



Internalizing Educational Quality Values: Evaluation and Principal Managerial Strategies at SMA Darussalam Medan

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Abstract

School quality improvement is often constrained not by the absence of formal quality-assurance instruments, but by a gap between institutional quality standards and how those standards are understood and enacted by teachers. This study examines how educational quality values are internalized through School Self-Evaluation (Evaluasi Diri Sekolah/EDS) and the principal's managerial strategies at SMA Darussalam Medan. Using qualitative field research with a single-site case orientation, data were derived from in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and school committee representatives, limited participatory observation of teaching and supervision, and institutional documents, including the School Development Plan (RPS), EDS reports, and teacher qualification records. The data were triangulated across sources and techniques and analyzed through iterative condensation, EDS-informed categorization, thematic comparison, and interpretive synthesis. The findings identify a connected mechanism rather than a single managerial intervention. Participatory planning creates shared ownership of quality goals; EDS functions as an evidence-informed diagnostic mechanism that identifies teacher-development and staffing needs; and the principal translates these needs into professional development, staffing responses, external advocacy, and the internalization of *itqān* as an Islamic ethic of professional thoroughness and responsibility. The case also reveals tensions: differences in quality awareness, continued reliance on teacher-centered instruction among some teachers, and shortages of permanent teachers. Recruiting honorary teachers helps maintain instructional continuity but introduces sustainability, financing, employment-status, and professional-quality trade-offs. The study contributes a context-sensitive explanation of how technical quality-assurance routines and value-based professional ethics can interact in a resource-constrained Islamic school.

Keywords: *School Self-Evaluation; Quality Internalization; Principal Leadership; Management.*

Abstrak: Peningkatan mutu sekolah sering kali terkendala bukan karena tidak adanya instrumen penjaminan mutu formal, melainkan akibat kesenjangan antara standar mutu institusional dan pemahaman serta penerapan standar tersebut oleh para guru. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana nilai-nilai mutu pendidikan diinternalisasikan melalui Evaluasi Diri Sekolah (EDS) dan strategi manajerial kepala sekolah di SMA Darussalam Medan. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian lapangan kualitatif yang berorientasi pada studi kasus tunggal, data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah, guru, dan perwakilan komite sekolah; observasi partisipatif terbatas terhadap kegiatan pembelajaran dan supervisi; serta dokumen institusional seperti Rencana Pengembangan Sekolah (RPS), laporan EDS, dan catatan kualifikasi guru. Data divalidasi melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan tahapan kondensasi data yang berulang,

kategorisasi berbasis EDS, perbandingan tematik, dan sintesis interpretatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya mekanisme yang saling terhubung, bukan sekadar intervensi manajerial tunggal. Perencanaan partisipatif menciptakan rasa kepemilikan bersama terhadap tujuan mutu; EDS berfungsi sebagai mekanisme diagnostik berbasis bukti untuk mengidentifikasi kebutuhan pengembangan guru dan ketenagakerjaan; dan kepala sekolah menerjemahkan kebutuhan tersebut ke dalam program pengembangan profesional, langkah-langkah terkait ketenagakerjaan, advokasi eksternal, serta internalisasi nilai *itqān* sebagai etika Islam yang menekankan ketelitian dan tanggung jawab profesional. Studi kasus ini juga mengungkap adanya ketegangan, seperti perbedaan tingkat kesadaran akan mutu, ketergantungan pada pembelajaran yang berpusat pada guru di kalangan sebagian tenaga pengajar, serta kekurangan guru tetap. Perekrutan guru honorer membantu menjaga keberlanjutan pembelajaran, namun juga memunculkan dilema terkait keberlangsungan jangka panjang, pembiayaan, status kepegawaian, dan kualitas profesional. Penelitian ini memberikan penjelasan yang peka terhadap konteks mengenai bagaimana rutinitas teknis penjaminan mutu dan etika profesional berbasis nilai dapat saling berinteraksi di sekolah Islam yang memiliki keterbatasan sumber daya.

Kata Kunci: *Evaluasi Diri Sekolah; Internalisasi Mutu; Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah; Manajemen.*

INTRODUCTION

Improving teacher quality is a central problem in school management because formal standards, regulations, and development programs do not automatically become everyday professional practices. In school-based management and quality-management traditions, the principal is expected to connect strategic planning, teacher development, supervision, and organizational culture (Fomba et al., 2023; Karoso et al., 2024). The unresolved academic problem is therefore not simply whether schools possess quality-assurance mechanisms, but how managerial processes convert institutional standards into shared beliefs, routines, and professional conduct among teachers. This distinction is important because a school may comply administratively with planning and evaluation requirements while still experiencing uneven quality awareness, conventional teaching practices, or staffing constraints.

