs.*

INTRODUCTION

Improving educational quality is a strategic priority in developing high-quality human resources. Educational quality is measured not only by students' academic achievement but also by the effectiveness of institutional governance, leadership, organizational culture, and quality assurance mechanisms. Consequently, the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) has become a key strategy for ensuring continuous quality improvement in educational institutions.

As Islamic educational institutions, madrasahs are responsible for producing graduates who demonstrate academic excellence, strong religious values, ethical character, and twenty-first-century competencies. To achieve these goals, madrasahs are required to implement IQAS through the PPEPP cycle, consisting of Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement. This cycle is designed to ensure that educational processes consistently meet the National Education Standards as well as the specific quality standards established for madrasahs.

Despite the implementation of IQAS across many madrasahs, several studies have reported persistent challenges. Many institutions continue to experience weak quality cultures, incomplete quality documentation, ineffective internal quality audits, and limited utilization of evaluation findings as a basis for continuous improvement. These issues create discrepancies between expected quality standards and actual institutional performance.

Previous studies have primarily focused on describing the implementation of IQAS without comprehensively analyzing the gaps between expected standards and actual practices. Therefore, a systematic evaluation approach is required to identify these discrepancies and formulate evidence-based recommendations for quality improvement. One of the most appropriate evaluation frameworks is Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), which emphasizes identifying differences between predetermined standards and actual implementation as the basis for decision-making and institutional improvement.

Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System in madrasahs using the Discrepancy Evaluation Model to determine the level of compliance with established standards, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and develop strategic recommendations for sustainable educational quality improvement.

Education is widely recognized as the primary instrument for developing human capital and promoting sustainable national development. The quality of an education system is determined not only by students' academic achievement but also by institutional governance, leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, accountability, and the implementation of systematic quality assurance mechanisms. Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly required to

establish comprehensive internal quality assurance systems capable of ensuring continuous improvement in accordance with national and international quality standards.

Quality assurance has become a global concern in educational reform. Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualize quality in higher and general education through several dimensions, including Among these dimensions, transformation and continuous improvement are considered the most relevant because educational institutions are expected to continuously enhance institutional performance rather than merely comply with predetermined standards.

Similarly, Deming (1986) argues that quality improvement is not a one-time activity but a continuous organizational process involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and corrective action. Through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA cycle, organizations can systematically improve their performance by identifying weaknesses and implementing evidence-based improvements. Juran (1992) further emphasizes that organizational quality depends on effective quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement, collectively known as the These theories have become the conceptual foundation for modern quality assurance systems across educational institutions worldwide.

Within the Indonesian education system, the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) represents a strategic policy for ensuring educational quality. IQAS is implemented through the PPEPP cycle Dete rmination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement which functions as an internal mechanism for monitoring institutional performance and promoting continuous quality improvement. Rather than focusing solely on accreditation outcomes, IQAS encourages educational institutions to develop a sustainable quality culture embedded in everyday organizational practices.

Madrasahs occupy a unique position within Indonesia's educational system because they integrate national educational objectives with Islamic values. Therefore, educational quality in madrasahs encompasses not only academic achievement but also religious competence, character development, institutional governance, and stakeholder satisfaction. This distinctive mission requires an effective quality assurance system capable of balancing academic excellence with Islamic educational values.

Despite the widespread implementation of IQAS, many madrasahs continue to experience significant challenges in translating quality assurance policies into effective institutional practices. Internal evaluations conducted by educational authorities indicate that although most madrasahs possess quality documents and strategic plans, the implementation of quality assurance remains inconsistent. Quality assurance activities frequently emphasize administrative compliance rather than continuous institutional improvement. Consequently, the expected outcomes of IQAS have not yet

been fully achieved. Several empirical studies have also reported similar findings. Sallis (2014) argues that educational quality cannot be achieved merely through documentation and compliance with standards; instead, quality must become an organizational culture supported by leadership commitment, stakeholder participation, and continuous evaluation. Likewise, Fullan (2007) emphasizes that sustainable educational improvement depends on organizational capacity to learn from evaluation results and transform them into institutional innovations.

