

Curriculum Management as an Internal Quality Assurance Mechanism: Evidence from an Integrated Islamic Primary School in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum management plays a pivotal role in ensuring educational quality at the school level. Previous studies have predominantly examined curriculum management from an administrative perspective, with limited attention to its function as an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) mechanism. This qualitative case study explores how curriculum management contributes to quality assurance in an Integrated Islamic Primary School in Indonesia. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and teachers. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal four interconnected themes: (1) curriculum planning aligned with the institutional vision, national education standards, and Islamic educational values; (2) integrated curriculum implementation combining the national curriculum with Islamic learning programs and character formation; (3) academic monitoring and supervision as continuous quality control through classroom observation, review of instructional documents, and professional feedback; and (4) curriculum evaluation as a mechanism for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and priorities for continuous improvement. These processes form a continuous quality assurance cycle resembling the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) framework. The study shows that curriculum management functions not merely as an administrative routine, but as a strategic mechanism for maintaining instructional consistency, strengthening institutional identity, and supporting sustainable school improvement. The findings contribute to the literature on educational quality assurance by demonstrating how curriculum management can be operationalized as an internal quality assurance practice in Islamic primary education. Practical implications emphasize teacher capacity, supervision, documented evaluation, and continuous follow-up.

Keywords: Curriculum Management; Internal Quality Assurance; Islamic Primary School; PDCA; Continuous Quality Improvement

ABSTRAK

Manajemen kurikulum memainkan peran penting dalam memastikan kualitas pendidikan di tingkat sekolah. Studi-studi sebelumnya sebagian besar meneliti manajemen kurikulum dari perspektif administratif, dengan perhatian terbatas pada fungsinya sebagai mekanisme Penjaminan Mutu Internal (IQA). Studi kasus kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana manajemen kurikulum berkontribusi pada penjaminan mutu di sebuah Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah bidang kurikulum, dan guru. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña melalui kondensasi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan mengungkapkan empat tema yang saling terkait: (1) perencanaan kurikulum selaras dengan visi institusional, standar pendidikan nasional, dan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam; (2) implementasi kurikulum terpadu yang menggabungkan kurikulum nasional dengan program pembelajaran Islam dan pembentukan

karakter; (3) pemantauan dan pengawasan akademik sebagai kontrol mutu berkelanjutan melalui observasi kelas, peninjauan dokumen pembelajaran, dan umpan balik profesional; dan (4) evaluasi kurikulum sebagai mekanisme untuk mengidentifikasi kekuatan, kelemahan, dan prioritas untuk perbaikan berkelanjutan. Proses-proses ini membentuk siklus penjaminan mutu berkelanjutan yang menyerupai kerangka kerja Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA). Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa manajemen kurikulum berfungsi bukan hanya sebagai rutinitas administratif, tetapi sebagai mekanisme strategis untuk menjaga konsistensi pengajaran, memperkuat identitas institusional, dan mendukung peningkatan sekolah yang berkelanjutan. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang penjaminan mutu pendidikan dengan menunjukkan bagaimana manajemen kurikulum dapat dioperasionalkan sebagai praktik penjaminan mutu internal dalam pendidikan dasar Islam. Implikasi praktis menekankan kapasitas guru, supervisi, evaluasi terdokumentasi, dan tindak lanjut berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Kurikulum; Penjaminan Mutu Internal; Sekolah Dasar Islam; PDCA; Peningkatan Mutu Berkelanjutan

INTRODUCTION

Educational quality has become a major concern for governments, schools, parents, and other educational stakeholders worldwide. Rapid technological development, changing social expectations, curriculum reforms, and increasing demands for accountability require educational institutions to continuously improve the quality of their services. Schools are therefore expected not only to comply with national education standards but also to develop internal mechanisms that enable them to monitor, evaluate, and improve educational processes on a continuous basis. In this context, Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) has become an important approach for strengthening institutional capacity and sustaining educational improvement (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023).

Internal Quality Assurance refers to a systematic process conducted within an educational institution to ensure that its programs, learning activities, resources, and outcomes meet established quality standards. IQA emphasizes continuous planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up improvement. Rather than relying solely on external accreditation or inspection, IQA encourages schools to develop an internal culture of quality in which all members of the institution take responsibility for maintaining and improving educational performance (ENQA, 2021; Sallis, 2014).

At the school level, curriculum management is one of the most important components of Internal Quality Assurance. The curriculum determines the direction of learning, the competencies to be developed, the content to be taught, the instructional strategies to be used, and the assessment processes through which student achievement is evaluated. Consequently, the quality of curriculum management has a direct influence on teaching practices, student learning experiences, and the achievement of institutional goals (Print, 2020; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2023).

