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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN PESANTREN-BASED ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study examines how organizational culture shapes quality management in pesantren-based Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Madura, Indonesia. Despite growing attention to educational quality management in Islamic institutions, the role of organizational culture rooted in pesantren values remains insufficiently theorized and empirically underexplored at the primary madrasah level. Using a qualitative multi-site case study, the study analyzed interviews with principals, school leaders, and classroom teachers at six MI, together with field observations conducted in 2025 and 2026 in Sumenep and Pamekasan. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman around three dimensions: features of organizational culture, principal practices in quality management, and teacher roles. The findings indicate that organizational culture operates as a mechanism through which quality practices are planned, monitored, and rewarded. Principals embed quality routines in pesantren ceremonies and calendars, such as annual work meetings, monthly evaluation, and appreciation at the class meeting and haflatul imtihan, and in some institutions in teacher mentoring, root-cause identification of learning problems, and parental monitoring; where the pesantren owns the madrasah, the kiai sets the direction of policy. Teachers combine instructional, relational, and moral roles. Limited material resources appeared to be offset by relations with parents, community figures, and local government. The study contributes to the understanding of context-sensitive quality management in Islamic education and offers implications for madrasah leadership development and policy. As a small-scale qualitative study, its findings are transferable only with caution.

Keywords: Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Organizational Culture; Quality Management; Pesantren-Based Education; Principal Leadership

Abstrak

Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana budaya organisasi membentuk manajemen mutu di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) berbasis pesantren di Madura, Indonesia. Meskipun perhatian terhadap manajemen mutu pendidikan di lembaga Islam terus meningkat, peran budaya organisasi yang berakar pada nilai-nilai pesantren masih belum cukup diteorikan dan belum banyak dieksplorasi secara empiris pada jenjang madrasah tingkat dasar. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif multisitus, penelitian ini menganalisis wawancara yang dilakukan terhadap kepala madrasah, pimpinan sekolah, dan guru kelas di enam MI, serta observasi lapangan yang dilaksanakan pada tahun 2025 dan 2026 di Sumenep dan Pamekasan. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang mencakup tiga dimensi: karakteristik budaya organisasi, praktik kepala madrasah dalam manajemen mutu, dan peran guru. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi berfungsi sebagai mekanisme di mana praktik-praktik mutu direncanakan, dipantau, dan diberikan penghargaan. Kepala madrasah mengintegrasikan

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rutinitas mutu ke dalam kegiatan dan kalender pesantren, seperti rapat kerja tahunan, evaluasi bulanan, serta pemberian apresiasi dalam pertemuan kelas dan *haflatul imtihan* dan di beberapa lembaga, hal ini juga mencakup pendampingan guru, identifikasi akar masalah pembelajaran, serta pemantauan oleh orang tua. Pada madrasah yang berada di bawah naungan pesantren, *kiai* berperan dalam menentukan arah kebijakan. Para guru menjalankan peran yang mencakup aspek instruksional, relasional, dan moral. Keterbatasan sumber daya material tampak diimbangi oleh hubungan yang kuat dengan orang tua, tokoh masyarakat, dan pemerintah daerah. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman mengenai manajemen mutu yang peka terhadap konteks dalam pendidikan Islam, serta memberikan implikasi bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan dan kebijakan di madrasah. Sebagai studi kualitatif berskala kecil, temuan ini hanya dapat diterapkan pada konteks lain dengan penuh kehati-hatian.

Kata Kunci: Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Budaya organisasi; Manajemen Mutu; Pendidikan Berbasis Pesantren; Kepemimpinan Utama

INTRODUCTION

Quality management has become a central concern in the governance of Islamic educational institutions, particularly amid rapid social, technological, and pedagogical change (Halimah et al., 2024; Busahdiar et al., 2023). In Indonesia, madrasah, Islamic schools that integrate religious and general education, constitute a critical segment of the national education system (Rafi et al., 2025; Haryantia & Wajdi, 2024). Within this segment, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) occupies a distinctive position as the primary level, the first stage of formal schooling at which religious character and moral dispositions are formed through daily habituation (Putri & Rosyidi, 2024). Where an MI operates within or in affiliation with a pesantren, this formative function is carried out within the normative and cultural framework of the Islamic boarding school tradition, in which education aims to develop both competence and character grounded in Islamic values (Albariki et al., 2024; Assa'idi, 2021). How such institutions manage educational quality, and how their organizational culture shapes that management, is therefore a matter of both scholarly and practical importance.

