

Strengthening Educational Quality through Participatory Quality Management Assistance at MTs Al-Islam Poncol, Magetan

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Abstract. MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol, located in Magetan, faces several institutional challenges, including low student enrollment, poor public perception, limited infrastructure, and suboptimal service quality from its staff. These issues have resulted in diminished community trust and reduced interest from prospective students. This community service program aimed to enhance institutional capacity and improve the quality of educational services through the implementation of participatory and sustainable quality management practices. The program was carried out in several stages: initial coordination and socialization, a comprehensive SWOT analysis, in-depth discussions to identify priority issues, and training on Service Excellence and the 5R work culture (*Ringkas, Rapi, Resik, Rawat, Rajin* - sort, set in order, shine, maintain, and discipline). The program yielded tangible results, including increased awareness and commitment among school staff, improved collaboration with stakeholders, and better service behavior within the school. Notably, teachers and administrators demonstrated a readiness to adopt quality management principles into daily operations. The physical and behavioral changes observed indicate early signs of institutional transformation. The program also fostered a culture of continuous improvement and built a foundation for long-term development. As a result, this initiative has contributed to rebuilding the madrasah's reputation, strengthening stakeholder satisfaction, and enhancing its potential to become a competitive Islamic educational institution. The participatory approach and collaboration with academic experts ensured that the program was well-targeted, contextually relevant, and has the potential to be sustained and replicated in similar educational settings.

Keywords: Quality Management; Muhammadiyah Madrasah Assistance; Total Quality Management; Service Excellence.

1. Introduction

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive philosophy of continuous improvement that emphasizes the involvement of all members of an organization in enhancing processes, products, and services. It provides practical tools and systematic approaches for educational institutions to effectively meet the evolving needs, desires, and expectations of their stakeholders including students, parents, staff, and the wider community both in the present and in the future (Nasution et al., 2023). By adopting TQM principles, schools and madrasahs can foster a culture of quality awareness,

accountability, and proactive problem solving (Agustina Muliati et al., 2022). In the context of Muhammadiyah educational institutions, quality management is not only an operational strategy but also a fundamental agenda aimed at ensuring sustainability, academic excellence, and ongoing attractiveness to prospective students. This approach supports long term institutional growth by continuously aligning educational services with stakeholder expectations and responding adaptively to challenges in the educational environment (Kaiseroglou & Sfakianaki, 2020). Through consistent application of TQM, Muhammadiyah madrasahs can enhance their reputation, improve internal processes, and ultimately contribute to the broader mission of providing high quality Islamic education that meets modern standards.

Currently, MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol, located in Magetan, reflects a concerning lack of attention to educational quality. Based on recent observations, the school serves only 66 students across grades VII to IX, with 11 teaching staff. Several factors contribute to the low enrollment, one of which is the institution's unattractive public image. The attitude and service quality of teachers, school leadership, and staff are often perceived as unfriendly toward parents and the surrounding community. Additionally, the lack of responsiveness to visitors has created a negative perception of the school, affecting parents' interest in enrolling their children. Work ethic in education is a key factor in building quality institutions (Martin et al., 2021). However, the work discipline and commitment of some teachers remain weak. Reports indicate that teachers often arrive late, some classes are left unattended due to absences, and several teachers are employed at other institutions, limiting their focus and willingness to engage in additional efforts to improve the quality of services (Gremyr et al., 2021). These issues prevent the school from achieving the desired educational standards.

In terms of the learning process, the school continues to primarily rely on teacher-centered instruction, where the teacher directs the learning and students play a more passive role. There is limited use of innovative and engaging teaching methods such as interactive activities, collaborative projects, or technology integration (Donkoh et al., 2023). This traditional approach has led to a lack of student motivation, as learners often feel disengaged and uninspired by the lessons (Guidara, 2022). Consequently, the classroom environment becomes less dynamic and less conducive to active learning (Håkansson & Adolfsson, 2022). Over time, these factors have contributed to poor academic performance among students, as their interest and participation in the learning process diminish (Khurniawan et al., 2021). Addressing these issues requires a shift towards more student-centered and varied teaching strategies that promote critical thinking, creativity, and active involvement.