Curriculum management generally consists of planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating the curriculum. Curriculum planning involves aligning educational objectives, learning programs, academic schedules, instructional resources, and institutional priorities. Curriculum organization focuses on the distribution of responsibilities, coordination among school leaders and teachers, and the arrangement of learning programs. Curriculum implementation refers to the translation of curriculum documents into actual teaching and learning activities. Supervision and monitoring ensure that implementation remains consistent with institutional objectives and established standards, while curriculum evaluation provides evidence for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement (Hadisaputra et al., 2024).

Although curriculum management has been widely discussed in educational research, previous studies have predominantly examined it from an administrative or managerial perspective. Curriculum management is often described as a set of technical activities related to program planning, teaching implementation, academic scheduling, and evaluation. Limited attention has been given to how these activities collectively function as an Internal Quality Assurance

mechanism. As a result, the relationship between curriculum management and continuous quality improvement at the school level remains insufficiently explored.

Integrating curriculum management with the concept of IQA provides a broader perspective. From this viewpoint, curriculum planning is not merely the preparation of academic documents but the establishment of quality standards and institutional priorities. Curriculum implementation becomes a process of ensuring that planned educational standards are translated into classroom practices. Academic supervision and monitoring function as quality control mechanisms, while curriculum evaluation provides the evidence needed for corrective action and continuous improvement. These processes form a cycle that resembles the Plan–Do–Check–Act framework, in which planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement are carried out continuously.

This perspective is particularly relevant in Integrated Islamic Primary Schools in Indonesia. These schools are required to implement the national curriculum while simultaneously integrating Islamic values, religious learning programs, character education, and institutional priorities. Such integration creates a complex curriculum environment because schools must maintain compliance with national standards while preserving their religious identity. Therefore, effective curriculum management is essential for ensuring coherence between institutional vision, curriculum content, classroom instruction, assessment, and student development.

SDIT Jam'iyyatul Mustaqim Balikpapan provides an important context for examining this issue. The school combines the national curriculum with institutional Islamic programs, including Qur'anic learning and tahfidz activities. Curriculum management is conducted through planning meetings, instructional implementation, academic supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. These activities indicate that curriculum management at the school may function not only as an administrative process but also as an internal mechanism for maintaining instructional consistency and promoting continuous quality improvement.

Accordingly, this study repositions curriculum management as an Internal Quality Assurance mechanism rather than merely an administrative activity. It examines how curriculum planning, integrated curriculum implementation, academic monitoring and supervision, and curriculum evaluation contribute to educational quality in an Integrated Islamic Primary School. By connecting curriculum management with IQA, this study offers a new perspective on how schools can build sustainable quality improvement processes through their daily curriculum practices.

The study is guided by the following research question: How does curriculum management function as an Internal Quality Assurance mechanism in an Integrated Islamic Primary School in Indonesia? The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by expanding the understanding of curriculum management within the field of educational quality assurance and practically by providing a framework for schools seeking to strengthen internal quality improvement through curriculum planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive field research design within a single-school case context. This approach was selected because the study sought to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of curriculum management as it was practiced in its natural setting. Rather than measuring predetermined variables, the research focused on describing the processes, interactions, institutional practices, and contextual factors involved in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The qualitative design was particularly appropriate because curriculum management at an Integrated Islamic Primary School involves not only formal curriculum documents but also leadership decisions, teacher practices, Islamic learning programs, institutional routines, and the interpretation of national curriculum policies at the school level. The study therefore

examined curriculum management as an interconnected process and subsequently interpreted these practices through the perspective of Internal Quality Assurance.

Research Site and Context

The research was conducted at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim Balikpapan, located on D.I. Panjaitan Street No. 1, RT 82, Karang Rejo, Central Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The school is a private Integrated Islamic Primary School administered by the Jam'iyatul Mustaqim Karang Rejo Foundation. Field research formally commenced on February 11, 2026, following the approval of the research permit.

The school was selected because it implements a curriculum that combines the Indonesian national curriculum with institutional Islamic programs. These programs include Qur'anic learning, tahfidz activities, memorization targets, daily recitation, and tahfidz assessment through *munaqasyah*. This setting provided a relevant context for examining how curriculum management coordinates national academic requirements, Islamic values, learning practices, and institutional quality expectations.

The curriculum practices examined in this study covered curriculum planning, instructional implementation, academic monitoring, and evaluation. The research also considered the implementation of curriculum through intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, with particular attention to the integration of the tahfidz program into the school curriculum. The study further explored the preparation of the School Operational Curriculum, the establishment of Qur'anic memorization targets, the implementation of tahfidz learning, and the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

Participants and Data Sources

The primary data were obtained from two key informants who were directly involved in curriculum management. The first informant was the school principal, who held responsibility for institutional leadership, curriculum supervision, and coordination of school programs. The second informant was the vice principal for curriculum, who also performed teaching responsibilities. This dual role provided information from both the managerial and instructional perspectives.