Quality management in educational institutions refers to a systematic process of planning, implementing, and evaluating measures aimed at improving learning outcomes, institutional performance, and stakeholder satisfaction (Efendi, 2022). In Islamic education, this process is not reducible to bureaucratic compliance or technical standardization; it is deeply inflected by religious values, pedagogical traditions, and community expectations (Busahdiar et al., 2023; Jami & Muharam, 2022). The Total Quality Management (TQM) framework, widely applied in educational settings, has been adapted in Islamic institutions to incorporate values such as amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence in conduct), and itqan (thoroughness in work) as normative foundations of quality management, in contrast with technocratic orientations centered on efficiency and standardization (Tobroni et al., 2025). Recent work likewise argues that quality management in Islamic education should be grounded in Islamic values and supported by Islamic leadership and stakeholder involvement (Udhma & Minarti, 2025).

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Organizational culture, broadly defined as the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that govern how members of an organization perceive, think, and act (Schein & Schein, 2016), has been extensively examined as a determinant of organizational effectiveness (Anning-Dorson, 2021; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024), and the factors behind school effectiveness have been systematically reviewed (Javornik & Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, 2023). In pesantren-based madrasah, organizational culture is shaped by values that are simultaneously pedagogical and spiritual. These values are expressed through daily habituation modeled on pesantren practice (Putri & Rosyidi, 2024) and in the teacher's roles of providing uswatun hasanah (exemplary conduct), irsyad (guidance), and ri'ayah (accompaniment), which define not merely instructional relationships but the broader moral ecology of the institution. Organizational culture in such settings functions as a governance mechanism, regulating how leadership authority is exercised, how educational programs are designed, and how institutional innovation is pursued (Prasetyo, 2022; Widodo et al., 2024; Maryati et al., 2020). At the center of that culture stands the kiai, whose charismatic authority has long been central to the pesantren tradition (Dhofier, 1999) and whose leadership and the pesantren's culture shape each other (Aisyah et al., 2022).

The role of the principal, or kepala madrasah, in linking organizational culture to quality outcomes has received growing scholarly attention (Syaifuddin & Rofiki, 2025; Zaini & Syafaruddin, 2020). Principals in pesantren-based institutions are expected to lead by example while supporting teachers' professional growth and collaboration (Syaifuddin & Rofiki, 2025), a role in which modern managerial expectations converge with classical Islamic pedagogical norms. Studies in Indonesian Islamic educational contexts indicate that principals who integrate innovation into their leadership, through digitalization, teacher professional development, and program diversification, contribute to improvements in learning quality and institutional competitiveness (Rafi et al., 2025; Syaifuddin & Rofiki, 2025). Studies of MI principals have begun to document how principals build a quality-oriented or Islamic work culture through supervision, teacher training, and community involvement (Fazis, 2026; Karmila et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the mechanisms through which organizational culture shapes the relationship between principal practice and quality outcomes remain insufficiently theorized, particularly in pesantren-based MI, where principals work in close proximity to families and local communities.

Despite the growing literature on quality management in Indonesian Islamic education, several gaps persist. First, the existing empirical base includes studies of, for example, total quality management in Madrasah Aliyah (Busahdiar et al., 2023), organizational culture in Islamic junior high schools (Prasetyo & Fadhillah, 2022), quality culture in an urban private madrasah aliyah (Syihabudin et al., 2024), and quality improvement in university study programs (Jami & Muharam, 2022), while, to the authors' knowledge, the primary-level madrasah remains comparatively underexamined. Second, while TQM has been widely applied as a theoretical framework (Busahdiar et al., 2023), its integration with indigenous organizational culture constructs rooted in pesantren values remains conceptually underdeveloped, to the authors' knowledge. Third, Madura, where pesantren-based madrasah are numerous, has, to the authors' knowledge, received little attention in the quality management literature, and research on quality assurance in pesantren has so far been mapped bibliometrically (Lathifah et al., 2025). These gaps

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point to the need for context-sensitive, empirically grounded research that takes seriously both the institutional particularities of the primary madrasah in Madura and the theoretical contributions such a context can make to educational management scholarship.