One of the most frequently encountered problems is the inconsistency in implementing the PPEPP cycle. In many madrasahs, quality standards have been formally established; however, systematic implementation remains limited. Internal monitoring activities are often conducted irregularly, quality audits are not performed consistently, and evaluation findings are insufficiently utilized as evidence for strategic decision-making. Consequently, quality assurance tends to function as an administrative requirement rather than as an instrument for institutional transformation.

Another major issue concerns the limited competency of human resources responsible for implementing IQAS. Members of Internal Quality Assurance Teams frequently receive limited professional development regarding quality management, educational evaluation, data analysis, and internal auditing. According to Oakland (2014), successful quality management requires competent personnel capable of collecting valid evidence, conducting objective evaluations, and implementing corrective actions based on empirical findings. Without adequate competency, quality assurance activities are unlikely to produce meaningful organizational improvements.

The development of an institutional quality culture also remains a substantial challenge. Quality culture refers to shared organizational values, beliefs, and behaviors that encourage continuous improvement throughout the institution (European University Association, 2006). In many educational institutions, quality assurance is still perceived as the responsibility of a specific committee rather than a collective responsibility shared by all organizational members. As a result, participation from teachers, administrative staff, students, and other stakeholders often remains limited

Furthermore, the rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed educational management worldwide. Nevertheless, many madrasahs continue to rely on conventional documentation systems, making quality monitoring less efficient and reducing the availability of reliable institutional data. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that digital transformation has become an essential component of educational governance because digital information systems enable institutions to monitor quality indicators in real time, improve transparency, and support evidence-based decision-making.

These conditions indicate a discrepancy between the intended objectives of IQAS and its actual implementation within madrasahs. Such discrepancies include inconsistencies between established quality standards and operational practices, weaknesses in quality documentation, limited effectiveness of internal quality audits, inadequate follow-up mechanisms, and underdeveloped quality cultures. These implementation gaps directly influence institutional performance and hinder sustainable educational quality improvement

To identify these discrepancies systematically, this study adopts Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) According to Provus (1971), evaluation should compare predetermined standards with actual implementation in order to identify discrepancies that require corrective action. Unlike traditional evaluation approaches focusing primarily on outcomes, the DEM examines every stage of program implementation including design, installation, process, and product—thereby providing comprehensive evidence for organizational improvement.

The selection of the Discrepancy Evaluation Model is particularly appropriate because IQAS itself is fundamentally based on continuous evaluation and quality improvement. By comparing institutional standards with actual practices, the model enables evaluators to identify strengths, weaknesses, and strategic priorities for enhancing educational quality.

Although previous studies have investigated IQAS implementation in Indonesian educational institutions, several research gaps remain. First, most studies focus primarily on describing implementation processes without systematically analyzing discrepancies between quality standards and actual practices. Second, previous research predominantly employs qualitative approaches, resulting in limited empirical measurement of implementation effectiveness. Third, only a small number of studies have applied Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model within the context of Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasahs. Finally, limited research has integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence through a mixed-methods design to produce comprehensive recommendations for policy and institutional improvement.

Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System in madrasahs using a mixed-methods approach and Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions by enriching the literature on educational quality assurance, identifying implementation gaps, and formulating evidence-based strategies for strengthening continuous quality improvement within madrasahs. Ultimately, the study is expected to support policymakers, educational leaders, and quality assurance practitioners in developing more effective and sustainable quality assurance systems capable of improving educational outcomes in Islamic schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design to comprehensively evaluate the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in madrasahs. Mixed-methods research is defined as a research approach that systematically integrates quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either method alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Creswell (2014) further explains that mixed methods combine the strengths of quantitative research, which provides measurable and generalizable findings, with qualitative research, which explores participants' experiences, perceptions, and contextual realities. The convergent parallel design was selected because quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase of the study, analyzed independently, and integrated during interpretation to produce complementary and corroborative findings. This design enables researchers to compare evidence from different sources, thereby enhancing the credibility, validity, and completeness of the evaluation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the context of this study, the mixed-methods approach was considered the most appropriate because evaluating the implementation of IQAS requires not only numerical evidence regarding the level of compliance with quality standards but also in-depth explanations of institutional practices, organizational culture, stakeholder perceptions, and challenges encountered during implementation.