The source case illustrates this implementation problem. At SMA Darussalam Medan, school documents and field accounts indicate three recurring concerns: variation in teachers' quality awareness and work ethos, continued reliance by some teachers on lecture-dominated and one-way instruction, and shortages of permanent teachers caused by retirement, changing class-group needs, and subject-specific staffing demands. These conditions are not presented as evidence of institutional failure; rather, they provide an empirical setting in which the interaction between formal quality assurance and day-to-day managerial adaptation can be examined. The importance of the case lies in the school's simultaneous use of participatory

planning, EDS, teacher development, short-term staffing responses, and Islamic professional values to manage these pressures.

Prior scholarship offers several relevant but only partially connected explanations. Studies of principal leadership emphasize strategic leadership, intellectual stimulation, supervision, and teacher competency development (Anwar, 2022; Marce et al., 2020; Sholeh, 2021). Research on school-based management stresses stakeholder participation and decentralized decision making (Ela et al., 2023), while quality-management scholarship emphasizes systematic evaluation and continuous improvement (Azizah & Witri, 2021; Puspita & Andriani, 2021). These approaches should not be treated as a simple binary between bureaucratic control and humanistic transformation. In practice, school quality management often combines formal standards and accountability with participatory leadership, professional learning, and cultural or ethical reinforcement. This study therefore avoids a rigid theoretical dichotomy and instead examines how these mechanisms are combined in one school context.

A more specific research gap concerns the relationship among three processes that are frequently studied separately: internal quality evaluation, principal managerial action, and the internalization of professional quality values. Existing studies commonly focus on what principals do to improve teacher competence, how school-based management supports participation, or how quality instruments evaluate school performance. Less attention has been given to the mechanism through which EDS-derived diagnoses are translated into managerial responses and then reinforced through a value-based professional ethic within an Islamic secondary-school setting. In particular, the role of *itqān*—understood here as careful, responsible, and high-quality performance of entrusted work—has rarely been examined as an organizational mechanism that may connect technical quality assurance with teachers' internal motivation.

Accordingly, this article analyzes how EDS, principal managerial strategies, and the internalization of quality values interact at SMA Darussalam Medan. The study asks how participatory planning and EDS identify quality priorities; how the principal converts these priorities into professional-development, staffing, and external-collaboration strategies; and how *itqān* is embedded in the professional meaning of teachers' work. By linking these processes, the study seeks to explain the pathway from evaluation to managerial action and from managerial action to the social and ethical internalization of quality.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative field research with a single-site case orientation at SMA Darussalam Medan. The case was selected because the school combines formal internal quality-assurance routines with participatory

governance, teacher-development initiatives, staffing adaptation, and Islamic professional values. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and school committee representatives who were purposively included because of their direct involvement in planning, implementation, supervision, and school-quality processes. Field observation focused on the learning climate and supervisory practices through limited participation. Secondary data consisted of the School Development Plan (RPS), EDS reports, and teacher qualification records. The source manuscript does not report the exact number of informants or the precise fieldwork dates; these details were therefore not reconstructed or invented in the revision and remain items that should be completed from the researchers' original field records before resubmission.

Data collection combined interview, observation, and document review so that managerial claims could be compared across evidence types. Interview material was used to identify perceptions of planning, teacher competence, staffing constraints, professional development, and quality values. Observation was used to assess whether the described supervisory and instructional patterns were visible in practice, while documentary evidence was used to trace formal planning and EDS-related quality priorities. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation (principal, teachers, committee representatives, and institutional documents) and technique triangulation (interviews, observations, and document analysis). No verbatim quotations are introduced in this revised manuscript because the source article does not contain transcribed excerpts that can be verified against the original recordings or transcripts.

Analysis was iterative rather than merely 'descriptive.' First, interview notes, observation records, and documents were condensed around recurring issues. Second, the data were categorized using EDS-relevant domains, particularly the standards for educators and education personnel and school management. Third, within-category coding identified recurring patterns such as participatory planning, quality-awareness disparity, teacher-centered pedagogy, staffing shortages, professional mentoring, *itqān*-based work ethics, and external advocacy. Fourth, patterns were compared across sources to distinguish convergent evidence from single-source assertions. Fifth, the resulting themes were interpreted using two primary analytical lenses: School-Based Management (SBM), to examine participation and decentralized school-level action, and continuous quality improvement/evidence-informed management, to examine the evaluation–diagnosis–action cycle. Human-resource resilience and Islamic professional ethics are used as secondary concepts only where they directly illuminate the staffing and *itqān* findings. This narrower framework responds to the risk of theoretical overload and keeps the interpretation aligned with the empirical themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participatory Strategic Planning as an Entry Point for Quality Internalization

Strategic planning at SMA Darussalam Medan places teacher quality within the School Development Plan rather than treating professional development as an isolated or incidental program. The school's vision emphasizes intelligent, resilient, and morally grounded graduates who can respond to scientific and technological change. In the field evidence, this vision was translated into teacher-development priorities, student-development programs, and efforts to strengthen the academic and religious culture of the school. The analytical significance of this finding is that quality values enter organizational life through planning before they appear as supervision or evaluation practices.