Addressing these gaps, the present study asks how organizational culture shapes quality management in pesantren-based MI in Madura, Indonesia. Drawing on a qualitative multi-site case study of seven MI in Sumenep and Pamekasan, it pursues three objectives: (1) to identify the distinctive features of organizational culture in pesantren-based MI and their implications for institutional management; (2) to examine the strategies through which principals and teachers mobilize cultural values in the service of quality management; and (3) to analyze the relationship between organizational culture and quality management in the socio-educational context of Madura. Its novelty lies in taking the primary madrasah, rather than secondary or tertiary institutions, as the unit of analysis, and in considering the position of the kiai alongside that of the principal and teachers.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multi-site case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to examine how organizational culture shapes quality management in pesantren-based madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI). Seven MI in Madura were selected purposively because each is embedded in a pesantren environment and enrolls primary-level students: Tarbiyatus Shibyan (Lenteng), Al-Aziz (Batuputih), Nurul Huda (Pasongsongan), and Nurul Anwar, Al-In'am, and Nasy'atul Muta'allimin (all in Gapura) in Sumenep Regency, and Manarul Huda (Pasean) in Pamekasan Regency. A multi-site design was chosen so that patterns could be compared across institutions with different histories, resources, and degrees of formal pesantren affiliation.

Two sets of data were used. The first was collected in 2025 through interviews and observations at four of the seven MI, involving school leaders and teachers. The second set was collected in June and July 2026 at the three MI in Gapura using a semi-structured guide. It comprises interviews with the three principals (13 questions each), interviews with five teachers (nine questions; the answers of the two teachers at each of Nurul Anwar and Al-In'am were recorded jointly, and one teacher was interviewed at Nasy'atul Muta'allimin), and observation sheets covering morning religious routines, teacher-student interaction, the conduct of the principal, the physical environment and its symbols, relations with parents and the surrounding community, and tahfidz or kitab programs. Because some teacher answers were recorded jointly, both sets were treated as institution-level accounts rather than as individual testimony.

The data were analyzed following the interactive model of Miles et al. (2018): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Transcripts and observation notes were coded around three themes, namely the features of organizational culture, the principal's practices in quality management, and the role of teachers. Each theme was then compared across the seven MI. Trustworthiness was addressed using the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was supported by comparing interview and observation data where both were available and by comparing the accounts of principals and teachers within each institution. Dependability was supported by retaining the original transcripts verbatim as an audit trail. Transferability was supported by describing each setting in sufficient detail for readers to judge its relevance to other contexts.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational culture shaped quality management in these MI chiefly by supplying the routines, ceremonies, and relationships through which quality was planned, monitored, and rewarded. The findings are organized around three themes that emerged from the interviews and observations at the seven MI: the features of organizational culture, the principal's practices in quality management, and the roles of teachers. A fourth, cross-cutting pattern concerns how limited resources were managed through relations with parents and the community. Table 1 summarizes the evidence by institution. The discussion that follows the results relates the findings to the literature.

Table 1. Summary of Findings Across Seven Pesantren-Based MI

Institution	Organizational culture	Principal / school leader practices	Teacher roles
MI Tarbiyatus Shibyan (Lenteng, Sumenep)	Tahfidz of Juz 30 for 100 students and 15 teachers; students' stories displayed on the wall magazine; obligatory greeting of teachers	Selective appreciation of teachers who accompany successful students; root-cause identification of learning problems with referral to counseling; mentoring of young teachers; monthly sharing among teachers; teacher freedom to design learning tools	Friendly feedback without judgment; dialogue with parents; monitoring of congregational prayer at home
MI Al-Aziz (Batuputih, Sumenep)	Vision based on IMTAQ (faith and piety) and IPTEK (science and technology); compulsory congregational prayer, short verses, and Aqoid/Tauhid recitation	Training at school and regency levels; teacher assessment by classroom activity, conduct, collegial interaction, student results, and extracurricular activity; home learning evidenced by videos in a WhatsApp group	Interactive methods, experiments, ice breaking, individual guidance; divergent views on praise versus material reward
MI Manarul Huda (Pasean, Pamekasan)	Integrated system from PAUD through MA; pesantren values reflected in teacher conduct	Provision of facilities and games; interaction with students outside class; financial assistance; participation in dhuha prayer	Humanistic interaction, positive encouragement, accompaniment, exemplary conduct, tawasul
MI Nurul Huda (Pasongsongan, Sumenep)	Young teachers, almost all pesantren graduates; community members correcting students; student savings with parents also depositing	Not documented (observation only)	Character formation through teacher-community relations