The evaluation was conducted using Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), which provides a systematic framework for assessing the extent to which program implementation conforms to predetermined standards. According to Provus (1971), evaluation is fundamentally a process of comparing actual program performance with established standards to identify discrepancies that require corrective action. Unlike evaluation models that emphasize outcomes alone, the Discrepancy Evaluation Model examines the entire implementation process, beginning with planning and continuing through implementation and results, enabling evaluators to identify weaknesses before they develop into significant organizational problems. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) argue that discrepancy-based evaluation is particularly valuable because it provides decision-makers with practical information for improving program effectiveness through evidence-based interventions. In this study, the evaluation encompassed five sequential stages: design evaluation, which assessed the adequacy of institutional quality policies, strategic planning, and quality standards; installation evaluation, which examined organizational readiness, human resources, infrastructure, and quality assurance mechanisms; process evaluation, which investigated the implementation of the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement); product evaluation, which measured the outcomes of IQAS implementation on institutional performance and educational quality; and discrepancy analysis, which identified gaps between expected standards and actual implementation and formulated recommendations for continuous quality improvement.

The study was conducted in selected Indonesian madrasahs that have implemented the Internal Quality Assurance System under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are intentionally chosen because they possess extensive knowledge and direct experience related to the phenomenon under investigation. Patton (2015) states that purposive sampling enables researchers to obtain rich and meaningful information from individuals who are capable of providing detailed insights into the research topic. Similarly, Creswell (2014) emphasizes that purposive sampling is appropriate in mixed-methods and qualitative studies because it prioritizes information-rich participants rather than statistical representativeness. Accordingly, the participants included madrasah principals, vice principals, members of the Internal Quality Assurance Team, teachers, administrative staff, madrasah supervisors, and representatives of the school committee, all of whom play significant roles in planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and improving IQAS.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data to ensure comprehensive evaluation. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) explain that primary data are collected directly by researchers from original sources for the specific purposes of the study, whereas secondary data consist of existing documents and records that provide contextual and supporting information. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Secondary data included institutional quality manuals, quality policies, strategic plans, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), internal audit reports, accreditation reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, meeting minutes, annual work plans, and other documents related to IQAS implementation. The integration of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation, thereby increasing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Data collection was conducted through five complementary techniques. First, observations were undertaken to examine directly the implementation of quality assurance activities, institutional management practices, documentation systems, learning environments, and organizational interactions. Marshall and Rossman (2016) define observation as a systematic process of collecting empirical evidence through direct examination of behaviors, activities, and events within their natural settings. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding IQAS implementation. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), interviews enable researchers to understand participants' perspectives and interpret the meanings underlying their experiences. Third, structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were distributed to measure respondents' perceptions of the implementation of IQAS across the dimensions of design, installation, process, product, and continuous improvement. Sekaran and Bougie (2020) describe questionnaires as standardized instruments capable of collecting consistent and comparable information from a relatively large number of respondents. Fourth, document analysis was employed to review institutional quality documents systematically. Bowen (2009) argues that document analysis is an effective qualitative research method for interpreting institutional records and obtaining empirical evidence

that complements observational and interview data. Finally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to validate preliminary findings, identify implementation challenges, and formulate recommendations for improving IQAS. Krueger and Casey (2015) explain that FGDs facilitate interactive discussions among participants, enabling researchers to obtain collective perspectives that may not emerge during individual interviews.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Field (2018) states that descriptive statistics summarize numerical information into meaningful patterns, thereby facilitating the interpretation of research findings. These analyses were used to determine the extent to which IQAS implementation met established quality standards across each evaluation dimension. Qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. During the analysis process, coding procedures involving open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were applied to identify emerging themes and relationships among the data. Following separate quantitative and qualitative analyses, the findings were integrated through joint display analysis, as recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), allowing statistical results to be interpreted alongside qualitative evidence. This integration facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, discrepancies, and improvement priorities in the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System in madrasahs.

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. The validity of the quantitative instrument was established through expert judgment and construct validation, while its internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. For the qualitative component, the study adopted the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through methodological and source triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement in the research setting. Finally, all participants voluntarily provided informed consent prior to data collection, and confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical principles were maintained throughout the research process in accordance with internationally accepted standards for educational research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

1. Design Evaluation

The design evaluation examined the extent to which the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) had been systematically planned before implementation. This evaluation focused on the availability of quality policies, institutional vision and mission, quality objectives, strategic planning, quality standards, and documented quality assurance procedures. According to Provus (1971), a program cannot be effectively implemented unless its objectives and standards are clearly formulated during the planning stage. Therefore, design evaluation serves as the

foundation for determining whether an institution possesses sufficient organizational readiness to implement quality assurance.