Although the number of key informants was limited, both participants were purposively selected because they possessed direct, comprehensive, and institutionally relevant knowledge of curriculum planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. The vice principal's concurrent role as a teacher also enabled the study to examine the relationship between curriculum-level decisions and their implementation in classroom practice.

Secondary data were obtained from school documents and contextual evidence. These included the school's vision and mission, teacher and education personnel profiles, curriculum-related documents, school facilities records, and photographs of supporting infrastructure such as classrooms, the library, assembly hall, and computer room. These materials were used to support, clarify, and verify the information gathered from interviews and observations.

Data Collection

Data were collected through direct observation, structured interviews, and document analysis. The three techniques were used complementarily to produce a contextual and comprehensive account of curriculum management.

Observation

Direct observation was conducted at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim to examine the actual conditions in which curriculum management and learning activities were implemented. The observations focused on curriculum-related activities, instructional practices, the implementation of Islamic programs, the use of facilities, and the contextual conditions supporting curriculum implementation.

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Observation allowed the researcher to compare formal descriptions of curriculum practices with actual school conditions. It also provided factual information regarding how planning, implementation, and evaluation processes were reflected in school routines and learning activities.

Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted with the principal and the vice principal for curriculum, who also served as a teacher. An interview guide was used to maintain consistency with the study's focus while allowing the informants to explain their experiences and institutional practices in sufficient detail.

The interview questions addressed the preparation of curriculum programs, the integration of the national curriculum and Islamic programs, the organization of learning activities, teacher responsibilities, curriculum supervision, evaluation meetings, supporting factors, and implementation constraints. Particular attention was given to how tahfidz learning was planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated as part of the school curriculum.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was used to examine written and visual evidence related to curriculum management. Documents included the school's vision and mission, institutional profile, teacher and staff data, curriculum plans, learning-related documentation, and photographs of facilities supporting the curriculum.

The documentary evidence served two purposes. First, it provided contextual information concerning the school's organizational and educational environment. Second, it was used to verify whether the information communicated during interviews was consistent with institutional records and observed practices.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis was conducted iteratively rather than as a strictly linear process.

Data Condensation

During data condensation, the researcher selected and focused the information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation according to the research objectives. Priority was given to data concerning curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation, particularly practices related to the integration of the tahfidz program into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

The selected data were simplified through summarization, while information unrelated to the research focus was excluded. The relevant information was then abstracted and grouped into thematic categories. For the purposes of the article, these categories were analytically reorganized into four interconnected quality assurance themes: curriculum planning, integrated curriculum implementation, academic monitoring and supervision, and curriculum evaluation for continuous improvement.

Data Display

The condensed data were organized into systematic descriptive accounts to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships. Interview findings were compared with observational evidence and curriculum-related documents. The display process enabled the researcher to examine how institutional plans were translated into learning activities and how monitoring and evaluation informed subsequent curriculum decisions.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusions were developed progressively throughout the analytical process. Initial interpretations remained provisional and were revised when stronger or contradictory evidence emerged. Verification was conducted by reviewing the data repeatedly and comparing information obtained from different sources and collection methods.

This process allowed the study to move beyond a descriptive account of curriculum administration and interpret curriculum practices as elements of an internal quality assurance cycle. Planning was interpreted as the establishment of standards and programs, implementation as the enactment of those standards, monitoring as internal quality control, and evaluation as the basis for follow-up improvement.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was undertaken by comparing information provided by the principal and the vice principal for curriculum. Their accounts were examined for consistency and differences in relation to their respective leadership and instructional responsibilities.

Method triangulation was conducted by comparing interview data with direct observations and documentary evidence. For example, descriptions of curriculum implementation and supporting facilities were checked against relevant institutional documents, school conditions, and observed activities. The use of several data collection techniques reduced dependence on a single source of evidence and strengthened the credibility of the interpretations.

The study also used continuing verification during data analysis. Conclusions were not based solely on the researcher's assumptions but were developed from information that demonstrated consistency across interviews, observations, and documents.

Scope of the Inquiry

The study focused on curriculum management at one Integrated Islamic Primary School. It did not aim to statistically generalize the findings to all Islamic schools in Indonesia. Instead, it sought to provide an analytically transferable explanation of how curriculum planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation may function as an Internal Quality Assurance mechanism within a specific institutional context.