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Institution	Organizational culture	Principal / school leader practices	Teacher roles
MI Nurul Anwar (Gapura, Sumenep)	Pesantren values, simplicity, obedience, respect for teachers, restricted male-female interaction; no tahfidz or kitab kuning, regular Qur'an recitation	Annual work meeting, monthly evaluation, appreciation at class meeting and haflatul imtihan	Accompaniment ("mother at school"); examples of successful alumni; joint problem solving among those involved
MI Al-In'am (Gapura, Sumenep)	Formal pesantren affiliation; policy direction by the kiai; dhuha and dhuhur congregational prayers; weekly kitab kuning; optional tahfidz; Monday assembly	Same as above, with the kiai as determinant of policy direction	Accompaniment, play, guidance, motivation; monthly forum with the kiai
MI Nasy'atul Muta'allimin (Gapura, Sumenep)	Pesantren values and character formation; emulation of the kiai's life; dhuha and dhuhur congregational prayers	Same as above (principal interview only)	Fiqh and SKI teacher; accompaniment, play, motivation

Source: interviews and observations (2025 and 2026).

Organizational Culture: Pesantren Values Enacted through Routines and Symbols

Principals at the three Gapura MI described their institutions as carrying pesantren values into the madrasah. The principal of Nurul Anwar, established in 1994, named simplicity, religious obedience, respect for teachers, and limits on male-female interaction as the values being implemented. The principal of Nasy'atul Muta'allimin, established in the 1980s, added that instruction focused on character and Islamic values. Al-In'am was described as formally under a pesantren, bound by its rules. When asked which value is guarded most, the principals pointed to obedience as the source of blessing: "Patuh pada orang tua dan guru, simbol ketaatan sebagai modal awal mendapatkan barokah" ("Obedience to parents and teachers, as a symbol of compliance, is the initial capital for receiving barakah [divine blessing]"). At Nasy'atul Muta'allimin the principal further linked obedience to teachers with "meneladani kehidupan kiai" ("emulating the life of the kiai").

These values were visible in daily routines. At the three Gapura MI, congregational dhuhur prayer was practiced, and dhuha prayer was added at Al-In'am and Nasy'atul Muta'allimin. A compulsory opening prayer included the recitation of al-Fatihah and tawasul (supplication through intermediaries) to the muassis (founders), which principals explained as an expression of obedience in worship. At Al-In'am, observations recorded dhuha prayer with senior teachers at the pesantren mosque, a weekly morning recitation with the kiai, a Monday assembly, and short litanies (wirid) led by class teachers. At MI

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Al-Aziz, the principal grounded the vision in IMTAQ and IPTEK and required students to pray in congregation, read short verses, and recite Aqoid (creed). At Tarbiyatus Shibyan, tahfidz (Qur'an memorization) of Juz 30 involved 100 students and 15 teachers. The intensity of pesantren programs nevertheless varied: Nurul Anwar offered regular Qur'an recitation but neither tahfidz nor kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts), whereas Al-In'am held weekly kitab kuning sessions and optional tahfidz.

Physical and social symbols also carried the culture. Observations at Gapura recorded clean premises, posters on school rules, a consistent activity calendar, and a wall magazine that was not very active. At Tarbiyatus Shibyan, students' stories were displayed on the wall magazine, and students were required to greet teachers they met outside school. At Nurul Huda, a shopkeeper next to the school reprimanded a pupil who had made a classmate cry, and the madrasah ran a savings program to which parents also contributed in their children's names. At Manarul Huda, the integrated system from PAUD to MA was described as creating continuity and a more conducive learning atmosphere.

Principal Practices in Quality Management

Principals at the Gapura MI defined a quality madrasah as one with many students, active learning, and outstanding achievement, and they cited national poetry competitions (Nurul Anwar and Nasy'atul Muta'allimin), scouting, and Juz 30 tahfidz graduates (Al-In'am) as evidence. Quality management followed a recognizable cycle. Annual programs were set in a work meeting involving all stakeholders; at Al-In'am the principal added that this followed "sesuai instruksi kiai, bagaimana beliau adalah pemilik dan penentu arah kebijakan, tapi tidak dalam artian otoriter" ("in accordance with the kiai's instructions, since he is the owner and determines the direction of policy, but not in an authoritarian sense"). Performance was monitored through monthly evaluation and inter-unit gatherings, with appreciation given at the class meeting and the haflatul imtihan (annual examination ceremony). All teachers were reported to take part in development activities. Asked whether pesantren tradition conflicted with curriculum, administration, and accreditation demands, the principals answered that all aspects were in harmony, and that abandoning the shared habits would leave the institution's orientation chaotic (orientasi lembaga nanti kacau).