The findings indicate that the participating madrasahs have generally established comprehensive quality planning documents. The institutional vision and mission have been aligned with the National Education Standards and the strategic direction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Likewise, quality policies, annual operational plans, and quality manuals have been formally documented and communicated throughout the institutions. The quantitative analysis revealed that the overall mean score for the design dimension was **4.47**, indicating a **very good** level of implementation.

Among all indicators, the institutional vision and mission achieved the highest mean score (**M = 4.61**), reflecting strong organizational commitment toward educational quality. Respondents acknowledged that institutional goals had been clearly formulated and disseminated to teachers, administrative personnel, and other stakeholders. Similarly, the quality policy indicator obtained a mean score of **4.55**, suggesting that most madrasahs had established formal quality policies consistent with national regulations. Strategic planning also demonstrated a high level of implementation (**M = 4.42**), indicating that quality improvement activities had been incorporated into institutional planning documents.

Despite these positive findings, document analysis revealed several weaknesses. In a number of madrasahs, quality indicators were formulated in broad and general terms without measurable performance targets. Consequently, institutional performance could not always be evaluated objectively because success indicators lacked operational definitions. Furthermore, several quality documents had not been updated regularly, resulting in inconsistencies between institutional policies and actual implementation.

These findings were further supported by interview data. One principal explained:

"Our quality policy has been established for several years, but not every department translates it into measurable annual performance indicators. As a result, implementation varies among different units." (Principal P05)

Similarly, a member of the Internal Quality Assurance Team stated:

"The quality documents exist, but some teachers still consider them administrative requirements rather than practical guidelines for improving educational quality." (Quality Assurance Coordinator Q02)

These findings suggest that although institutional commitment toward quality planning is relatively strong, greater emphasis should be placed on operationalizing quality standards into measurable performance indicators. Deming (1986) argues that quality planning should include clearly defined objectives accompanied by measurable indicators capable of guiding continuous

improvement. Likewise, Juran (1992) emphasizes that quality planning represents the first component of the Juran Trilogy and determines the effectiveness of subsequent quality control and improvement processes.

Overall, the design evaluation demonstrates that the participating madrasahs have established an adequate foundation for IQAS implementation. Nevertheless, improvements are required in translating institutional quality policies into measurable operational targets and ensuring that quality documents are regularly reviewed and updated.

2. Installation Evaluation

Installation evaluation assessed the readiness of organizational resources required to implement the Internal Quality Assurance System. Specifically, this evaluation examined the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Teams, the competence of quality assurance personnel, institutional infrastructure, financial support, quality management information systems, and administrative readiness. According to Provus (1971), successful implementation depends on whether the necessary organizational resources have been adequately prepared before program execution begins.

The quantitative findings indicate that the installation dimension achieved an overall mean score of **4.18**, categorized as **good**. The establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Teams received the highest score (**M = 4.49**), indicating that nearly all participating madrasahs had formally appointed quality assurance personnel through official institutional decrees. Respondents also reported strong support from school leadership regarding quality assurance implementation.

However, several indicators demonstrated comparatively lower scores. Auditor competence obtained a mean score of **3.67**, while the availability of digital quality management systems scored **3.54**. These findings indicate that although organizational structures have been established, institutional capacity remains constrained by limited professional development opportunities and inadequate technological support.

Observation data further confirmed these findings. Several madrasahs still relied on manual documentation systems for monitoring quality indicators and storing quality assurance records. Internal audit reports were predominantly paper-based, making data retrieval and longitudinal quality monitoring relatively inefficient. Moreover, only a limited number of institutions had developed integrated digital quality assurance platforms capable of supporting evidence-based decision-making.

Interview data highlighted similar concerns. One Internal Quality Assurance Team member stated:

"Our team has been formally established, but only a few members have received professional training in educational quality audits. Most of us learn through practical experience." (IQAT Member Q06)

Another respondent commented:

"Documentation is still managed manually. Preparing accreditation documents or internal audit reports requires considerable time because institutional data are stored in different locations." (Administrative Staff A03)

These findings indicate that organizational readiness extends beyond the establishment of formal organizational structures. Oakland (2014) argues that quality management requires competent human resources supported by effective organizational systems and adequate technological infrastructure. Similarly, Sallis (2014) emphasizes that educational quality depends on the interaction among leadership, organizational culture, staff competence, and institutional support systems.