The single-site focus enabled a detailed examination of the interaction between the national curriculum, Islamic educational values, institutional programs, and school-level quality practices. However, the findings should be interpreted in relation to the characteristics, leadership structure, resources, and curriculum traditions of SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim Balikpapan.

FINDINGS

Curriculum Planning as the Foundation of Internal Quality Assurance

Curriculum planning at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim was conducted through school working meetings involving the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, and teachers. These meetings were used to determine curriculum programs, organize instructional activities, prepare learning documents, and coordinate the integration of the national curriculum with the Islamic programs developed by the school and its foundation. The planning process was closely connected to the school's institutional identity as an Integrated Islamic Primary School. The school did not treat the national curriculum and Islamic education as two completely separate programs. Instead, curriculum planning was directed toward creating coherence between national educational standards, the school's vision and mission, Islamic character formation, Qur'anic learning, and the developmental needs of students.

At the operational level, curriculum planning included the preparation of annual and semester programs, learning schedules, instructional plans, teacher assignments, and learning materials.

Teachers were expected to translate curriculum objectives into classroom activities while incorporating Islamic values where relevant. The planning process also included the arrangement of religious routines and programs, such as Qur'anic recitation, tahfidz learning, memorization targets, and the scheduling of tahfidz evaluation.

The tahfidz program illustrates how planning functioned as a quality-setting activity. The program was not treated merely as an optional religious activity. It was incorporated into the school curriculum through memorization targets, scheduled recitation and memorization sessions, regular submission of memorized verses, and final evaluation through *munaqasyah tahfidz*. This structure established expected learning outcomes and provided a basis for monitoring students' religious learning progress.

The findings indicate that curriculum planning functioned as the initial quality assurance stage because it established the standards, programs, responsibilities, and instructional expectations to be implemented during the academic year. However, the planning stage also revealed several challenges. The school had not yet developed a complete set of standardized integrative learning materials. As a result, teachers often needed to develop or adapt materials independently in order to connect national curriculum content with Islamic values. This required additional time, professional judgment, and teacher commitment.

Integrated Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation was primarily conducted through intracurricular learning, supported by co-curricular, extracurricular, and school religious activities. The implementation combined national curriculum content with the school's Islamic educational programs. General subjects were taught in accordance with national curriculum requirements, while Islamic values were embedded in classroom interactions, learning materials, school routines, and specific religious programs. The integration of Islamic values was visible in both formal instruction and everyday school practices. Students participated in Islamic habituation activities, including the performance of *Dhuha* prayer, Qur'anic reading using the Tilawati method before formal lessons, congregational *Dhuhr* prayer, and Friday prayer for male students. These activities were intended to develop religious discipline and strengthen the relationship between academic learning and Islamic character formation.

Tahfidz learning represented one of the central forms of integrated curriculum implementation. Students were given memorization targets and participated in regular recitation and memorization submission. Their progress was evaluated through *munaqasyah tahfidz*. This program demonstrated that the Islamic component of the curriculum was not limited to theoretical religious instruction but was organized as a measurable learning program with defined activities and expected outcomes. Teachers played the main role in translating curriculum plans into learning experiences. They prepared instructional documents, selected learning methods, managed classroom activities, and attempted to connect subject matter with Islamic values. Implementation was supported by the commitment of teachers, cooperation among school personnel, and support from the foundation. These factors enabled the school to sustain both academic and religious programs within a single institutional framework.

Nevertheless, curriculum implementation also faced important constraints. The integrated curriculum created a relatively dense learning schedule because the school needed to accommodate national subjects, Islamic learning, religious routines, and tahfidz targets. Teachers therefore faced difficulties in completing the required academic content while maintaining the quality of Islamic integration. Another challenge concerned variations in students' academic and memorization abilities. Students progressed at different rates, requiring teachers to provide differentiated support. However, differentiation was not always easy to implement because of limited time, the number of learning targets, and differences in teacher capacity. These conditions show that curriculum integration expanded the educational experiences offered by the school but also increased the complexity of instructional management.

Academic Monitoring and Supervision

The third theme concerned monitoring and supervision as mechanisms for controlling the quality of curriculum implementation. The principal and the vice principal for curriculum were responsible for ensuring that planned programs were implemented in accordance with school objectives. Monitoring was conducted through the observation of teaching and learning activities, review of instructional implementation, supervision of teachers, and discussion of emerging problems. Academic supervision enabled school leaders to examine whether teaching practices were consistent with curriculum plans and whether teachers were able to integrate national curriculum requirements with the school's Islamic values.

