

Management of Service Quality Improvement in Junior High Schools: A Total Quality Management (TQM) Perspective

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Abstract

Total Quality Management (TQM) in public schools refers to the application of integrated quality management principles to improve the quality of education and services provided to students and stakeholders. This study aims to examine the management of educational service quality improvement at SMP N 1 Batanghari District through the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach. In the context of education, the need for comprehensive service quality in terms of academics, character, and spirituality is of utmost importance. TQM is viewed as a relevant managerial approach because it prioritizes the principles of continuous improvement, customer focus, visionary leadership, and the participation of all elements of the organization. This study employs qualitative methods and library research by reviewing various relevant academic literature, including books, national and international journals, and educational policy documents.

The study's findings indicate that the implementation of TQM principles at SMP N 1 Batanghari Subdistrict can holistically improve the quality of educational services. This is reflected in adaptive school leadership, participatory management, continuous improvement of teacher competencies, and data-driven evaluation. Furthermore, the integration of formal educational values into every stage of quality management gives the school a comparative advantage in shaping students' character to excel both spiritually and academically. Therefore, TQM is not merely a technical strategy but also an integral part of the institution's educational mission that strengthens the identity of modern Islamic education.

Keywords

Keyword 1; Management 2; School 3; Total Quality Management (TQM)



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation for building civilization and improving the quality of human resources. In the midst of the current era of globalization and digital competition, educational institutions face significant challenges in continuously improving the quality of the services they provide. The community's need for education that is not only academically

excellent but also strong in moral and spiritual values makes quality management an aspect that cannot be ignored. Total Quality Management (TQM) in schools is one model of service quality management that can respond to these needs by integrating the national curriculum and character development in an integrated manner (Arifin, 2009, p. 115).

The existence of public junior high schools within the community does not necessarily guarantee ideal service quality without being supported by a professional and well-directed management system. Many formal educational institutions experience quality stagnation and even declining public trust due to weak quality management systems, limited service innovation, and the absence of measurable quality standards that are comprehensively implemented. This is where the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) becomes highly important. TQM is a managerial approach oriented toward continuous improvement, customer (stakeholder) satisfaction, and the active and participatory involvement of all components of an institution (Deming, 1986, p. 23).

The implementation of TQM in educational environments has been proven effective in improving organizational performance in various professional educational institutions (Sallis & Slack, 1992, p. 45). However, how this approach is implemented within the context of educational institutions, particularly at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, remains a major question that has not been sufficiently addressed scientifically. This issue is interesting to investigate further because the school has a unique complexity of services, ranging from academic learning and student character development to social and spiritual services.

Total Quality Management (TQM) in public schools refers to the application of integrated quality management principles to improve the quality of education and services provided to students and other stakeholders. TQM in the context of public schools aims to create a culture of continuous quality improvement, focus on student satisfaction, and involve all components of the school.

Furthermore, there is an urgency to examine how modern management-based TQM principles can be harmoniously integrated with Islamic character values among children. From an Islamic perspective, quality (*al-jawdah*) is a manifestation of the concept of *ihsan*, which means performing work as well as possible and with full responsibility (Shihab, 2001, p. 275). Values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *musyawarah* (deliberation), *istiqamah* (steadfastness), and honesty are essentially highly consistent with the spirit of TQM. Therefore, the integration of TQM principles and Islamic teachings is not a contradiction but rather a mutually reinforcing synergy.

Based on this background, this study will comprehensively examine how educational service quality improvement management is implemented at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, through the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach. The primary focus

is to explore the strategies employed, the obstacles encountered, and the actual impact of TQM implementation on the overall quality of educational services.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive method. The descriptive method aims to provide a comprehensive overview of current practices and applications regarding generative AI in learning, while identifying the need to develop a more holistic learning model (Sugiyono, 2023). The study also integrates Total Quality Management (TQM) theories as a foundation for developing an integrated service model. Data collection was conducted in stages using three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations aimed to identify the actual conditions of TQM implementation in both instruction and student services. Data analysis was performed using a thematic analysis approach comprising several stages. The initial step involved coding data from observations, interviews, and documents to identify preliminary categories. Subsequently, key themes were identified based on patterns and relationships emerging from the data. Data triangulation was employed to ensure consistency across the findings from observations, interviews, and documents.