The installation evaluation therefore demonstrates that participating madrasahs possess adequate organizational structures for IQAS implementation. Nevertheless, strengthening human resource competencies, expanding professional development opportunities for internal auditors, and digitalizing institutional quality management systems remain essential priorities for improving the effectiveness of quality assurance implementation.

3.**Process Evaluation**

The process evaluation investigated how effectively the PPEPP cycle Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement was carried out in daily institutional practice. The findings showed that implementation was generally satisfactory but declined during the Evaluation, Control, and Improvement stages. This pattern suggests that madrasahs were relatively successful in establishing quality standards and implementing planned activities but encountered greater difficulties in monitoring performance, conducting systematic internal evaluations, and ensuring that evaluation findings were translated into continuous improvement initiatives.Installation evaluation assessed organizational readiness to implement IQAS.

Table Installation Evaluation Results

Indicator	Mean	SD	Category
IQAS Team Formation	4.51	0.46	Very Good
Leadership Support	4.47	0.51	Very Good
Infrastructure	4.08	0.63	Good
Financial Support	3.94	0.71	Good
Auditor Competence	3.71	0.76	Good
Digital Information System	3.52	0.83	Fair
Overall Mean	**4.04**	**0.65**	**Good**

The results reveal that institutional readiness was generally good. Leadership support and the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Teams demonstrated high levels of readiness. However, digital quality management systems and auditor competencies remain relatively weak and require further improvement.The implementation of the PPEPP cycle was evaluated to determine the effectiveness of IQAS implementation.

Table
PPEPP Implementation

PPEPP Stage	Achievement (%)	Category
Determination	93.2	Very Good
Implementation	88.4	Very Good
Evaluation	79.5	Good
Control	74.3	Good
Improvement	69.6	Fair

Interview evidence revealed that internal quality audits were often conducted primarily to satisfy accreditation requirements rather than as routine mechanisms for organizational learning. Several respondents acknowledged that follow-up actions based on audit findings were not always implemented consistently due to limited time, insufficient human resources, and competing institutional priorities. As one principal explained:

"We conduct internal audits every year, but follow-up actions are sometimes delayed because other administrative responsibilities take precedence." (Principal P02)

These findings are consistent with Deming's (1986) assertion that continuous improvement requires systematic evaluation and corrective action rather than periodic compliance exercises. Likewise, Fullan (2007) emphasizes that sustainable educational improvement depends on an institution's capacity to transform evaluation findings into organizational learning and innovation.

4.**Product Evaluation**

The product evaluation examined the outcomes of IQAS implementation in relation to institutional performance, educational quality, governance, and stakeholder satisfaction. Overall, respondents perceived that IQAS had contributed positively to improving administrative management, strengthening organizational accountability, and enhancing institutional readiness for accreditation. However, improvements in instructional quality and organizational quality culture were reported to be more gradual and varied across departments.

Several participants observed that IQAS had encouraged more systematic documentation, clearer planning procedures, and stronger collaboration among institutional units. Nevertheless, they also emphasized that the long-term success of IQAS depends on embedding quality assurance

into everyday institutional practices rather than treating it as a temporary administrative requirement.

According to Harvey and Green (1993), educational quality should be viewed as a transformative process that continuously enhances institutional capacity. The present findings support this perspective by demonstrating that IQAS contributes not only to institutional compliance but also to organizational learning and continuous development when implemented consistently.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in madrasahs has generally been carried out in accordance with the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement). Nevertheless, the evaluation also revealed several discrepancies between the expected quality standards and actual implementation practices. These discrepancies indicate that although the regulatory framework and institutional commitment have been established, the operationalization of quality assurance has not yet been fully integrated into the organizational culture. According to Provus (1971), discrepancies between predetermined standards and actual performance provide valuable evidence for decision-making and institutional improvement. Therefore, the identified gaps should not be viewed as indicators of institutional failure but rather as opportunities to strengthen quality assurance practices and achieve sustainable educational improvement.