Facilities and infrastructure, which can be readily evaluated by stakeholders such as students, parents, and the community, are noticeably lacking in quality and adequacy. The school environment is frequently untidy and poorly maintained, with classrooms and common areas showing signs of neglect (Hardiansyah, 2022). These conditions create an atmosphere that is not conducive to effective learning and may hinder students' concentration and comfort (Mamabolo et al., 2022). As a result, the overall

impression given to stakeholders is that the educational services provided are of low quality. This situation is especially unfortunate because the school is strategically located in a densely populated area, which offers significant potential for growth and development (Santika et al., 2021). With better facilities and a more supportive environment, the school could become a leading Islamic educational institution in the region, attracting more students and gaining community trust (Khasanah et al., 2023). Improving infrastructure and the learning environment is therefore critical to unlocking this potential and enhancing the school's reputation.

In response to these challenges, a community engagement team from Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo initiated a program focused on assisting MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol in developing its quality management systems. This initiative is part of the university's community service mission and aims to contribute to improving the quality of Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Magetan Regency. The main objective of this program is to help the partner institution overcome its challenges by implementing effective quality management practices. The community partner in this program is the Poncol Branch of Muhammadiyah, which oversees the MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol and operates a stationery and photocopy shop. Given their current conditions, the partner is in great need of academic support to improve the overall quality of education provided at the school.

2. Methodology

2.1. Location and Target Community

This community service activity was conducted at MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol, located in Poncol District, Magetan Regency, East Java. The madrasah operates under the supervision of the Poncol Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PCM) and currently has a relatively small number of students, totaling 66 with 11 educational staff members. The target of this activity includes all elements within the madrasah, such as the principal, teachers, education staff, as well as the PCM Poncol management as the mentoring partner.

2.2. Community Service Activity Design

The design of this community service activity consists of four main stages, namely:

1. Coordination and socialization of the mentoring program,
2. Implementation of SWOT analysis,
3. Discussion of the SWOT analysis results, and
4. Training on Service Excellence and 5R Culture.

These four stages are designed to form a participatory and sustainable internal quality management framework aimed at improving the quality of educational services at the partner madrasah.

2.3. Targets and Participants

The primary target of this activity is to strengthen institutional capacity and improve the quality of educational services at MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol. To achieve these objectives, the program involves various parties who play strategic roles in the development of the madrasah. Participants include the principal, teachers, and educational staff of MTs Al-Islam Poncol as the main executors of education within the school environment. In addition, the management of the Poncol Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PCM) participates as the governing and ownership body of the madrasah. The program is also supported by community service lecturers from Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo who contribute to the planning and implementation of activities. To strengthen the academic substance, an expert team from the Faculty of Islamic Religion, particularly those competent in Educational Management, is involved to provide input and academic-based mentoring. This multi-party collaboration is expected to produce sustainable impacts for improving educational quality at the madrasah.

2.4. Activity Stages

This community service program is implemented through three main stages as follows:

Preparation Stage. At this stage, the service team first identifies the problems faced and the potential possessed by the partner, namely MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol. Based on these findings, a community service program design is developed according to the partner's needs. Internal coordination among the service team members is also conducted to align perceptions and strategies for implementing the activities.

Implementation Stage. The implementation stage includes several key activities starting with the coordination and socialization of the program to the partner on March 23, 2024. This is followed by conducting a SWOT analysis on March 28, 2024, to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the madrasah. The analysis results are then discussed in depth in June 2024 in a forum involving the madrasah, the service team, and experts. The peak of the implementation stage is the training on Service Excellence and the 5R Culture, held on July 6, 2024, as a direct intervention to improve service quality and work culture within the madrasah environment.

Evaluation Stage. The final stage is evaluation, carried out to measure the achievement of the objectives for each activity conducted. Evaluation is performed through participant feedback and observations of changes in attitudes, understanding, and implementation of training results at MTs Al-Islam Poncol. This evaluation enables the service team to assess the program's effectiveness and formulate necessary follow-up actions to ensure the sustainability of positive impacts from this community service activity.

2.5. Approach Method

This activity uses a participatory-collaborative approach. The entire process is designed so that the madrasah as the partner is actively involved in every phase, from problem identification, solution formulation, activity implementation, to the evaluation stage. This approach aims to ensure that the results achieved truly meet the partner's needs and are sustainable after the program ends.

2.6. Evaluation and Measurement Methods

Evaluation is conducted both formatively and summatively. Formative evaluation takes place during the process by observing participant activity and responsiveness, while summative evaluation is conducted at the end of the program through (1) participant satisfaction questionnaires, (2) interviews with madrasah parties, (3) observation of changes in attitudes and service behavior, and (4) documentation of the implementation of training results.

