

Integrating Total Quality Management and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah under Spiritual Prestige-Driven Transformation

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Abstract

This study analyses how Total Quality Management (TQM) is implemented in the governance of elite Islamic boarding schools through the interaction between the Visionary, Integrated, and Prestigious (VIP) orientation and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah as an ethical control system. The study employs a qualitative approach with a multi-case study design at Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra Malang, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri Malang, and Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Tenganan. Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured interviews with 22 informants, and participatory observation, and were subsequently analysed using reflexive thematic analysis and cross-case comparisons. The results indicate that TQM serves as a stabilising mechanism for the quality management process through system strengthening, continuous evaluation, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. The implementation of TQM is influenced by VIP Orientation, which reinforces strategic vision, institutional integration, and institutional legitimacy. At the same time, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah functions as an ethical control mechanism that ensures all managerial practices remain oriented toward Islamic values. The interaction of these three elements forms the Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) framework, which integrates managerial effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, and moral-spiritual responsibility in pesantren governance. This study is limited to three elite pesantren; therefore, its results cannot yet be generalised to all types of pesantren in Indonesia. Consequently, future research is recommended to test the relevance of the SQG framework across various models of Islamic educational institutions using a comparative approach or mixed-methods design to expand its empirical validity and theoretical development.

Kata Kunci:

Spiritual Quality Governance, Orientasi VIP, Total Quality Management, Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah, Tata Kelola Pendidikan Pesantren.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana Total Quality Management (TQM) diterapkan dalam tata kelola pesantren elit melalui interaksi antara orientasi Visionary, Integrated, and Prestigious (VIP Orientation) dan maqāṣid al-sharī'ah sebagai sistem pengendalian etis. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multi-kasus pada Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra Malang, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri Malang, dan Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Tenganan. Data diperoleh melalui analisis dokumen, wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap 22 informan, serta observasi partisipatif, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan reflexive thematic analysis dan perbandingan lintas kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa TQM berperan sebagai mekanisme yang menstabilkan proses tata kelola mutu melalui penguatan sistem, evaluasi berkelanjutan, akuntabilitas, dan pengambilan keputusan berbasis bukti. Penerapan TQM dipengaruhi oleh VIP Orientation yang memperkuat visi strategis, integrasi kelembagaan, dan legitimasi institusional, sedangkan maqāṣid al-sharī'ah berfungsi sebagai pengendali etis yang memastikan seluruh praktik manajerial tetap berorientasi pada nilai-nilai Islam. Interaksi ketiga unsur tersebut membentuk kerangka Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) yang mengintegrasikan efektivitas manajerial, legitimasi kelembagaan, dan tanggung jawab moral-spiritual dalam tata kelola pesantren. Penelitian ini terbatas pada tiga pesantren elit sehingga

hasilnya belum dapat digeneralisasikan pada seluruh tipe pesantren di Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya disarankan menguji relevansi kerangka SQG pada berbagai model lembaga pendidikan Islam dengan menggunakan pendekatan komparatif atau metode campuran untuk memperluas validitas empiris dan mengembangkan teorinya.

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly competitive educational landscape demands that every educational institution establish a quality management system that is not only effective but also accountable, transparent, and sustainable (Hartanto et al., 2022; Rinne, 2020; Taufikin et al., 2025; Voisin & Ávalos-Bevan, 2023). In this context, Total Quality Management (TQM) has emerged as one of the most widely adopted management approaches for enhancing organisational quality through *continuous improvement*, stakeholder-oriented practices, process consistency, and data-driven decision-making. (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014). Various studies indicate that the implementation of TQM can strengthen the effectiveness of educational organisations by improving institutional coordination, standardising services, fostering a culture of evaluation, and enhancing stakeholder satisfaction. (Dallashah, 2025; Herfiyanti et al., 2025; Kaleli et al., 2025). However, the success of TQM is determined not only by the sophistication of managerial procedures but also by its ability to adapt to the values, organisational culture, and institutional characteristics of the setting where the system is implemented. (Andrews & Glendinning, 2024; Fomba et al., 2023).