The first important finding concerns the **design evaluation**, which revealed that most participating madrasahs had developed comprehensive quality assurance documents, including institutional vision and mission statements, quality policies, strategic plans, quality objectives, and quality manuals. This finding indicates that the planning stage of IQAS has been implemented effectively. The existence of clearly documented institutional standards reflects the commitment of school leaders to establishing quality-oriented governance. Similar findings were reported by Sallis (2014), who argues that quality improvement begins with strategic planning because institutional quality cannot be achieved without clearly formulated objectives and measurable standards. Likewise, Deming (1986) emphasizes that quality planning is the first step in continuous improvement since organizational members require clear directions before implementing quality initiatives. The present findings therefore confirm that madrasahs have recognized the importance of strategic planning as the foundation of institutional quality assurance.

However, despite the availability of quality documents, this study identified weaknesses in translating strategic objectives into measurable operational indicators. Several quality standards remained general and lacked clearly defined performance benchmarks. Consequently, institutional performance was difficult to evaluate objectively because expected outcomes had not been

operationalized into measurable indicators. This finding supports Juran's (1992) Quality Trilogy, which argues that quality planning should produce measurable quality goals that can subsequently be monitored and improved. Without measurable indicators, quality assurance becomes largely administrative and loses its function as a management tool for continuous improvement. Therefore, the findings suggest that madrasahs should strengthen the formulation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that align institutional objectives with operational activities.

The **installation evaluation** further demonstrated that organizational readiness was generally satisfactory. Most participating institutions had established Internal Quality Assurance Teams through formal organizational structures and had allocated institutional resources to support IQAS implementation. Leadership commitment was consistently identified as one of the strongest supporting factors. Respondents acknowledged that principals actively encouraged teachers and administrative personnel to participate in quality assurance activities and regularly monitored institutional performance. These findings are consistent with Total Quality Management (TQM) theory, which identifies leadership as the primary determinant of organizational quality (Oakland, 2014). According to Deming (1986), approximately 85% of quality problems originate from management systems rather than individual employees. Therefore, leadership commitment significantly influences the success of organizational quality improvement initiatives.

Despite these positive findings, the evaluation also revealed deficiencies in human resource capacity. Many Internal Quality Assurance Team members had limited experience in conducting educational quality audits, data analysis, and institutional evaluation. Similar concerns have been reported by UNESCO (2023), which emphasizes that educational quality assurance increasingly depends on professional competencies related to data-driven decision-making, institutional evaluation, and digital quality management. Consequently, strengthening the professional capacity of quality assurance personnel through continuous training and certification programs should become a strategic priority for educational policymakers.

Another important finding concerns the limited utilization of digital technology in quality management. Although most madrasahs possessed basic administrative systems, relatively few had developed integrated digital quality assurance platforms capable of supporting institutional monitoring and evidence-based decision-making. Documentation remained largely paper-based, increasing administrative workload and reducing the efficiency of quality monitoring. UNESCO (2023) argues that digital transformation has become an essential component of educational governance because digital information systems facilitate transparency, accountability, and real-time monitoring of institutional performance. Therefore, digitalizing IQAS represents an important strategic direction for improving educational governance in Indonesian madrasahs.

The **process evaluation** produced perhaps the most significant findings of this study. Although institutions generally implemented the PPEPP cycle, the quality of implementation declined considerably during the Evaluation, Control, and Improvement stages. While quality standards had been established and educational activities implemented according to institutional plans, systematic monitoring and follow-up actions were conducted inconsistently. Internal quality audits were frequently performed only to satisfy accreditation requirements rather than functioning as continuous mechanisms for organizational learning.

This finding reflects a common challenge in educational quality management. According to Harvey and Green (1993), educational quality should be understood as a process of transformation rather than compliance with predetermined standards. Institutions that focus primarily on documentation often fail to develop a genuine quality culture because quality assurance activities become administrative obligations rather than organizational learning processes. Similarly, Fullan (2007) argues that sustainable educational improvement requires institutions to transform evaluation findings into innovations capable of improving teaching, leadership, and organizational performance. Therefore, the effectiveness of IQAS depends not merely on conducting evaluations but on utilizing evaluation results as the basis for strategic decision-making.

The interviews further revealed that many teachers perceived internal quality audits primarily as administrative inspections.

