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Strengthening Arabic Language Learning through Total Quality Management (TQM)

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Abstract

Keywords:

Total Quality Management, Arabic Language Learning, Strengthening

The background of this study is the various challenges in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin, such as low teaching effectiveness, limited facilities, and minimal use of digital technology in the teaching and learning process. These problems require a managerial and pedagogical approach that can improve the quality of learning in a sustainable manner. This study aims to describe the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic language learning at the madrasah. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, indepth interviews with teachers and the head of the madrasah, as well as documentation of teaching tools and learning journals. The results of the study show that TQM principles have been thoroughly internalized in three main aspects of learning, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. At the planning stage, and madrasah principals conduct collaborative evaluations and analyze student needs to develop relevant teachers implement teaching tools. In practice, communicative, and contextual learning, and adapt methods and media to students' learning styles. Formative and summative evaluations are conducted using authentic instruments, portfolios, and learning journals as a basis for decision making. In addition, reflective practices through internal MGMPs, student learning satisfaction surveys, and appreciation for teacher innovation demonstrate the continuous strengthening of a culture of quality. Despite constraints such as limited facilities and digitization, the implementation of TQM has proven to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of Arabic language learning. These findings confirm that TQM can be effectively applied not only at the managerial level but also directly in the classroom.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:
Manajemen
Mutu Terpadu,
Pembelajaran
Bahasa Arab,
Penguatan

Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah berbagai tantangan dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin, seperti rendahnya efektivitas pengajaran, keterbatasan fasilitas, dan minimnya pemanfaatan teknologi digital dalam proses belajar mengajar. Permasalahan ini menuntut adanya pendekatan manajerial dan pedagogis yang mampu meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi Total Quality Management (TQM) dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di madrasah tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan kepala madrasah, serta dokumentasi perangkat ajar dan jurnal pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsipprinsip TQM telah diinternalisasi secara menyeluruh dalam tiga aspek utama pembelajaran, yaitu perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Pada tahap perencanaan, guru dan kepala madrasah melakukan evaluasi kolaboratif serta analisis kebutuhan peserta didik untuk menyusun perangkat ajar yang relevan. Dalam pelaksanaan, guru menerapkan pembelajaran aktif, komunikatif, dan kontekstual, serta menyesuaikan metode dan media dengan gaya belajar siswa. Evaluasi dilakukan secara formatif dan sumatif menggunakan instrumen autentik, portofolio, dan jurnal pembelajaran sebagai dasar pengambilan keputusan. Selain itu, praktik refleksi melalui MGMP internal, survei kepuasan belajar dan pemberian apresiasi terhadap inovasi menunjukkan penguatan budaya mutu secara berkelanjutan. Meskipun terdapat kendala seperti keterbatasan fasilitas dan digitalisasi, implementasi TQM terbukti meningkatkan efektivitas dan keberlanjutan pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa TQM dapat diterapkan secara efektif tidak hanya pada tataran manajerial, tetapi juga langsung di ruang kelas.

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Introduction

The quality of education is a key factor in determining a nation's competitiveness amid the rapid pace of globalization and the development of information technology(Imron et al., 2024). In the modern education landscape, success is not solely measured by academic achievements but also by an educational institution's ability to provide high-quality, relevant, and sustainable learning services(Bathothiy et al., 2025). Therefore, a structured and comprehensive management system is needed to ensure the optimal achievement of educational goals(Hidayah & Pd, 2022). One managerial approach considered effective in ensuring educational quality is Total Quality Management (TQM), which has traditionally been more prevalent in the industrial sector but is now increasingly being adapted in educational systems, including madrasahs (Hidayah, 2019b).

In the context of madrasah education, particularly in Arabic language learning, the demand for quality improvement is highly relevant. Arabic is not merely a subject (Mukmin, 2017), but also a primary tool for understanding Islamic teachings, such as the Qur'an and Hadith (muhammad & purnama, 2025). Therefore, Arabic language instruction cannot be conducted in a conventional and stagnant manner but must be managed professionally and structurally to create an active, meaningful learning process that addresses the needs of students (Wasilah & Agustina, 2016). The application of TQM principles is important because it offers a customer-oriented framework (in this case, students), emphasizes collective participation, and promotes continuous improvement in every aspect of education (Jumhur, Jumhur, 2015)

However, the implementation of TQM in Arabic language learning at the madrasah level has rarely been studied in depth, both in terms of institutional policy and classroom teaching practices(Hidayah et al., 2021). Previous studies have primarily focused on TQM in the context of school management or overall educational service quality (Irmansyah & Pratiwi, 2021). However, if TQM principles are applied specifically to the learning process, such as in the

development of teaching materials, the implementation of teaching and learning activities, and the evaluation of learning outcomes, this has the potential to significantly improve the quality of learning (Talha, 2004).