The planning process is described as participatory. The principal involves teachers, the school committee, the foundation, and community elements in discussions concerning the vision, mission, and school work plans. This pattern is consistent with SBM, which treats participation as a source of legitimacy and local problem solving (Ela et al., 2023). In this case, participation matters because teacher-development priorities are connected to instructional problems identified by those who implement the programs. The available evidence supports a cautious interpretation: participatory planning appears to create shared ownership and collective responsibility, but the study does not quantify the degree of participation or its causal effect on teacher performance.

This interpretation shifts the discussion away from an overly binary contrast between top-down and participatory leadership. Formal standards and managerial direction remain present, but they are combined with consultation and collective formulation. The case therefore suggests a hybrid mechanism: institutional standards provide direction, while participation helps translate those standards into locally meaningful priorities.

EDS as an Evidence-Informed Diagnostic Mechanism

EDS functions as the main internal evaluation mechanism through which the school identifies quality priorities. The process is linked to the School Development Team and includes school leaders, teacher representatives, the committee, parents, and supervisory assistance from the provincial education authority. The original manuscript also indicates that EDS is conducted periodically and that its results inform the school work plan and budget. These features position EDS as more than an administrative checklist: it becomes part of an evaluation–planning–action cycle.

The reviewer appropriately questioned the earlier claim that EDS maps teacher competence 'objectively and measurably' because the manuscript does not present numeric EDS scores. The revised analysis therefore limits the claim to evidence actually reported in the study. Three EDS-related diagnostic

patterns are visible in the source material: (1) teacher qualifications were generally reported to meet the minimum undergraduate level, although formal qualifications did not always correspond to student-centered pedagogical practice; (2) some teachers continued to rely on lectures and one-way communication, indicating a pedagogical-development need; and (3) the number of permanent teachers did not always match subject and class-group requirements, indicating a staffing-capacity problem. These findings show how EDS-related domains can organize institutional diagnosis without implying unavailable quantitative precision.

The managerial value of EDS lies in how identified needs are translated into decisions. Needs related to teaching methods, technology use, professional learning, and staffing are carried into school programs and budget discussions. This use of evaluation evidence is consistent with continuous quality improvement: evaluation is meaningful when it leads to prioritization, intervention, and subsequent review (Rusdiana et al., 2025). The case thus supports a process-oriented interpretation of EDS as an evidence-informed diagnostic mechanism rather than a stand-alone measurement instrument.

Competency Disparities and Resource Constraints

The most important field finding is that formal quality systems coexist with uneven professional readiness. Cross-source patterns in the manuscript identify differences in teachers' quality awareness and work ethos, continued use of conventional instruction by some teachers, and staffing shortages in selected subject areas. These themes are treated here as empirical patterns derived from the convergence of interview, observation, and documentary material, rather than as universal claims about all teachers in the school.

The first pattern concerns quality awareness. Some teachers appear to interpret teaching primarily as subject-matter delivery, whereas school leadership expects continuous updating of instructional competence, teaching resources, and technology use. The second pattern concerns pedagogy. Although most teachers were reported to hold at least an undergraduate qualification and some held postgraduate degrees, the field account still identifies lecture-dominated and one-way instruction among part of the teaching staff. This finding reinforces the distinction between formal qualification and enacted pedagogical competence (Zaqiah et al., 2024). The third pattern is structural: retirement, changes in class groups, and subject-distribution needs create periods in which permanent staffing is insufficient. This can increase teaching loads and reduce time for reflection, training, and instructional innovation.

Taken together, these patterns show why internalization is a more useful concept than compliance alone. A quality standard may be formally recognized but unevenly enacted. The principal's challenge is therefore to

align institutional expectations, professional capacity, and available staffing. This is where the case moves from evaluation to managerial intervention.

Internalizing *Itqān* Through Professional Development

The distinctive contribution of the case is the use of *itqān* as an ethical language for professional quality. In the school's managerial practice, *itqān* is not treated only as a religious slogan. It is linked to recurring professional-development practices: routine evaluation meetings, academic supervision, reflective discussion, interpersonal coaching, revision of teaching materials, greater openness to educational technology, and encouragement to improve teaching methods. Through these practices, the principal frames careful, responsible, and high-quality performance as both a professional obligation and a form of religious accountability.