Supervision also involved checking teachers' instructional documents and monitoring the implementation of scheduled learning programs. Through these activities, school leaders could identify difficulties related to lesson planning, time allocation, learning methods, classroom management, and student achievement. The monitoring of Islamic programs included attention to Qur'anic learning, memorization activities, and student participation in religious routines. The school used memorization targets, recitation activities, and tahfidz assessment as indicators of the implementation of the religious curriculum. In this sense, monitoring was not limited to general academic learning but also covered the distinctive Islamic programs that formed part of the school's identity.

The findings suggest that supervision was conducted as both a controlling and developmental activity. Monitoring enabled school leaders to identify deviations from planned programs, while feedback and discussion were used to support instructional improvement. However, the effectiveness of supervision was influenced by the availability of time, the multiple responsibilities held by school leaders, and the absence of fully standardized instruments for evaluating integrated curriculum implementation. The lack of standardized integrative supervision instruments meant that the quality of Islamic integration could be interpreted differently by individual teachers or supervisors. While general curriculum implementation could be reviewed through instructional plans and classroom observations, the extent to which Islamic values were effectively integrated was more difficult to measure consistently.

Continuous Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation was conducted through instructional supervision, monitoring of teaching and learning activities, assessment of student learning, and evaluation meetings involving teachers and school management. These activities were used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and problems encountered during curriculum implementation.

Evaluation meetings provided a forum for discussing teaching progress, student achievement, program implementation, and challenges experienced by teachers. The results of evaluation were then used as a reference for improving curriculum programs and instructional practices in the following period. The evaluation of the tahfidz program was conducted through regular memorization assessment and *munaqasyah tahfidz*. This evaluation enabled the school to determine whether students had achieved the memorization targets established in the curriculum. It also provided evidence of the extent to which the religious learning program had been implemented. At the broader curriculum level, evaluation included examining whether instructional programs had been completed, whether learning objectives had been achieved, and whether school programs were aligned with institutional expectations. Evaluation therefore functioned not merely as a final assessment but as a source of information for curriculum revision and future planning.

The findings also identified several limitations in the evaluation process. The school did not yet have a fully standardized instrument for evaluating the integration between national curriculum content and Islamic values. Consequently, judgments about the quality of curriculum integration could differ among teachers. Evaluation was therefore stronger in assessing program implementation and student achievement than in measuring the depth and consistency of Islamic integration across subjects.

Despite these limitations, curriculum evaluation formed an important feedback mechanism. The school used monitoring results, teacher discussions, and student learning evidence to determine which aspects should be maintained, improved, or adjusted. This process illustrates a movement from evaluation toward continuous improvement.

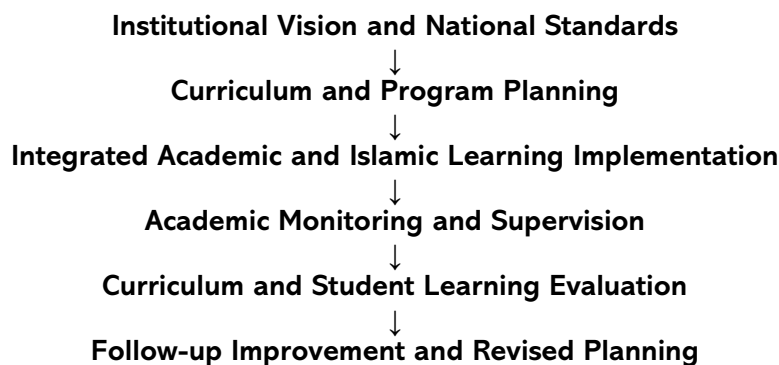
Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings also revealed that the effectiveness of the four quality assurance themes was influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors. The main supporting factors were cooperation among school personnel, foundation support, and teacher commitment. Collaboration among the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, and teachers facilitated curriculum planning, program coordination, and problem solving. Support from the foundation strengthened the implementation of Islamic programs and the institutional identity of the school. Teacher commitment was particularly important because the integration of general and Islamic learning often required teachers to prepare additional materials and adapt instructional strategies.

The inhibiting factors included limited teacher capacity to integrate the national curriculum with Islamic values, incomplete integrative learning resources, dense curriculum content, and differences in student abilities. These challenges increased teachers' workloads and affected the consistency of implementation. In addition, the absence of standardized evaluation instruments for integrated learning made it difficult to measure curriculum effectiveness uniformly. These findings indicate that the success of curriculum management was not determined solely by formal procedures. It depended on the capacity of teachers, collaboration within the school, leadership support, institutional resources, and the availability of clear quality indicators.