Validation also involved confirming findings with informants through a "member checking" process. Newly emerging data were iteratively compared with existing data to refine the findings. Data validity was ensured through the triangulation of techniques, sources, and time. Technique triangulation involved combining results from observations, interviews, and documents. Source triangulation entailed comparing data obtained from the school principal, teachers, and students. Time triangulation involved collecting data at different intervals to assess the consistency of findings. Additionally, a peer debriefing process was conducted by soliciting input from experts to enhance validity. Conclusions were drawn inductively based on the data analysis findings. Emerging key patterns were analyzed to generate more specific findings, and each conclusion was cross-verified against existing data to ensure logical coherence and consistency. Through this approach, the study not only generates theory but also makes a tangible contribution to the implementation of TQM in schools, thereby enhancing the quality of education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Total Quality Management (TQM) and Quality Culture

TQM strongly emphasizes the importance of a quality culture, namely a collective mental attitude and behavior committed to achieving the highest possible quality in every activity. In schools, this quality culture must be instilled through clear policies, continuous training, reward and punishment systems, as well as open and participatory communication. The implementation of a quality culture within formal educational institutions that apply TQM includes the following:

1. Teachers are committed to continuous learning and developing effective learning strategies.
2. The Head of Department serves as a role model in servant leadership.
3. The school conducts regular self-assessment as a basis for strategic decision-making.
4. Assessment is not only oriented toward student learning outcomes, but also toward processes, satisfaction, and long-term impacts (Arikunto, 2012, p. 88).

B. Challenges of TQM Implementation in Schools

Although it offers various advantages, the implementation of TQM in education does not always run smoothly. Several challenges that are frequently encountered include:

1. Resistance to change among teachers and staff who are not accustomed to a culture of evaluation and quality improvement.
 2. Limited resources, such as budgets, human resources, and facilities that support the implementation of quality programs.
 3. Insufficient training and mentoring in understanding and implementing TQM principles.
 4. Insufficient reward systems that encourage motivation to innovate and achieve.
- Therefore, the success of TQM in educational institutions is highly dependent on leadership commitment, institutional policy support, and the empowerment of all parties within the organization.

C. Relevance of TQM to Public Schools

SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, has an advantage because it possesses managerial flexibility and independence in policy-making. This enables TQM implementation to be carried out in a more adaptive and contextual manner (Zuriah, 2008, p. 98). Educational values in public schools encompass various aspects aimed at developing quality student character. These values include religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendliness/communication, peacefulness, reading habits, environmental awareness, social concern, and responsibility, all of which are highly consistent with TQM principles.

By combining general educational values and Islamic values while adopting modern management, TQM becomes a highly relevant framework for schools seeking to improve educational quality holistically. TQM implementation enables schools to remain competitive, professional, and grounded in spirituality while facing the dynamics of global education.

D. Implementation of *Total Quality Management* (TQM) in Improving the Quality of Educational Services in Schools

The implementation of *Total Quality Management* (TQM) at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, represents a strategic approach to creating an excellent, integrated, and sustainable educational system. In the context of educational institutions, TQM is not merely understood as a managerial technique but also as an integrated value system that upholds quality, professionalism, and blessings (Suyadi, 2016, p. 90).

SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, has distinctive characteristics, such as the integration of religious and general knowledge, the development of independent student character, and a holistic learning approach. Therefore, the implementation of TQM at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, must be adjusted to the school's vision and mission, which emphasize academic and spiritual quality. In improving service quality, several activities must be carried out by the school, namely:

1. Structured Quality Planning

The initial step in implementing TQM in schools is to design systematic and long-term-oriented quality planning. The quality plan includes a quality vision, strategic objectives, achievement indicators, and implementation strategies. In practice, quality planning involves:

- a. Identifying the needs of stakeholders (students, parents, and teachers).
- b. Conducting a SWOT analysis of the institution to determine quality development priorities.
- c. Developing a quality-based School Strategic Plan (RENSTRA).
- d. Mapping educational service standards based on the National Education Standards (SNP) (Zuriah, 2008, p. 103).

Quality planning at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, is not merely a formality but serves as the primary reference in daily management processes and strategic decision-making.

2. Implementation of TQM in School Operational Activities

In the operational context, TQM is implemented through the application of quality principles throughout all aspects of school activities, including:

- a. Learning: Teachers actively use active learning methods, integrative approaches between science and religion, and authentic assessment emphasizing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.
- b. Human Resource Management: The recruitment, development, and evaluation processes of teachers and staff are conducted based on competencies and Islamic values.
- c. Educational Services: School administration, such as information services, financial services, student affairs, and library services, is managed based on the principles of transparency, accuracy, and speed.
- d. Relations with parents and the community: Through parenting programs, *majlis taklim*, and parent-student communication forums, SMP N 1 Batanghari applies the principle of customer satisfaction (Mulyasa, 2013, p. 133).

Thus, quality does not merely become a slogan but becomes a work culture embedded in daily activities.

3. Quality Monitoring and Evaluation

Quality monitoring at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, is conducted through a structured monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In the TQM approach, evaluation is carried out periodically and participatively, involving all elements of the school. Several evaluation instruments used include:

- a. Teacher Performance Evaluation (EKG) and classroom supervision conducted by the principal.

- b. Service satisfaction assessment by students and parents through questionnaires or discussion forums.
- c. Evaluation of school programs through management review meetings (RTM).
- d. Internal educational quality audits conducted by the school quality assurance team (Anwar, 2017, p. 74).

This evaluation is not only used to assess success but, more importantly, to identify root causes and formulate appropriate corrective actions.