This issue is particularly relevant in the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia. As Islamic educational institutions deeply rooted in scholarly traditions, kiai leadership, and character development, pesantren face increasingly complex demands to preserve their religious identity while meeting modern educational governance standards. (Lukens-Bull, 2010; Taufikin et al., 2026). The development of accreditation systems, rising public expectations, competition among educational institutions, and demands for transparency and accountability have prompted many pesantren to transform their governance through the implementation of more structured quality management systems. (Hanif et al., 2024; Iskarim et al., 2025). These challenges are particularly evident in elite pesantren that seek to build an academic reputation while maintaining moral legitimacy amid intensifying educational competition.

Various studies indicate that the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) has made a positive contribution to improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. (Haddade et al., 2024; Sudir, 2025; Syaifullah et al., 2023). Several other studies suggest that the implementation of TQM in Islamic educational institutions often faces challenges when a technocratic managerial approach fails to adequately accommodate the ethical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions that are the defining characteristics of Islamic boarding schools (Adnan et al., 2023; Murdayanti & Puruwita, 2017). In a related development, an increasing number of studies position *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as the normative foundation for establishing the governance of Islamic institutions, as this concept not only emphasises the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property but also broadens the governance orientation toward the public good, social responsibility, and holistic human development (Abdullah et al., 2025; Auda, 2008, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024; Kamali, 2012).

Although these three themes have developed rapidly, existing studies still reveal significant conceptual fragmentation. Most research on TQM remains focused on organisational effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and quality control as managerial tools. Other studies position *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* primarily as a normative framework for discussing ethics, Islamic governance, and human welfare. At the same time, research on pesantren transformation tends to

highlight aspects of leadership, institutional modernisation, accountability, or organisational change in isolation. To date, there remains very limited research explaining how Total Quality Management is applied in elite pesantren through the interaction between a prestige-based institutional transformation orientation (VIP Orientation) and *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* as an ethical control mechanism in daily governance practices. Consequently, there is currently no conceptual framework capable of explaining how managerial effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, and moral-spiritual responsibility work in an integrated manner to shape quality governance in Islamic educational institutions. This gap serves as the primary foundation for this study and underscores its novelty in advancing research on Total Quality Management in Islamic education.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyse how Total Quality Management (TQM) is applied in the governance of elite Islamic boarding schools through the interaction between VIP Orientation as an orientation toward institutional transformation and *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, as an ethical control system. (Adnan et al., 2023; Murdayanti & Puruwita, 2017). This study is based on the assumption that the effectiveness of TQM in religion-based educational institutions is determined not only by the success in establishing quality management procedures but also by the institution's ability to integrate moral and spiritual values into every decision-making process. (Andrews & Glendinning, 2024; Fomba et al., 2023). Specifically, this study aims to answer four main questions how does VIP Orientation shape the transformation of pesantren governance, how does Total Quality Management function as a mechanism for strengthening quality governance, how *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* guides TQM practices through ethical control mechanisms, and how the interaction of these three elements gives rise to the Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) framework as a quality governance model in elite Islamic boarding schools.

This study contributes assumptions to the development of research on Islamic educational management in three aspects. *First*, theoretically, this study broadens the perspective of Total Quality Management by demonstrating that the success of quality management systems in religion-based educational institutions requires the integration of managerial effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, and ethical-spiritual values. *Second*, empirically, this study demonstrates how elite Islamic boarding schools adapt TQM principles without compromising the Islamic character that defines their institutional identity. *Third*, this study proposes Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) as an analytical framework that explains the dynamic relationship between Total Quality Management, VIP Orientation, and *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* in establishing a quality governance system oriented toward both professionalism and moral significance.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a multi-case study design to analyse the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the governance of elite Islamic boarding schools through the interaction between VIP Orientation, *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, and Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG). (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; de Vries, 2020; Yin, 2014). The study was conducted at three Islamic boarding schools selected using theoretical purposive sampling: Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra Malang, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri Malang, and Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Tengeran. These three Islamic boarding schools were selected because they met three main criteria. They have a reputation as leading institutions, they implement a quality assurance system that adopts the principles of Total Quality Management, and they demonstrate a strong commitment to Islamic moral and spiritual values in their institutional governance.

Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and participatory observation. The documents analysed included strategic plans, quality assurance system guidelines, accreditation documents, institutional policies, evaluation reports, and other official documents related to quality management. (Morgan, 2022). Interviews were conducted with 22 informants, consisting of six pesantren leaders, seven teachers/ustaz, six parents of students, and three students selected based on their involvement in the quality management process and institutional transformation. (Knott et al., 2022). Meanwhile, participatory observation was conducted during academic, boarding school-related, managerial, character-building, and religious activities to gain an understanding of the implementation of quality management in daily practice. (Hurst, 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using reflexive thematic analysis combined with cross-case comparison to identify patterns of similarities and differences in the implementation of Total Quality Management at the three Islamic boarding schools. (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2025; Squires, 2023). The analysis stages included initial coding, theme development, cross-case comparison, and the drafting of analytical memos to construct a comprehensive interpretation. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through the triangulation of sources, methods, and cases (Denzin, 2012; Marlina et al., 2024), while researcher reflexivity was applied throughout the analysis process through discussions among researchers, analytical note-taking, and scrutiny of evidence that might contradict initial interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

VIP Orientation and Restructuring of Quality Governance in Islamic Boarding Schools

The research results indicate that VIP Orientation serves as the primary driver of quality governance restructuring in the three Islamic boarding schools studied. This orientation not only drives organisational modernisation but also transforms how Islamic boarding schools formulate their institutional vision, integrate various educational systems, build institutional reputation, and strengthen public accountability. Although all Islamic boarding schools exhibit the same trend, each institution develops distinct implementation strategies tailored to its leadership style, organisational culture, and institutional development direction.

The results of document analysis reinforce these interview findings. The IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri Strategic Plan for 2023–2028 shows that the institutional vision has been translated into strategic objectives, key performance indicators (KPIs), annual targets, and periodic evaluation mechanisms. Meanwhile, the Ar-Rohmah Putra Islamic Boarding School Development Plan document emphasises that all academic, boarding school, and character development programs are designed based on the same institutional vision. The document demonstrates that the vision is not merely an institutional slogan but serves as the foundation for policy formulation, resource allocation, and program evaluation.

The most frequently mentioned theme was the visionary orientation, cited by 14 of the 22 informants. The informants emphasised that the vision is no longer positioned as a normative statement but rather as a strategic instrument that guides the entire institutional development process. As one boarding school leader put it:

Now we can no longer manage the pesantren relying solely on good intentions. Parents want to know the direction of the institution's development, the quality of graduates, and the goals to be achieved in the coming years. Therefore, all programs must align with the same vision. (KP-02, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri)

Every program we design is always linked to the boarding school's vision. So it's not just about carrying out activities, but ensuring that all units are moving toward the same goal." (G-05, Al-Irsyad Tengaran Boarding School)

These findings indicate that the VIP Orientation drives the transformation of the vision from a mere symbolic identity into a governance instrument that strengthens strategic direction, organisational consistency, and institutional legitimacy amid rising demands for educational quality. The second theme that emerged in this study is institutional integration, which was mentioned by 11 of the 22 informants. All the Islamic boarding schools that served as research sites sought to integrate various components of educational administration, ranging from the curriculum, dormitory life, character development, administrative systems, the use of digital technology, and partnerships with parents. Although they share the same goals, each boarding school demonstrated a different approach in building this integration.

Boarding School IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri emphasises integration through a well-documented management system; Ar-Rohmah Putra is more focused on the effectiveness of coordination among work units; while the Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School places the integration of Islamic values as the primary foundation for all institutional activities. A teacher at the Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School explained that the success of governance is not determined by individual units working in isolation, but by the interconnectedness of the entire system that supports the educational process.

All activities must be interconnected. The curriculum, dormitory life, character development, religious activities, and communication with parents must not operate in isolation. Together, they form a cohesive educational system. (G-06, Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School)

Each unit has its own targets, but all of these targets ultimately contribute to the boarding school's overarching goals. Therefore, we conduct regular coordination to ensure that all programs operate in an integrated and mutually supportive manner. (KP-01, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri)

The results of a document analysis support these findings. The IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri Annual Quality Evaluation Report indicates that parent satisfaction, students' academic achievements, non-academic accomplishments, and the success of graduates are used as key indicators in the institution's quality evaluation. Meanwhile, the Institutional Profile of Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra highlights various accreditation achievements, student accomplishments, institutional partnerships, and alumni track records as part of a strategy to build public trust. On the other hand, the Institutional Development Document of the Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School emphasises that an institution's reputation must be built through the consistent implementation of Islamic values, character development, and educational services conducted with integrity, not merely through external image-building.