Curriculum Management as a Sustainable Quality Cycle

Taken together, the four themes demonstrate that curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim operated as an interconnected cycle. Curriculum planning established institutional expectations, curriculum implementation translated those expectations into academic and Islamic learning activities, monitoring and supervision examined the consistency of implementation, and evaluation provided information for subsequent improvement. The cycle can be summarized as follows:



This pattern resembles the Plan–Do–Check–Act framework. Planning meetings and instructional preparation represented the planning stage. Classroom learning, religious routines, and the tahfidz program represented implementation. Supervision, monitoring, and assessment represented the checking stage. Evaluation meetings and curriculum revision represented follow-up action. However, the cycle had not yet reached a fully standardized Internal Quality Assurance system. Several practices remained dependent on individual teacher commitment, informal coordination, and non-standardized instruments. Therefore, the findings show both the existence of a functional quality cycle and the need to strengthen its documentation, indicators, evaluation tools, and follow-up mechanisms.

Overall, curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim was implemented relatively well and contributed to the coordination of academic and Islamic education. Its principal strength

lay in the integration of institutional vision, national curriculum requirements, religious learning, monitoring, and evaluation. Its primary area for improvement concerned the standardization of integrated curriculum resources, supervision instruments, and quality indicators.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim Balikpapan operates as a practical Internal Quality Assurance mechanism rather than merely as an administrative function. Curriculum planning, integrated implementation, academic monitoring, and evaluation form an interconnected cycle that supports the continuity and quality of educational practices (Deming, 1986). These processes correspond closely to the Plan–Do–Check–Act framework and demonstrate how daily curriculum activities can contribute to continuous school improvement (Sallis, 2014). At the planning stage, the school aligns its curriculum with national education standards, institutional vision, and Islamic educational values. This process includes the preparation of annual and semester programs, learning schedules, teacher assignments, instructional documents, memorization targets, and religious learning activities. The planning process therefore functions as a quality-setting mechanism because it establishes expectations regarding what should be taught, how learning should be organized, and what outcomes should be achieved (Hallinger, 2020).

The school's curriculum planning also reflects the specific character of an Integrated Islamic Primary School. The national curriculum is not implemented independently from the school's religious programs. Instead, it is combined with Qur'anic learning, tahfidz activities, Islamic habituation, and character education (Fullan, 2020). This integration strengthens institutional identity while ensuring that the school continues to comply with national curriculum requirements. The findings show that the integration of Islamic values is implemented through both formal learning and school routines. Students participate in Qur'anic reading, tahfidz activities, *Dhuha* prayer, congregational *Dhuhr* prayer, and Friday prayer for male students. The tahfidz program includes memorization targets, regular submission of memorized verses, and evaluation through *munaqasyah tahfidz*. These practices demonstrate that Islamic values are not treated as supplementary content but as an organized component of the school curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2023).

From an Internal Quality Assurance perspective, the implementation stage represents the “Do” component of the PDCA cycle. The planned curriculum is translated into classroom teaching, religious learning, daily routines, and student development programs. The quality of implementation depends significantly on teacher commitment, cooperation among school personnel, and support from the foundation. These factors enable the school to maintain both academic and religious programs within a unified curriculum framework. However, the implementation process also reveals several quality challenges. Teachers are required to manage a relatively dense curriculum because national academic content must be combined with Islamic learning programs and religious routines. This creates pressure on instructional time and makes it difficult for teachers to complete all learning targets while maintaining the depth of Islamic integration (Hadisaputra et al., 2024).

Another challenge relates to the availability of integrative learning materials. The school has not yet developed a complete set of standardized teaching resources that systematically connect national curriculum content with Islamic values. Consequently, teachers often need to create or adapt materials independently (Azra, 2019; Mulyasa, 2022).

This dependence on individual teacher initiative may result in variations in the quality and consistency of curriculum integration across classrooms. Differences in students' academic abilities and Qur'anic memorization progress also influence curriculum implementation.

Teachers need to provide additional support for students who progress more slowly, while simultaneously maintaining the achievement of class-level targets. Although differentiated learning is necessary, its implementation is constrained by limited time, multiple curriculum demands, and differences in teacher capacity.

The monitoring and supervision process represents the “Check” stage of the PDCA cycle. The principal and vice principal for curriculum monitor instructional activities, review teacher documents, observe curriculum implementation, and discuss problems encountered during teaching. These activities help ensure that learning remains aligned with curriculum plans and institutional expectations. Academic supervision also functions as a professional support mechanism. Through observation and feedback, school leaders identify difficulties in lesson planning, time allocation, classroom management, and the integration of Islamic values. This indicates that supervision is not limited to administrative control but also contributes to the development of teaching practices.