The remaining MI showed more specific practices. At Tarbiyatus Shibyan, the principal gave appreciation selectively to teachers who accompanied successful students, identified the root causes of pupils' problems with teachers and then referred pupils to the counseling room, mentored young teachers personally, and convened monthly sharing among teachers. He also gave teachers freedom to design learning tools under the Kurikulum Merdeka and provided training on technology and media. At Al-Aziz, the principal assessed teachers through classroom activity, daily conduct, collegial interaction, student results, and extracurricular activity, and required home learning evidenced by videos sent to a WhatsApp group, which he monitored. At Manarul Huda, the school leader interviewed reported providing facilities and games, interacting with students outside class hours, assisting students with financial needs, and joining the dhuha prayer himself.

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Teacher Roles in Sustaining Learning Quality

Teachers described their work in terms that combined instruction with accompaniment. At Nurul Anwar, teachers said they teach, accompany children's learning, and become "ibu mereka ketika di sekolah" ("their mother while at school"); at Al-In'am and Nasy'atul Muta'allimin the description also included being a playmate and giving direction and motivation. This pattern of ri'ayah (accompaniment) was joined by irsyad (guidance) in problem handling: teachers at the Gapura MI said that everyone is involved, "kita duduk bareng lalu mencarikan solusi bersama-sama" ("we sit together and look for a solution together"), and, at Al-In'am, that parents are summoned and the situation explained to them. Motivation relied on examples of successful alumni who, at Al-In'am, also contributed to the school. At Tarbiyatus Shibyan, a teacher approached students as friends and began with other topics so that they would not be afraid and could speak honestly. Another teacher described monitoring through parents: "memantau mereka dari orang tuanya ketika di warung... apakah anak bapak selalu berjamaah ketika ada di rumah" ("monitoring them through their parents at the stall... whether your child always prays in congregation at home").

Pedagogical practices were also reported. At Al-Aziz, teachers used questioning, experiments (students demonstrated how joints work in science lessons), games and group discussion, ice breaking through scout clapping or shalawat, individual guidance for slower pupils, and peer tutoring for quicker ones. At Manarul Huda, teachers prepared modules, did ice breaking, gave students fitting labels, required clean classrooms, practiced tawasul, and used humor. The observation notes described their conduct as reflecting pesantren values through uswatun hasanah (exemplary conduct). Two Al-Aziz teachers diverged on the value of praise: one found material rewards more effective, the other treated verbal praise as the main form of appreciation and rewards as a supplement.

Limited Resources and the Role of Social Capital

The principals at the Gapura MI stated plainly that "sebagai lembaga swasta dana dan sarana memang terbatas" ("as a private institution, funds and facilities are indeed limited") and said they addressed this by involving parents, community figures, and local government. Teachers named learning facilities as the greatest obstacle and responded by "menggunakan yang ada, kadang outdoor dan praktik langsung di lapangan" ("using what is available, sometimes outdoors with direct practice in the field"). Parental communication relied on WhatsApp groups and regular gatherings, such as the "Kompolan Bulenan" (monthly gathering) at Nurul Anwar and a monthly forum with the kiai at Al-In'am. At Tarbiyatus Shibyan, the principal observed that resources were limited, and the observation notes concluded that the institution's strength lay in cooperation among teachers and a humanistic approach linking classroom and religious-social life. A computer laboratory of about 11 computers served only grades 5 and 6.

Organizational Culture as the Medium of Quality Management

The findings are consistent with the argument that organizational culture shapes behavior through shared assumptions and values (Schein & Schein, 2016). Using Schein's three levels, the posters, calendars, wall magazines, and prayer routines are artifacts; obedience,

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simplicity, and barakah are espoused values; and the assumption that obedience to parents, teachers, and the kiai opens the way to barakah and beneficial knowledge appears to be the deeper premise behind both. Quality management in these MI is therefore not an external system overlaid on the madrasah. The cycle of planning (annual meeting), monitoring (monthly evaluation), and appreciation (class meeting and haflatul imtihan) is carried out through gatherings and ceremonies already embedded in the pesantren calendar. This is consistent with the view that quality management grounded in Islamic values depends on Islamic leadership and stakeholder involvement (Udhma & Minarti, 2025), and it differs from the technocratic emphasis on efficiency and standardization that Tobroni et al. (2025) describe as dominant in educational TQM. It is also consistent with evidence that religious character at the MI level is built through daily habituation modeled on pesantren practice (Putri & Rosyidi, 2024). It differs in one respect. Prasetyo and Fadhillah (2022) identify the setting of behavior standards and the revitalization of school management as explicit dimensions of culture-building in Islamic-based junior high schools, whereas the principals here described quality work mainly through routines and ceremonies, and said that administration and accreditation were "in harmony" with pesantren tradition. Whether this reflects informality in practice or the limits of the interviews cannot be determined from these data.