Such perceptions reduced participation and limited opportunities for collaborative learning. Senge (2006) explains that learning organizations encourage continuous reflection, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving rather than emphasizing compliance alone. Consequently, strengthening organizational learning should become an integral component of IQAS implementation in madrasahs.

The **product evaluation** indicates that IQAS has generated several positive institutional outcomes. Participants reported improvements in administrative governance, documentation quality, accreditation preparedness, stakeholder communication, and institutional accountability. These findings suggest that IQAS contributes significantly to strengthening organizational management systems. Similar findings were reported by Hénard and Roseveare (2012), who concluded that internal quality assurance positively influences institutional effectiveness when quality management becomes integrated into everyday organizational practices.

Nevertheless, improvements in teaching quality, innovation, and organizational quality culture were less evident. Some respondents indicated that quality assurance activities remained concentrated within administrative units, whereas teachers' instructional practices experienced

relatively limited changes. This finding suggests that quality assurance has not yet fully penetrated classroom-level educational processes. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), sustainable educational improvement requires professional collaboration among teachers because instructional quality constitutes the core of educational excellence. Consequently, future IQAS initiatives should strengthen professional learning communities and instructional supervision alongside administrative quality management.

The discrepancy analysis further demonstrated that the largest implementation gaps occurred in internal quality audits, follow-up mechanisms, documentation systems, and continuous improvement activities. These findings confirm the assumptions underlying Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model that evaluation should identify performance gaps requiring organizational intervention. Rather than viewing discrepancies as institutional weaknesses, educational leaders should interpret them as strategic information for improving institutional quality. The present findings therefore reinforce the practical relevance of discrepancy-based evaluation for educational quality management.

An important implication emerging from this study concerns the development of an institutional quality culture. Sallis (2014) argues that quality assurance cannot succeed unless quality becomes embedded within the shared beliefs, values, and everyday practices of organizational members. Similarly, Harvey and Stensaker (2008) explain that quality culture

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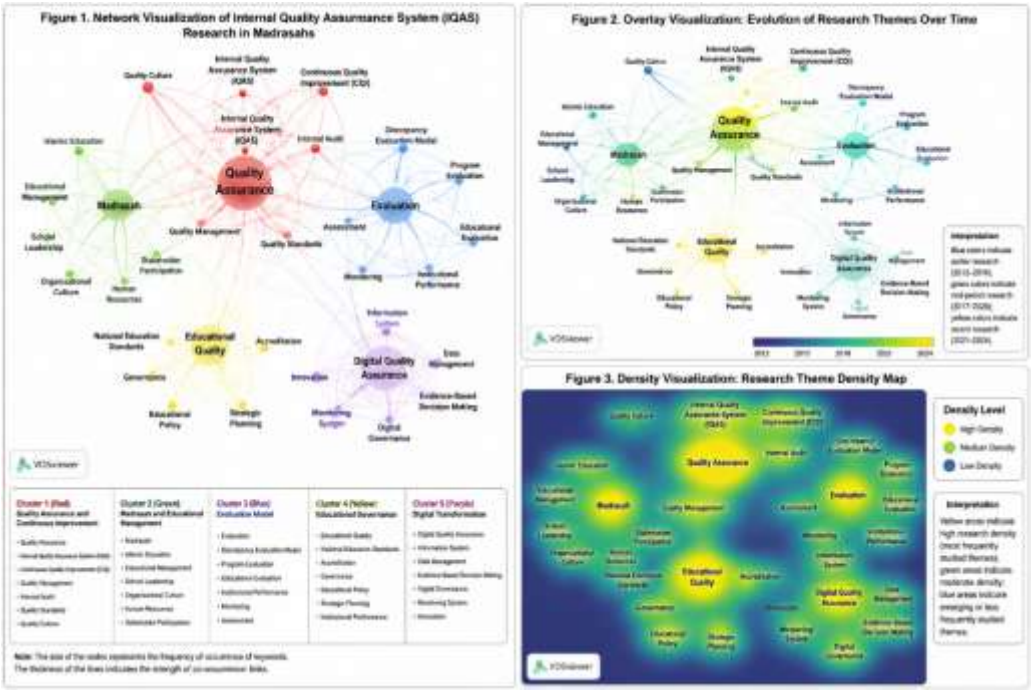

combines structural quality assurance mechanisms with organizational commitment toward continuous improvement. The present findings indicate that many madrasahs have successfully established structural quality systems; however, strengthening organizational commitment remains an ongoing challenge. Therefore, leadership should encourage greater participation from teachers, administrative personnel, students, and external stakeholders to institutionalize quality-oriented behaviors throughout the organization.