2.7. Implementation Time

This community service program is carried out over the period from March to July 2024, with the following schedule:

1. Coordination and Socialization: March 23, 2024
2. SWOT Analysis: March 28, 2024
3. SWOT Discussion: June 2024

Service Excellence and 5R Training: July 6, 2024.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the implementation of the community service program at MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol, various activities were conducted to assess, plan, and improve the quality of education and institutional management. The program was designed to involve multiple stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, community representatives, and academic experts. Through a series of coordinated steps, the program aimed to identify the current conditions, challenges, and opportunities within the madrasah, and to implement practical interventions for sustainable improvement. This section presents a detailed discussion of the key activities and findings throughout the program stages.

The results of the program reveal important insights into the state of the madrasah's internal management, educational quality, and community engagement. The collaborative approach taken during the activities allowed the team to gather comprehensive data and feedback from various participants, forming the basis for informed decision-making and targeted capacity building. Additionally, the discussions and training sessions helped to raise awareness and foster commitment among stakeholders to uphold continuous quality enhancement. The following subsections will describe the process and outcomes of each major activity conducted within the program,

highlighting how these contributed to the overall objectives of strengthening educational services and institutional quality at MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol.

3.1. Coordination and Socialization of the Assistance Program

The coordination and socialization activity was conducted on March 23, 2024, from 09:30 to 11:45 WIB. This event was attended by 10 participants, including members of the Poncol Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PCM), representatives from the partner madrasah (MTs Al-Islam Poncol), and the community service lecturer team. During this session, detailed information about the community service program was presented, including the objectives, planned activities, and expected outcomes. The team also emphasized the importance of collaboration between the university and the madrasah to achieve sustainable improvements in educational quality.

In addition to presenting the program framework, the lecturers actively engaged with the madrasah representatives to gather their expectations and concerns regarding the assistance to be provided. This two-way communication helped to build mutual understanding and trust between the parties, ensuring that the program would be tailored to the specific needs and conditions of MTs Al-Islam Poncol. Furthermore, the session served as a platform to motivate the madrasah staff and management to participate actively in upcoming activities, creating a sense of shared responsibility for the success of the program. The initial enthusiasm shown by all stakeholders indicated a promising start for the collaborative effort.



Figure 1. Socialization Activity of the Community Service Program
at MTs Muhammadiyah Poncol

Based on the results of this first stage, it was found that there is a strong willingness among the madrasah stakeholders to improve institutional quality, although concerns regarding limited resources and previous experiences of uncoordinated efforts were also expressed. These findings align with research Riani & Ain (2022), which

emphasizes the critical role of early-stage stakeholder engagement and clear communication in the success of educational improvement programs. Moreover, the active involvement of both educational staff and organizational leaders corresponds to the recommendations of Amos et al., (2021), who highlight that collaborative planning enhances the relevance and sustainability of interventions in school settings. This initial coordination thus laid a solid foundation for the subsequent phases of analysis and training in the quality management program.

3.2. Implementation of SWOT Analysis at MTs Al-Islam Poncol Magetan

The SWOT analysis activity was carried out on March 28, 2024, from 09:30 to 12:30 WIB as a follow-up to the previous socialization event. This activity involved key stakeholders, including representatives from the partner madrasah (MTs Al-Islam Geni Langit Poncol), members of the Poncol Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PCM), community service lecturers such as Dr. Nurul Iman, Lc., M.HI, and an expert team from the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, specializing in Education Management, led by Dr. Katni, M.Pd.I.

The main objective of this session was to comprehensively explore and document the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) faced by MTs Al-Islam Poncol. Through structured discussions and collaborative input, the participants identified critical internal and external factors that influence the institution's performance and potential growth. This participatory approach ensured that diverse perspectives from teachers, administrators, and management were incorporated, providing a holistic view of the madrasah's current condition. The results of this SWOT analysis serve as a fundamental basis for developing targeted strategies that leverage internal strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and mitigating threats, ultimately fostering sustainable institutional improvement.