These findings indicate that within the VIP Orientation framework, prestige functions as a form of social legitimacy derived from sustainable governance. Institutional reputation is not positioned merely as a marketing tool, but rather as the result of the consistent implementation of Total Quality Management combined with moral responsibility and Islamic values. Thus, reputation becomes institutional capital that strengthens public trust while ensuring the sustainability of the Islamic boarding school amid increasing competition in the education sector.

The Application of Total Quality Management Principles in VIP-Oriented Islamic Boarding Schools

Stakeholder orientation is the most prominent principle of TQM, as stated by 15 of the 22 informants. All Islamic boarding schools view parents not merely as recipients of educational services, but as strategic partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs. These findings are supported by an analysis of the Internal Quality Assurance System Guidelines, minutes from semester evaluation meetings, and parent satisfaction survey documents, which demonstrate the existence of a regular feedback mechanism serving as the basis for program improvement.

These documents show that stakeholder involvement has become an integral part of the quality assurance cycle, rather than merely administrative communication. This finding indicates that the implementation of TQM has shifted the relationship between the pesantren and parents from a paternalistic model toward a partnership that is more participatory, accountable, and oriented toward continuous quality improvement.

Feedback from parents is always part of our quality evaluation because they help determine the direction of our educational services.” (KP-02).

We not only receive progress reports on the students but are also involved in providing suggestions regarding the boarding school’s programs.” (OT-01).

These findings are supported by the results of the analysis of Internal Quality Audit reports, management review meeting documents, and annual program evaluation reports, which show that every recommendation from the evaluation is followed up with measurable improvement plans. These documents demonstrate the existence of a cycle of evaluation, follow-up, and monitoring that is carried out periodically across all work units. These findings indicate that the principle of *continuous improvement* has become part of the organisational culture, rather than merely an administrative procedure. Quality improvement is understood as an ongoing process to enhance service effectiveness, strengthen institutional competitiveness, and uphold the sustainability of Islamic educational values.

Continuous improvement is a TQM principle mentioned by 13 out of 22 informants. All three pesantren routinely evaluate their academic, pesantren life, Quran memorisation (tahfiz), and character-building programs as the basis for refining educational services.

At the end of every academic year, we evaluate all programs. The results of these evaluations serve as the basis for improving activities in the following year.” (G-03).

Improvements are not made only when problems arise, but are part of a routine agenda documented within the quality assurance system.” (KP-01).

Human resource engagement is a TQM principle mentioned by 10 out of 22 informants. The research findings indicate that teachers, ustaz, and educational staff do not merely act as policy implementers but are also involved in the processes of planning, evaluation, and institutional quality development. These findings are supported by an analysis of the minutes from quality evaluation meetings, documents regarding the formation of the quality assurance team, and reports on teacher competency development, all of which demonstrate the existence of participatory mechanisms in decision-making.

We are always involved in program development and evaluation, so every teacher feels a sense of responsibility toward the quality of the boarding school.” (G-06).

Each unit is allowed to submit improvement proposals through the quality evaluation forum, so decisions do not originate solely from the leadership.” (KP-01).

These documents show that the involvement of teachers and educational staff has been integrated into the quality assurance system through coordination forums, training, and periodic

evaluations. These findings indicate that the implementation of TQM fosters the development of participatory governance, strengthens a sense of ownership toward the organisation, and enhances shared commitment to fostering a sustainable culture of quality.

Evidence-based decision-making is a TQM principle cited by 12 of the 22 informants. All three Islamic boarding schools utilise various data regarding academic progress, student discipline, attendance, learning assessment results, and program outcomes as the basis for policy formulation. These findings are supported by the results of the analysis of academic evaluation reports, summaries of quality indicator achievements, and management review meeting documents, which show that data serves as the basis for setting program priorities, evaluating performance, and developing follow-up plans.

Our task is not only to ensure that programs run smoothly but also to ensure that every policy remains aligned with the boarding school's vision and values.” (KP-01).

The leadership always encourages innovation, but every change must continue to strengthen the character and educational goals of the pesantren.” (G-04).

Every decision must be supported by verifiable data so that the policies adopted truly align with the institution's needs.” (KP-02)

These documents demonstrate that the use of data has been integrated into the quality assurance system, rather than merely serving administrative needs. This finding indicates that the implementation of TQM fosters a culture of decision-making that is more objective, transparent, and accountable, ensuring that every policy has a clear empirical basis while supporting the continuous improvement of educational quality. The research results show that boarding school leaders serve not only as decision-makers but also as change agents capable of integrating the quality management system with Islamic values.