Overall, the findings suggest that successful IQAS implementation requires an integrated approach combining effective leadership, competent human resources, systematic quality planning, digital information systems, continuous evaluation, and organizational learning. The interaction among these components creates a sustainable quality assurance ecosystem capable of supporting institutional excellence. Consequently, educational policymakers should prioritize investments in professional development, digital transformation, quality culture, and evidence-based decision-making to ensure that IQAS functions not merely as an administrative requirement but as a strategic instrument for continuous educational improvement.

The present study also contributes theoretically by extending the application of **Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model** within the context of Islamic educational institutions. While previous studies have primarily described IQAS implementation, this research demonstrates that discrepancy analysis provides a comprehensive framework for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and improvement priorities across all stages of the PPEPP cycle. Practically, the findings provide empirical evidence that can support the Ministry of Religious Affairs, madrasah leaders, and quality assurance practitioners in designing more effective strategies for strengthening internal quality assurance and achieving sustainable educational excellence.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in Indonesian madrasahs using a mixed-methods approach and Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM). The evaluation demonstrates that IQAS has generally been implemented in accordance with the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement). The findings indicate that madrasahs have established quality policies, institutional standards, strategic planning documents, and Internal Quality Assurance Teams, reflecting a strong institutional commitment to quality assurance and educational improvement.

Despite these positive achievements, the study identified several discrepancies between expected standards and actual implementation. The most significant gaps were found in the consistency of quality standard implementation, the effectiveness of internal quality audits, the completeness and digitalization of quality documentation, the systematic use of evaluation findings for decision-making, and the sustainability of continuous improvement initiatives. These findings

suggest that IQAS implementation remains more focused on administrative compliance than on fostering an institutional quality culture that supports continuous organizational learning and innovation.

The study further reveals that successful IQAS implementation is influenced by several interrelated factors. Strong leadership commitment, supportive institutional policies, and the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Teams function as major enabling factors. Conversely, limited human resource competencies, inadequate digital quality management systems, insufficient audit capacity, and a relatively weak quality culture continue to constrain the effectiveness of IQAS implementation. Therefore, improving educational quality requires not only compliance with institutional standards but also strengthening organizational capacity, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based management practices.

From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms the relevance of Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model as a comprehensive framework for evaluating educational quality assurance systems. The model effectively identifies discrepancies across the stages of design, installation, process, and product, enabling institutions to formulate targeted corrective actions and continuous quality improvement strategies. The findings also reinforce the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) by demonstrating that sustainable educational quality depends on systematic planning, effective implementation, continuous evaluation, organizational learning, and leadership commitment.

Practically, the findings provide several recommendations for policymakers and madrasah leaders. First, institutional quality standards should be translated into measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to facilitate objective performance monitoring. Second, professional development programs should be expanded to strengthen the competencies of Internal Quality Assurance Team members and internal auditors. Third, digital transformation should be accelerated through the development of integrated quality management information systems that support real-time monitoring, documentation, and data-driven decision-making. Finally, madrasahs should cultivate a sustainable quality culture by encouraging the active participation of teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders in all stages of the quality assurance process.

Although this study provides comprehensive evidence regarding IQAS implementation, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research was conducted within the context of Indonesian madrasahs, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. In addition, the evaluation focused primarily on institutional quality management and did not comprehensively examine the long-term effects of IQAS on student learning outcomes and graduate competencies. Future research is therefore recommended to employ longitudinal designs,

comparative studies across different educational institutions, and advanced analytical techniques to investigate the relationships among leadership, organizational culture, digital transformation, quality assurance practices, and educational performance.

In conclusion, the Internal Quality Assurance System has become a strategic instrument for improving the quality of madrasah education. However, its effectiveness depends not merely on the existence of quality documents or institutional regulations but on the consistent implementation of quality assurance practices, the development of an organizational quality culture, and a sustained commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement. Strengthening these dimensions will enable madrasahs to enhance institutional performance, improve educational outcomes, and contribute.

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