Nevertheless, the study reveals that the school does not yet have fully standardized instruments for evaluating integrated curriculum implementation. General instructional activities can be monitored through lesson plans and classroom observations, but the depth and quality of Islamic value integration are more difficult to assess consistently. As a result, judgments may depend on the perceptions and professional interpretations of individual teachers or supervisors (Nasir et al., 2024). Curriculum evaluation represents the “Act” stage of the quality cycle. Evaluation is conducted through supervision results, student assessments, teacher reflection, monitoring activities, and school evaluation meetings. These processes allow the school to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement.

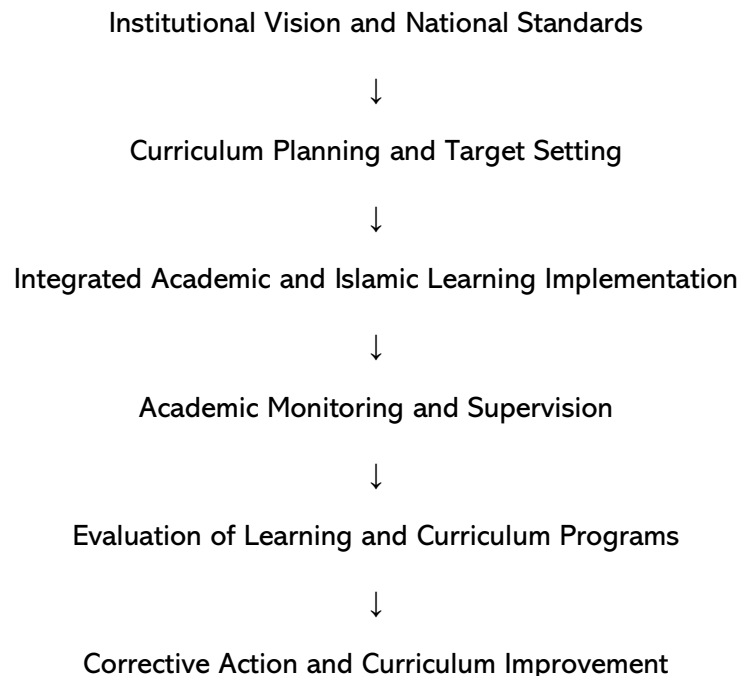
The evaluation of the *tahfidz* program provides a concrete example of outcome-oriented curriculum evaluation. Memorization targets and *munaqasyah tahfidz* enable the school to determine whether students have achieved the expected religious learning outcomes. In this case, evaluation is directly linked to planned curriculum targets. At the broader curriculum level, evaluation is used to review instructional progress, student achievement, program implementation, and problems experienced by teachers. The results are then used as a basis for revising programs and improving curriculum implementation in subsequent periods. This demonstrates the existence of a feedback mechanism that supports continuous improvement (Rijal et al., 2023).

The findings also indicate that the school's quality assurance cycle is supported by three major factors: collaboration among school personnel, foundation support, and teacher commitment. Collaboration enables curriculum planning and problem solving to be conducted collectively. Foundation support reinforces the implementation of Islamic programs, while teacher commitment sustains curriculum integration despite limited standardized resources. In contrast, the main inhibiting factors include limited integrative teaching resources, differences in teacher competence, a dense curriculum structure, variations in student ability, and the absence of standardized evaluation instruments. These constraints show that the effectiveness of curriculum management depends not only on the existence of planning and evaluation procedures but also on institutional capacity, teacher competence, resource availability, and the clarity of quality indicators.

The study therefore suggests that curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim has already formed a functional Internal Quality Assurance cycle, but the system remains partially dependent on informal coordination and individual commitment. To strengthen this mechanism, the school needs to develop standardized integrative teaching materials, common supervision instruments, clear indicators of Islamic curriculum integration, and more systematic documentation of evaluation results and follow-up actions. The integration of Islamic values

also provides a distinctive contribution to the concept of Internal Quality Assurance. In this school context, educational quality is not defined solely by academic achievement or compliance with national standards. Quality also includes the development of Qur'anic competence, religious discipline, Islamic character, and alignment with the school's vision. Therefore, the school's quality assurance framework reflects both national educational expectations and institutional religious values. This finding expands the conventional understanding of IQA by showing that quality assurance in faith-based schools must accommodate institutional identity (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). National standards provide the external reference, while Islamic values provide the internal normative framework that shapes curriculum priorities and educational outcomes. The study also demonstrates that curriculum management can serve as the operational core of school-level quality assurance. Planning establishes standards, implementation translates standards into educational practice, supervision monitors consistency, and evaluation generates evidence for improvement. When these processes are connected, curriculum management becomes a continuous quality improvement mechanism rather than a collection of separate administrative tasks.