Based on these conditions, this article aims to examine and describe the implementation of TQM in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin (Nurani, 2022). The research focuses on three main aspects: planning, implementation, and evaluation of the learning process(Irmansyah et al., 2023). Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide a factual and comprehensive overview of the application of TQM principles in daily learning processes(Hidayah, 2019a). Additionally, the results of this study are expected to contribute scientifically to the development of strategies for improving the quality of Arabic language learning and serve as a reference for other educational institutions in effectively adopting a total quality management system (Nazarmanto, 2019).

The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin is a necessity amid the ongoing changes in education. Technological developments, changes in the learning styles of the digital generation, and demands for more adaptive education have shifted the teaching paradigm toward a more innovative and student-centered approach. In the context of Arabic language learning, teachers are not only required to master the subject matter comprehensively but also to design approaches that are responsive to students' needs and diverse characteristics. Principles in TQM, such as customer focus, encourage teachers to develop learning processes based on students' needs. Meanwhile, the principle of continuous improvement emphasizes the importance of consistent reflection and refinement of teaching methods (Sallis, 2015). Thus, TQM can serve as a strategic approach to improving the overall effectiveness and quality of Arabic language learning.

On the other hand, the geographical location and socio-cultural background of MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin, which is located in the South Sumatra region, also presents its own challenges in the Arabic language learning process. The community in this area generally has Malay cultural roots with Palembang as the daily language of communication, so the approach to teaching Arabic must be adapted contextually so that the material can be more easily accepted and understood by students. This is in line with the TQM principle, which emphasizes the need for a deep understanding of the characteristics and needs of students in designing the learning process. The involvement of various parties, from the madrasah principal, educators, students, to parents, is also a crucial element in the successful implementation of TQM. This study aims to uncover the forms of contextual implementation of TQM principles that align with local characteristics, thereby serving as a reference for other madrasahs facing similar conditions in their efforts to improve the quality of Arabic language education.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe the phenomenon comprehensively in a natural and contextual setting. The research location is at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin, South Sumatra. The informants consisted of the head of the madrasah, Arabic language teachers, and the curriculum coordinator as the main informants, as well as students and parents as supporting informants. The informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in the implementation of learning and quality management. Data collection was conducted using three main techniques, namely direct observation of the learning process and managerial activities, indepth interviews with key informants to understand the contextual implementation of TQM, and a study of learning tools, teacher journals, and evaluation reports. The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which involves the stages of data reduction, data

presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documents. (Yuniar & Mardalena, 2019).

A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to capture the dynamics of Total Quality Management (TQM) implementation in depth and in its entirety in the context of Arabic language learning. By placing the researcher as the main instrument, this approach provides flexibility in understanding the meaning, process, and interactions between educational elements in the field. The research focus is not only on the final learning outcomes but also on the processes, strategies, and patterns of interaction between teachers, students, and school management. Additionally, this method allows the researcher to explore more flexibly how TQM principles, such as continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement, and a focus on learners, are actually implemented in daily learning practices. Thus, this approach is relevant for uncovering the complex social and pedagogical realities within the MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin environment.

Result and Discussion

The Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic Language Learning

The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin demonstrates the integration of managerial and pedagogical dimensions that complement each other in creating optimal learning quality(Hidayah et al., 2023). The planning stage of learning begins with an evaluation of the previous year's learning through an evaluative meeting involving teachers, the school principal, and the curriculum development team. The results of this evaluation serve as the basis for formulating the Lesson Plan (RPP), taking into account changes in student needs and curriculum outcomes(Muhammad et al., 2023). In this case, planning

is proactive and anticipatory of potential learning challenges, reflecting the preventive and participatory principles of TQM (Rohayati, 2019). Additionally, students are indirectly involved through learning needs analysis conducted by teachers based on reflections from diagnostic assessments and observations of learning behavior(Wasilah & Agustina, 2016). One teacher mentioned in an interview, "We carefully observe each student's progress and adjust lesson plans accordingly, even if it means extra preparation time on our part."