E. The Role of the Principal in Implementing TQM in Schools

In implementing *Total Quality Management* (TQM) at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, the role of the principal is extremely vital. The principal is not merely an administrator but also a transformational leader who promotes the establishment of a quality culture based on Islamic values. The effectiveness of TQM implementation is largely determined by the principal's leadership in designing the vision, directing change, empowering teachers and staff, and overseeing the continuous evaluation process (Fattah, 2013, p. 101).

1. Visionary Leader and Driver of Quality Culture

The principal of SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, must possess a strategic vision that integrates quality objectives with the Islamic mission. The principal becomes the main actor in internalizing TQM values such as total involvement, long-term commitment to continuous improvement, and orientation toward customer satisfaction (parents and students). As a transformational leader, the principal acts as:

- a. A role model for Islamic quality culture, such as discipline, integrity, and sincerity in work.
- b. A driver of change, capable of motivating all stakeholders to work together to improve service quality.

- c. A creator of a positive work climate, supporting open communication, collaboration, and active participation (Sagala, 2013, p. 77).
- d. Without strong leadership, the spirit of TQM can easily fade due to the absence of direction and shared inspiration.

2. Manager of the Quality Assurance System

The principal acts as the manager of the internal quality assurance system (SPMI). The principal is responsible for designing, implementing, and supervising the quality system, including standards, quality documents, evaluation mechanisms, and improvement follow-up. This role involves:

- a. Establishing the School Quality Assurance Team (TPM).
- b. Developing quality documents, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), quality manuals, and evaluation forms.
- c. Supervising the implementation of the PPEPP cycle (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement).
- d. Conducting management review meetings (RTM) periodically to evaluate quality achievements (Directorate General of Islamic Education, 2018, p. 24).

Through these managerial capabilities, the principal ensures that the educational process operates according to the agreed quality standards.

3. Empowerment of Teachers and Educational Personnel

The quality of educational services is highly dependent on the quality of its human resources. In this regard, the principal acts as an empowerer who encourages the professional growth of teachers and staff. The strategies implemented include:

- a. Providing regular professional development training and workshops.
- b. Providing feedback based on performance evaluation data.
- c. Establishing teacher learning communities as a means of reflection and learning innovation.
- d. Encouraging mentoring and coaching cultures among teachers.

This empowerment is an integral part of TQM because institutional quality improvement cannot be achieved without increasing the capacity of the individuals involved in the organization (Uyun, 2016, p. 88).

4. Communication and Stakeholder Participation Mediator

TQM emphasizes the importance of active participation by all stakeholders. The principal of SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, must establish harmonious communication with teachers, students, parents, and the surrounding community. This responsibility includes:

- a. Establishing a two-way communication system, such as parent forums, teacher evaluation meetings, and satisfaction surveys.
- b. Translating community aspirations into school policies.
- c. Creating policy transparency and involving members of the school community in decision-making.

Healthy communication becomes a strong foundation for the sustainability of a quality culture within the school (Sallis, 2002, p. 102).

5. Innovation Agent and Strategic Decision-Maker

The principal of SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, is required to be responsive to changes in the times, including technological developments, labor market needs, and parental expectations. Therefore, the principal must become an innovation agent who is willing to make strategic decisions based on data. This role is realized through:

- a. Developing an adaptive curriculum that integrates religion and science.
- b. Promoting the digitalization of academic and administrative services.
- c. Managing school resources optimally to improve service efficiency and effectiveness.
- d. Developing an objective and fair reward and punishment system.

Through this role, the principal ensures that the school not only survives but also grows and excels amid competition among educational institutions (Daryanto, 2015, p. 69). The principal in TQM is not merely an administrative figure but a central figure in creating positive change. The success of TQM implementation at SMP N 1 Batanghari District, East Lampung, is highly determined by the extent to which the principal is able to integrate modern

management values with Islamic principles, establish a high-quality work culture, and direct all school components to grow together in the spirit of continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical analysis presented, it can be concluded that the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles to the management of educational service quality at SMP N 1, Batanghari District, East Lampung, is highly relevant in the context of modern education. TQM offers a systematic and sustainable approach to quality enhancement that encompasses all elements of the school—ranging from planning, implementation, and evaluation to follow-up actions. TQM emphasizes the involvement of the entire school community—including leadership, teachers, educational staff, students, and parents—in fostering a culture of quality. The quality improvement process undertaken is not merely a short-term endeavor but rather part of a cycle of continuous improvement. This is evident across various aspects, such as principal leadership, teacher participation, instructional management, data utilization, and comprehensive evaluation of educational service inputs, processes, and outputs.

This literature-based study demonstrates that TQM principles—such as customer satisfaction, fact-based decision-making, teamwork, and a commitment to quality—are highly suitable for implementation in public schools. This is particularly true given that such institutions aim not only for academic excellence but also for the development of character and spiritual values, alongside the provision of comprehensive, high-quality services to students and the community.

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