The proposed quality cycle can be summarized as follows:



This model resembles the PDCA framework, but it is contextualized within an Integrated Islamic Primary School. Its distinctive feature lies in the integration of national curriculum standards, Islamic learning programs, religious habituation, and continuous evaluation. The findings therefore contribute to the literature on educational quality assurance by demonstrating that IQA can be embedded in everyday curriculum management. The study also shows that school quality improvement does not necessarily begin with a separate quality assurance unit. It can emerge from the systematic coordination of curriculum planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. However, for this cycle to become more sustainable, the school must move from a person-dependent system toward an institutionally documented system. Quality practices should not depend solely on the commitment of particular leaders or teachers. They need to be supported by written standards, shared indicators, regular documentation, and follow-up procedures that can be maintained even when personnel change (Nasir & Rijal, 2020).

In practical terms, the school should strengthen teacher professional development in integrated curriculum design, differentiated learning, assessment, and the development of Islamic contextual materials. Collaborative lesson planning and professional learning communities may also reduce differences in teacher interpretation and improve consistency across classrooms. Overall, the discussion confirms that curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim functions as a practical Internal Quality Assurance mechanism. Its strength lies in the integration of institutional vision, national curriculum requirements, Islamic values, supervision, and evaluation. Its principal weakness lies in the limited standardization of integrative resources, indicators, and follow-up documentation. Strengthening these areas would enable the school to transform its existing curriculum practices into a more systematic and sustainable Internal Quality Assurance system.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that curriculum management at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim Balikpapan extends beyond its conventional administrative function and operates as a practical mechanism for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). Curriculum planning, integrated curriculum implementation, academic monitoring and supervision, and continuous curriculum evaluation constitute an interconnected quality cycle that supports the systematic improvement of educational processes. These activities collectively reflect the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) model of continuous quality improvement, indicating that curriculum management serves not only as an instructional management process but also as a strategic instrument for maintaining and enhancing school quality.

The findings reveal that curriculum planning establishes institutional quality standards by aligning the national curriculum with the school's vision, mission, and Islamic educational values. Curriculum implementation translates these plans into integrated academic and religious learning experiences through classroom instruction, Qur'anic learning, tahfidz programs, Islamic habituation, and character education. Academic monitoring and supervision function as internal quality control processes that ensure instructional consistency while providing professional support for teachers. Furthermore, curriculum evaluation provides evidence for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and improvement priorities, enabling the school to continuously refine its curriculum implementation.

A distinctive contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how Internal Quality Assurance can be embedded within curriculum management in an Integrated Islamic Primary School. Unlike conventional quality assurance models that primarily emphasize compliance with national education standards, the curriculum management system at SDIT Jam'iyatul Mustaqim simultaneously accommodates institutional religious identity. Educational quality is therefore measured not only through academic achievement but also through the successful integration of Islamic values, Qur'anic competence, religious habituation, and character development. This finding suggests that quality assurance frameworks for faith-based schools should recognize institutional values as an integral component of educational quality.

The study also identifies several supporting and inhibiting factors affecting curriculum management. Collaboration among school leaders and teachers, strong institutional commitment, and foundation support contribute positively to curriculum implementation. However, challenges remain, including limited standardized teaching resources integrating national curriculum content with Islamic values, variations in teacher competence, differences in students' learning abilities, the density of curriculum content, and the absence of standardized instruments for evaluating integrated curriculum implementation. These findings indicate that sustainable quality improvement requires not only effective planning and

supervision but also systematic teacher professional development, adequate learning resources, standardized evaluation instruments, and institutional support.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the educational quality assurance literature by reconceptualizing curriculum management as an operational Internal Quality Assurance mechanism rather than merely an administrative function. The proposed framework illustrates that planning, implementation, monitoring, supervision, evaluation, and continuous improvement operate as an integrated quality cycle capable of sustaining school improvement. This perspective enriches current discussions on school-based quality assurance by positioning curriculum management as the operational core of continuous quality improvement.

Practically, the findings provide guidance for school leaders and policymakers seeking to strengthen Internal Quality Assurance systems. Schools should move beyond document-oriented curriculum administration toward evidence-based quality management by developing standardized curriculum planning procedures, collaborative lesson planning, systematic academic supervision, documented evaluation mechanisms, and structured follow-up actions. Strengthening teacher capacity in integrated curriculum design, assessment literacy, and the development of contextual teaching materials is also essential for sustaining curriculum quality.

Finally, this study is limited to a single Integrated Islamic Primary School and therefore does not aim to provide statistical generalization. Nevertheless, the findings offer an analytically transferable model illustrating how curriculum management may function as an Internal Quality Assurance mechanism within faith-based educational institutions. Future studies are encouraged to investigate similar practices across different school contexts and educational levels, compare Internal Quality Assurance models between public and private schools, and examine the long-term relationship between curriculum management, teacher professionalism, and student learning outcomes.

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