This comprehensive approach shows that learning planning is not only a structural responsibility, but also the result of multidimensional collaboration involving data analysis, active participation of various stakeholders, and a deep understanding of the characteristics of learners as the main basis for realizing an effective, adaptive, and sustainable learning process.

The implementation of Arabic language learning shows that teachers actively apply the principle of continuous improvement through modifications to teaching methods and variations in learning media(Jamanuddin & Kumbara, 2016). Classroom observations show that teachers do not merely deliver material in a one-way manner but facilitate activity-based learning that places the main subjects(Imron, 2023). The approach used is students as communicative, integrative, and contextual. Teachers utilize tools such as vocabulary cards, educational videos, and dialogue scenarios to encourage student participation in using Arabic both orally and in writing. The learning model applied also takes into account differences in students' learning styles, so teachers often differentiate tasks and provide individual feedback. One teacher explained during a reflection meeting, "When a student struggles with vocabulary, I provide additional exercises or pair them with peers who can help, so learning is inclusive." This practice aligns with the customer-driven quality principle in TQM, where customer satisfaction (in this case, students) is at the center of all processes and decisions(Qaaf, 2014). Thus, the implementation of learning is not only focused on achieving curriculum targets, but also oriented towards creating enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences that are capable of developing students' communicative competencies in a sustainable manner through an inclusive and responsive classroom atmosphere, supported by continuous innovation from teachers as learning facilitators.

In addition to direct classroom practice, the implementation of TQM is also evident in the regular reflection activities conducted by Arabic language teachers on a weekly basis in the form of an internal Madrasah Subject Teacher Forum (MGMP). In this forum, teachers exchange best practices, discuss learning obstacles, and develop solutions based on experience. The Madrasah principal supports these activities by providing dedicated time and documentation facilities. A teacher shared, "During MGMP, we discuss challenges openly, like when internet connectivity fails during online exercises, and we brainstorm alternative solutions that everyone can apply." These reflective activities demonstrate that learning is not stagnant but a dynamic process that is continuously developed. This aligns with the principle of empowerment in TQM, which emphasizes empowering all organizational elements to innovate and take an active role in continuous quality improvement(Hidayah, 2018). This forum also serves as a space for teachers to actualize their professionalism, encouraging the creation of a culture of lifelong learning among educators. Beyond technical evaluations, MGMP discussions often address strategic aspects such as the development of contextual teaching materials, the use of cutting-edge learning technologies, and the discussion of madrasah policies that directly impact the effectiveness of learning. Thus, these weekly reflective activities are not merely administrative routines but an integral part of a sustainable and transformative education quality system.

During the evaluation stage, the assessment system focuses not only on giving final grades, but more on diagnostic and formative functions. Teachers use a variety of assessment instruments, including portfolios, performative assessment rubrics, and authentic assessments such as language projects and presentations in Arabic. Daily evaluation results are recorded in detail in the

teacher's learning journal, which then serves as material for discussion in monthly learning evaluation meetings. Summative evaluations are conducted at the end of each theme or lesson unit, and the results are used to determine strategies for further learning, remedial measures, or enrichment. The implementation of data-based evaluation shows that teachers utilize learning outcome information as a basis for decision-making, in accordance with the principle of fact-based decision-making in TQM. (Mukmin & Irmansyah, 2017). One teacher noted, "By checking daily student performance in journals, I can see immediately which areas need reinforcement before moving to the next topic."

Furthermore, this evaluative process encourages a culture of reflection and accountability, where assessment is no longer viewed merely as a measurement tool, but as a foundation for pedagogical improvement. By consistently analyzing trends in student learning outcomes, teachers can identify learning gaps early on, design targeted interventions, and adjust their teaching approaches in a timely and responsive manner. This data-driven cycle not only improves individual learning outcomes but also contributes to institutional learning and systemic continuous improvement.

Interestingly, the implementation of TQM does not only stop at the formal aspects of learning, but also extends to the work culture of the madrasah. There is an appreciative culture in the madrasah environment, where teachers with the best innovations are rewarded in monthly meetings. Students are also involved in teacher evaluations through learning satisfaction surveys conducted at the end of each semester. The data from these surveys is then used as a basis for improving teaching approaches and teacher-student relationships. A teacher explained, "Feedback from students often guides me to adjust my teaching style or choose more engaging activities." This demonstrates that MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin has implemented the principle of stakeholder focus, which involves considering the needs and expectations of all parties involved in the educational process. (Jamanuddin & Baruna, 2016).