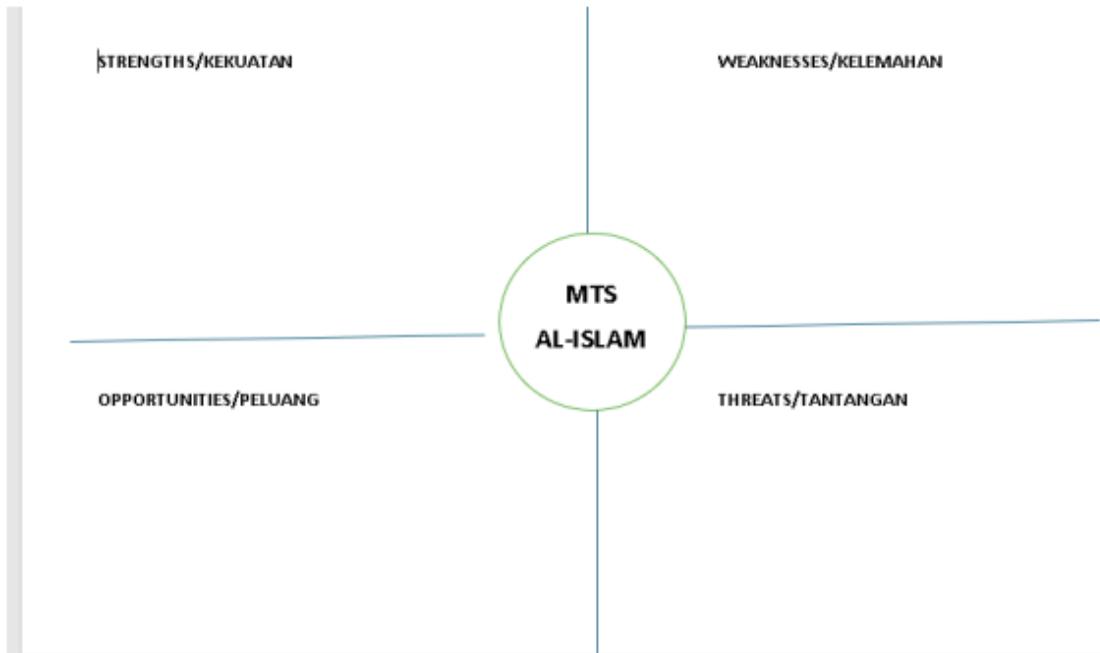


Figure 2. SWOT Analysis Form – Community Service Program for Madrasah Quality Management

Based on the findings from this second stage, it was evident that MTs Al-Islam Poncol possesses several core strengths, such as dedicated teaching staff and strong community support, but also faces challenges including limited infrastructure and resource constraints. Opportunities identified include potential partnerships and community engagement, while threats comprise external competition and policy changes. These results are consistent with the conclusions of Min et al., (2023), who emphasize that a thorough SWOT analysis enables educational institutions to develop realistic and actionable improvement plans grounded in internal capabilities. Furthermore, the inclusive nature of this analysis reflects best practices outlined by Martin et al., (2021), who advocate for collaborative stakeholder involvement to increase commitment and accuracy in institutional assessments. This critical step thus informed the planning of subsequent interventions to optimize madrasah performance.

3.3. Discussion of the Madrasah SWOT Analysis Results

The collected results from the SWOT analysis were subsequently discussed in an internal meeting involving representatives from MTs Al-Islam Poncol, the research team, and experts in madrasah management, notably Dr. Katni, M.Pd.I. This meeting was held on Saturday in June 2024, from 09:00 to 12:00 WIB at the PCM Poncol Hall, Magetan. The main objectives of this discussion session were threefold: first, to classify and organize the SWOT findings systematically; second, to identify any previously overlooked issues or opportunities that emerged from the initial analysis; and third, to initiate new strategic steps aimed at the madrasah's development.

The meeting gathered insights from various stakeholders within the madrasah, including teachers, administrative staff, vice principals, and the head of the madrasah,

which ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the SWOT results. Through this collaborative dialogue, participants critically examined each element of the SWOT matrix, clarifying ambiguities and prioritizing issues for immediate and long-term action. This participatory evaluation fostered a shared understanding of the madrasah's condition and laid the groundwork for consensus-driven decision-making to improve educational quality and institutional capacity.