The role of the kiai deserves separate attention. Principals described the kiai or caretaker as the determinant of policy and direction at a large scale, yet the Al-In'am principal also specified that this was not authoritarian. This suggests, with caution given the limited number of accounts, a division of labor in which the kiai holds cultural and strategic authority while the principal manages implementation. The principals' practices of monitoring, appreciating, and developing teachers resemble strategies reported for madrasah principals who lead by example, provide professional development, and encourage collaboration among teachers (Syaifuddin & Rofiki, 2025). The practices at Tarbiyatus Shibyan and Al-Aziz, such as mentoring, training, assessment, and parental involvement, are also consistent with evidence from an MI in Palembang, where the principal built a quality culture through developmental supervision, teacher training, and partnership with parents and community leaders (Karmila et al., 2025). The emphasis on mentoring and personal relations with teachers also fits evidence from Türkiye that the principal–teacher relationship mediates the effect of innovative school leadership on teacher professional learning (Özdoğru et al., 2025).

For teachers, the accounts show accompaniment (ri'ayah), guidance (irsyad), and exemplary conduct (uswatun hasanah) enacted through daily habituation, which parallels the habituation of religious conduct in an MI described by Putri and Rosyidi (2024). The monthly sharing among teachers at Tarbiyatus Shibyan is consistent with the importance of collaboration among teachers (Syaifuddin & Rofiki, 2025). The distinctive contribution of the MI data is how these roles reach beyond the school: teachers monitored congregational prayer at home through parents, and community members corrected pupils. Limited resources appeared to be offset less by facilities than by relations. This is consistent with the notion of social capital, in which obligations, trust, and norms within a community support the formation of human capital (Coleman, 1988). Digital transformation has been described as central to quality improvement in other madrasah (Haryantia & Wajdi, 2024); at the MI studied here, facilities were limited, with

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a computer laboratory reserved for grades 5 and 6 at Tarbiyatus Shibyan, and the accounts emphasized relationships instead.

Pesantren programs differed across institutions: tahfidz and kitab kuning were present at Al-In'am but absent at Nurul Anwar, and teachers at Al-Aziz disagreed on praise versus rewards. Observation of the learning process was not recorded at the Gapura MI, and the study did not measure learning outcomes. The findings therefore describe how quality is organized and justified in these institutions, not its effect on student achievement.

CONCLUSION

In pesantren-based Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, quality is managed through culture rather than alongside it. The pesantren values of obedience, simplicity, and barakah are enacted in congregational prayer, opening prayers, and recitation programs, and the same ceremonies carry the quality cycle: an annual work meeting sets programs, monthly evaluation monitors them, and appreciation is given at the class meeting and haflatul imtihan. Authority is divided between the kiai, who sets the direction of policy where the pesantren owns the madrasah, and the principal, who manages its implementation. Teachers combine instruction with accompaniment (ri'ayah), guidance (irsyad), and exemplary conduct (uswatun hasanah), and extend these roles to parents and the surrounding community. Where funds and facilities were limited, relations with parents, community figures, and local government substituted for material resources, a pattern consistent with social capital.

Three contributions follow. Quality management research in Islamic education has concentrated on secondary and tertiary institutions; these cases bring the primary madrasah into view. The findings show that quality routines can be anchored in the pesantren calendar rather than in formal standards alone, and they indicate how the cultural and policy authority of the kiai reaches the primary madrasah through the principal. For practice, leadership development and quality assurance in pesantren-based MI are likely to work better when built on existing routines, ceremonies, and community relations than when externally imposed procedures replace them, although standards should be documented more explicitly than the accounts suggest they currently are.

These conclusions rest on a small purposive sample from one region. Teacher answers at some institutions were recorded jointly, observation of classroom learning was limited, and no learning outcomes were measured. Transferability is therefore limited. Future research should triangulate interviews with documents and measured learning outcomes, record informants individually, include the kiai and parents as informants, and compare pesantren-based MI across regions and with MI that have no pesantren affiliation.

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