This madrasah has also developed a two-way communication system between management and all elements of the school through regular consultation forums and an open suggestion box mechanism. Teachers are given the opportunity to express their aspirations regarding obstacles and needs in the learning process, while students and parents have access to information on academic progress and learning policies. This approach creates a dialogical climate that supports transparency, accountability, and overall quality improvement. The implementation of the stakeholder involvement principle reinforces the belief that improving the quality of education cannot be achieved unilaterally, but requires cross-functional cooperation and a shared commitment to building a superior and competitive madrasah.

However, the implementation of TQM also faces several real challenges. Limited supporting facilities such as language laboratories, multimedia devices, and unstable internet connections hinder the optimization of technology-based learning approaches. Teachers also expressed the need for more structured advanced training related to 21st-century competency-based Arabic teaching strategies. Additionally, documentation of learning practices and assessment instruments has not been fully digitized, making it difficult to conduct continuous quality monitoring. One teacher noted, "Sometimes I cannot upload all my assessment data due to limited internet bandwidth, which delays monitoring and feedback." These findings reinforce the study by Suryadi and Rachmawati (2018), which emphasizes that the success of TQM implementation depends heavily on the readiness of supporting systems and institutional commitment to strengthening human resource capacity.

Another obstacle is resistance to change from a small number of educators, particularly those who have been teaching using conventional approaches for a long time and are not yet accustomed to a culture of continuous reflection and evaluation. On the other hand, the lack of integration between internal madrasah policies and external quality standards also hinders the creation of systemic quality continuity. To overcome these obstacles,

teachers and the principal have implemented strategic steps such as peer mentoring, targeted in-house training sessions, and gradual integration of digital assessment tools. One teacher mentioned, "We started with small steps, like peer observation and sharing sessions, before fully implementing new teaching strategies, which helped reduce resistance among senior teachers." Therefore, strategic steps are needed in the form of more measurable professional development planning, the provision of adequate infrastructure, and synergy between internal and external quality policies to ensure that the implementation of TQM is not just superficial, but truly becomes the foundation for excellent management and learning practices..

Thus, the implementation of TQM in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin has demonstrated a strong integration between total quality management principles and daily pedagogical practices. Participatory planning processes, adaptive implementation, and data-driven evaluation are the key pillars of the success of this approach. Although there is still room for improvement, the achievements attained indicate that TQM is not only applicable in the general management of educational institutions but also effective in the classroom, particularly in skill-based subjects such as Arabic.

The key to the successful implementation of TQM at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin also lies in the commitment of visionary and collaborative leadership. The school principal serves as a quality leader who not only sets strategic policies but also actively fosters an organizational culture that supports educational innovation. This transformative leadership is evident in the principal's initiatives to facilitate cross-teacher discussions, streamline administrative processes, and encourage the use of simple technologies to enhance teacher effectiveness. In many cases, the school principal also serves as a direct facilitator in teacher capacity-building programs, such as training in the development of lesson plans based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) or workshops on creative teaching materials. This participatory leadership aligns with the principle of leadership commitment in TQM, which emphasizes the

importance of leaders in creating a shared vision and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

On the other hand, the role of Arabic teachers as agents of change is also crucial in the application of TQM principles in the classroom. Teachers do not only act as conveyors of material, but also as facilitators, evaluators, and innovators of learning. Observations show that teachers reflect individually on student learning outcomes through daily notes and revise their approaches when they find discrepancies between learning objectives and the results obtained. Teachers also adopt project-based learning strategies to enhance students' critical and collaborative thinking skills in a linguistic context. This approach reflects the application of the process approach principle in TQM, which focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of each stage in the learning process.

The synergy between madrasahs and parents also strengthens the foundation of TQM in the context of Arabic language learning. Communication between teachers and parents is carried out regularly, both through formal meetings and online media such as class WhatsApp groups. Information about student learning progress, evaluation results, and follow-up recommendations is conveyed transparently and participatively. In some cases, parents are even involved in providing additional learning materials at home or assisting their children with Arabic language projects based on local culture. This involvement demonstrates the strengthening of the principle of "involvement of people" in TQM, where the quality of education is not solely the responsibility of the institution but also the result of active collaboration among all stakeholders committed to the success of learning (ISO 9001:2015).