The mechanism of internalization can be described in three steps. First, supervisory and evaluative encounters make discrepancies in teaching practice visible. Second, the principal uses persuasive coaching rather than solely punitive control, encouraging teachers to interpret supervision as professional learning. Third, *itqān* supplies a moral vocabulary through which improvement is attached to the meaning of the teaching profession itself. In this sense, quality is reinforced not only through external monitoring but through an effort to develop intrinsic professional responsibility.

The evidence does not permit a causal claim that *itqān* alone changes teacher behavior. However, the field patterns indicate that the value is embedded in concrete managerial routines and professional expectations. This is analytically important because it shows how a technical quality-assurance system can be culturally localized. EDS identifies what needs improvement, while the *itqān* frame helps explain why improvement should matter to teachers beyond administrative compliance.

Human-Resource Resilience: Honorary Teacher Recruitment and Its Trade-offs

When permanent staffing is insufficient, the principal responds by recruiting honorary teachers to maintain instructional continuity. Selection is reported to consider educational background, academic competence, and subject relevance. Newly recruited teachers are then supported through mentoring by senior teachers and participation in internal subject-teacher forums, which help align curriculum interpretation, assessment practice, and organizational culture. These measures indicate an attempt to prevent short-term staffing responses from becoming detached from the school's quality expectations.

The strategy, however, should not be treated as an unqualified success. Recruiting honorary teachers introduces at least four trade-offs. First, continuity may depend on the school's capacity to retain non-permanent staff.

Second, financing creates recurring budget pressure in a private-school context. Third, employment status may affect long-term commitment, career security, and turnover. Fourth, variation in prior experience may create professional-quality risks unless induction, mentoring, and supervision are sustained. These trade-offs mean that honorary recruitment is best understood as an adaptive resilience mechanism rather than a structural solution to teacher supply.

This critical reading strengthens the finding. The principal's action reduces an immediate operational risk, but the long-term quality of the response depends on institutional capacity for financing, professional development, retention, and external staffing advocacy. Human-resource resilience in this case is therefore provisional and relational: it is produced through recruitment, mentoring, and continued efforts to obtain broader institutional support.

External Advocacy and Institutional Collaboration

The third managerial response is external advocacy. The principal communicates staffing needs, requests support or redistribution where possible, consults on policy changes, and coordinates access to teacher-development programs with the relevant provincial education authority. The school also maintains working relationships with the foundation, school committee, parents, and educational communities. These activities matter because some quality problems—especially teacher supply—cannot be resolved entirely through internal management.

Within the narrower theoretical architecture adopted in this revision, external collaboration is interpreted as an extension of SBM rather than as a separate full-scale collaborative-governance framework. School autonomy does not mean organizational isolation; it includes the capacity to mobilize relationships and resources that support locally identified priorities. The case therefore shows that the evaluation–action cycle can extend beyond the school boundary when internally diagnosed needs require regulatory, staffing, or professional-development support.

Across the findings, the most coherent explanatory model is: participatory planning creates shared quality priorities; EDS identifies gaps and organizes diagnosis; the principal converts diagnosis into professional development, staffing adaptation, and external advocacy; and *itqān* reinforces the professional meaning of quality. These mechanisms interact rather than operate independently. The model does not establish causality, but it offers an analytically grounded account of how a resource-constrained Islamic school attempts to move from quality standards to quality practices.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the internalization of educational quality values

at SMA Darussalam Medan is organized through an interconnected sequence of participatory planning, EDS-based diagnosis, managerial response, and value-based professional reinforcement. Participatory formulation of school priorities appears to support shared ownership; EDS provides a structured basis for recognizing teacher-development and staffing problems; and the principal responds through supervision, reflective professional development, honorary-teacher recruitment, and external advocacy. Within these processes, *itqān* functions as a culturally and religiously meaningful ethic that connects quality improvement with teachers' sense of professional responsibility.

The findings also indicate important limitations and tensions. Quality awareness and pedagogical practice are uneven, permanent-teacher shortages create workload and continuity pressures, and honorary-teacher recruitment involves financing, retention, employment-status, and professional-development trade-offs. For this reason, the study does not claim that the identified strategies 'prove' or causally guarantee quality sustainability. Rather, they illustrate an adaptive managerial configuration through which one school seeks to maintain and improve quality under resource constraints.

The study is limited by its single-site qualitative design and by incomplete reporting in the source manuscript regarding the exact number of informants, fieldwork dates, and verbatim interview excerpts. The findings should therefore be interpreted as analytically transferable insights rather than statistically generalizable conclusions. Future studies could compare multiple Islamic and non-Islamic schools, incorporate longitudinal EDS indicators, and examine how value-based professional ethics interact with measurable changes in pedagogy, teacher retention, and student outcomes.

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