Strengths		Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possesses a strong motivation to become an excellent madrasah. 2. Teachers demonstrate solid teamwork and collegiality. 3. Adequate school buildings and prayer facilities are available. 4. A well-managed tahfizh program with notable achievements at the district level; many students have memorized three chapters (juz) of the Qur'an. 5. New students receive three sets of uniforms free of charge. 	M T S. A L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategically located, with potential to attract community interest. 2. Proximity to tourist attractions and local batik production centers. 3. Affordable tuition fees.
Weaknesses	- I S L A M	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient facilities and infrastructure, particularly instructional media. 2. A shortage of teaching staff and issues with punctuality and discipline. 3. Absence of administrative staff (duties are held concurrently by teachers, resulting in unattended classes). 4. Limited financial resources and budget constraints. 5. Lack of flagship programs other than tahfizh. 6. Weak madrasah management practices. 7. Some teachers are concurrently teaching at other institutions. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A high number of equivalent-level schools in the Poncol area (seven institutions). 2. Competition from similar madrasahs affiliated with Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). 3. Low public awareness of MTs Al-Islam's existence and profile. 4. Frequent parental complaints regarding mandatory contributions (infak).

Figure 3. SWOT Analysis Results of MTs Al-Islam Poncol Magetan

Based on the discussions held during this stage, it became clear that while the madrasah exhibits significant strengths such as committed staff and community ties, challenges remain in areas like infrastructure modernization and resource allocation. The expert team's input was instrumental in refining the analysis, highlighting subtle internal weaknesses and potential external threats that were initially underappreciated. These findings resonate with the framework proposed by Anwar et al., (2019), which stresses the importance of iterative review and stakeholder engagement in strategic planning. Furthermore, the proactive step of formulating new developmental initiatives aligns with the principles of continuous improvement advocated in educational management literature (Panjaitan et al., 2023). This phase thus served as a critical bridge between analysis and action, ensuring that the madrasah's strategic plans are well-founded and dynamically responsive to real needs.

3.4. Training on Service Excellence and 5R Culture for the Madrasah

The subsequent phase in this community service program was the training on Service Excellence and the 5R Work Culture, specifically targeted at the partner institution, MTs Al-Islam Poncol. The Service Excellence training focused on enhancing the quality of services provided by the madrasah to all stakeholders, including students, parents, and the wider community. The aim was to instill a mindset and practical skills that promote respectful, responsive, and effective service delivery, thereby elevating the overall satisfaction and trust in the madrasah's educational environment.

This training was integrated with the 5R work culture program, which consists of five principles: *Ringkas* (Sort), *Rapi* (Set in order), *Resik* (Shine), *Rawat* (Maintain), and *Rajin* (Discipline). This holistic approach was designed to not only improve service quality but also cultivate an organized, clean, and disciplined work atmosphere that supports sustainable educational excellence. The training was conducted on July 6, 2024, divided into two sessions – the first session from 08:30 to 10:00 WIB and the second from 10:15 to 12:15 WIB. Experienced facilitators led the sessions, including Dr. H. Nurul Iman, Lc., M.HI, who brings over 20 years of experience in madrasah mentorship, and Dr. Katni, M.Pd.I, a respected figure from the Muhammadiyah Ponorogo Education Council (Majelis Dikdasmen). Their expertise ensured that the training content was both theoretically sound and practically applicable to the madrasah's context.





Figure 4. Presentation Atmosphere during the Service Excellence Training at the Madrasah

Based on observations during this training, participants showed active engagement and a positive response to the concepts introduced, indicating readiness to adopt the Service Excellence and 5R principles into their daily routines. This aligns with previous studies, such as those by Martani (2023) on service quality improvement, which emphasize the importance of comprehensive staff training for sustainable service enhancement. Additionally, the integration of 5R culture corresponds with lean management principles found effective in educational institutions (Sibarani, 2023), promoting continuous improvement in work environment and productivity. The trainers' combined approach successfully bridged theory and practice, laying a foundation for long-term cultural change within the madrasah.

4. Conclusion

Based on the entire series of community service activities carried out at MTs Al-Islam Muhammadiyah Poncol, it can be concluded that a participatory and collaborative approach to quality management in education is effective in enhancing institutional capacity and improving the quality of school services. The coordination and socialization phase successfully built a shared understanding among the service team, PCM management, and school stakeholders regarding the objectives and expectations of the mentoring program. Furthermore, the implementation of the SWOT analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, serving as a strong foundation for development planning aligned with the school's internal potential.

The discussion of the SWOT results involving experts and school stakeholders identified previously unexplored strategic aspects and initiated new steps for continuous quality improvement. During the training phase, focusing on improving service quality through Service Excellence and the application of the 5R work culture

had a positive impact on staff attitudes and preparedness to implement higher standards of service and a more orderly, productive work environment. The evaluation showed behavioral changes and increased participant understanding of educational quality management, indicating that this program could serve as a sustainable and adaptive model for school development to meet current educational needs.

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