Table 1 : Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic Language Learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin

Aspect	Implementation Practices	TQM Principle	Field Findings
Planning	Evaluation of the previous	Preventive &	Teachers adjusted

Aspect	Implementation Practices	TQM Principle	Field Findings
	year's learning through meetings with teachers, the principal, and the curriculum team; student needs analysis.	participatory planning	lesson plans based on diagnostic assessments and classroom observations.
Implementation	Use of varied methods (vocabulary cards, videos, dialogue scenarios); communicative, contextual, and integrative approach; differentiated tasks and individual feedback.	Customer-driven quality; continuous improvement	Teachers provided extra exercises and paired students for peer-learning support.
Reflection (MGMP)	Weekly internal teacher forums to share best practices, discuss obstacles, and develop collective solutions.	Empowerment & teamwork	Teachers collectively agreed on alternatives when internet problems disrupted online learning.
Evaluation	Diagnostic, formative, portfolio, project-based, and presentation assessments; monthly evaluations based on data.	Fact-based decision making	Teachers recorded daily student performance in learning journals for remedial or enrichment planning.
Appreciation Culture Leadership	Rewards for innovative teachers; student satisfaction surveys conducted every semester. Principal facilitated teacher	Stakeholder focus Leadership	Students provided feedback through surveys to improve teaching styles. The principal acted

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Aspect	Implementation Practices	TQM Principle	Field Findings
	forums, HOTS workshops, and creative teaching trainings.	commitment	as a direct facilitator for teacher capacity- building programs.
Teacher's Role	Teachers as facilitators, evaluators, and innovators; daily reflections; adoption of Project-based Learning (PjBL).	Process approach	Teachers revised their methods when discrepancies were found between objectives and outcomes.
Parent Collaboration	Regular communication with parents via formal meetings and WhatsApp groups; parental support for homebased learning materials.	Involvement of people	Parents assisted children in completing Arabic projects based on local culture.
Challenges	Limited facilities (language labs, multimedia tools, internet); resistance from some senior teachers; limited digital documentation.	System readiness & human resource development	Senior teachers were gradually mentored to reduce resistance toward new strategies.

The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin demonstrates that systematic planning, effective execution, reflective teacher collaboration, and continuous evaluation are essential to achieving learning excellence. The school successfully integrates TQM principles such as preventive planning, customer-driven quality, teamwork, and fact-based decision-making into daily instructional practices. Despite challenges related to limited facilities and teacher resistance, the commitment of school leadership, collaborative teacher forums, and parental involvement have created a sustainable learning ecosystem that supports both academic and character development in students.

Overall, this study highlights that TQM is not merely a managerial framework but also a transformative approach that can elevate the quality of Arabic language learning. By fostering innovation, accountability, and stakeholder participation, MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin provides a model for how Islamic educational institutions can adapt TQM principles to strengthen teaching and learning processes. These findings contribute not only to the development of Arabic education but also to the broader discourse on quality management in Islamic schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Arabic language learning at MTs Ma'ariful Ulum Banyuasin has been applied comprehensively and consistently. Collaborative lesson planning, active and communicative teaching strategies, and reflective evaluation practices show that the essential principles of TQM are well integrated into instructional activities. These practices have fostered gradual and sustainable improvements in learning quality, positioning TQM as a practical and adaptable approach in the context of Arabic language education.

A particularly striking discovery is that despite limited technological resources and occasional resistance from some teachers, the adoption of TQM principles still had a significant positive impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. This demonstrates that strong commitment, collaboration, and reflective practice among educators can effectively compensate for infrastructural and organizational shortcomings. It also reveals that TQM's strength lies not only in its managerial dimension but also in its ability to empower teachers to create meaningful, student-centered learning experiences even in challenging conditions.

This study is limited in scope, as it focuses on a single institution and employs a primarily qualitative approach, which may restrict the generalizability of its findings. Future research should adopt quantitative or

mixed-method approaches to provide empirical evidence of TQM's impact across different educational contexts. Moreover, comparative studies between institutions with varying resources could enrich the understanding of TQM's adaptability. Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the discourse on educational quality management by showing how TQM principles—traditionally applied in organizational contexts—can be effectively contextualized in classroom practice, offering both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for sustainable educational improvement.

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Author Contribution Statement

MH contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the research design, and overall coordination of the project. W was responsible for data collection, classroom observations, and initial drafting of the manuscript. J contributed to data analysis, critical revisions, and final editing of the article. All authors have read and approved the final version of this manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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