These findings are supported by an analysis of the Islamic Boarding School's Strategic Plan, quality objective documents, and minutes of leadership meetings, which show that all strategic policies are formulated based on the institutional vision, performance indicators, and periodic quality evaluations. These documents demonstrate that leadership not only guides the achievement of organisational goals but also ensures consistency between managerial innovation and the mission of Islamic education.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as an Ethical Control System in Quality Management

The dimension of ḥifẓ al-dīn is the most dominant aspect of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and was mentioned by 16 of the 22 informants. The research findings indicate that the quality of a pesantren is measured not only by academic achievement but also by its success in fostering the students' religiosity, moral character, and commitment to Islam. These findings are supported by an analysis of the boarding school's vision and mission documents, guidelines for student character development, and graduate competency standards, which indicate that moral development, strengthening of religious practice, and the internalisation of Islamic values are key indicators in the quality assurance system.

These documents demonstrate that the religious dimension is not treated as an afterthought but serves as the foundation for policy formulation, program implementation, and institutional evaluation. This finding indicates that ḥifẓ al-dīn functions as an ethical control mechanism that ensures the implementation of Total Quality Management remains oriented toward the goals of Islamic education and is not reduced to merely achieving managerial indicators.

For us, the quality of education is not merely about academic grades, but about how students become more devout, morally upright individuals who can practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives. (G-05)

All quality programs must remain focused on strengthening Islamic character. Academic achievement is important, but it must not overshadow the primary goal of boarding school education.” (KP-01).

The dimension of *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* was cited by 10 out of 22 informants as one of the ethical foundations in pesantren quality management. The research findings show that all three pesantren view the health, safety, comfort, and psychological well-being of students as an integral part of the quality assurance system.

These findings are supported by the results of an analysis of the Standard Operating Procedures for student health services, guidance on student development and care, and student well-being evaluation reports, which demonstrate the existence of mechanisms for health monitoring, counselling services, dormitory support, and an emergency response system. These documents demonstrate that the protection of students' well-being has been integrated into the quality assurance system through documented procedures that are evaluated on a regular basis.

This finding indicates that *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* functions as an ethical mechanism that ensures the implementation of Total Quality Management is oriented not only toward achieving institutional performance but also toward protecting the dignity, safety, and well-being of every student as the primary goal of Islamic education.

Educational quality cannot be achieved if students do not feel safe, healthy, and comfortable while undergoing the learning process at the pesantren.” (KP-02).

We feel at ease because the pesantren not only focuses on academic achievement but also on our children's health, guidance, and emotional well-being.” (OT-02).

The dimension of *ḥifẓ al-'aql* was cited by 12 out of 22 informants as an ethical foundation for the development of academic quality in Islamic boarding schools. The research findings indicate that enhancing intellectual capacity, utilising learning technologies, and educational innovation are viewed as part of TQM implementation; however, the entire process must remain within the framework of Islamic values.

These findings are supported by an analysis of the pesantren's curriculum, digital-based learning guidelines, and academic evaluation reports, which show that the development of intellectual competencies is integrated with character education and ethical digital literacy. These documents demonstrate that the use of technology, learning innovations, and academic evaluations is designed to support educational quality without neglecting the goal of character development. This finding indicates that *ḥifẓ al-'aql* functions as an ethical mechanism that guides the implementation of Total Quality Management so that educational innovation remains aligned with intellectual development, character, and Islamic values.

We use technology to improve the quality of learning, but its use must strengthen critical thinking while preserving the students' moral character.” (KP-01).

Learning innovations are always evaluated to ensure they not only improve academic achievement but also shape students' character and sense of responsibility.” (G-04).

The dimension of *ḥifẓ al-naḥl* was cited by 9 out of 22 informants as a principle that strengthens the continuity of education between the pesantren and the family. The research results show that parental involvement is viewed as part of the quality assurance system because the character development of students not only takes place within the pesantren environment but also requires family support.

This finding is supported by the results of an analysis of the parent partnership guidelines, student guardian communication reports, and character development evaluation documents, which indicate the existence of consultation mechanisms, periodic reporting, and social interaction forums between the pesantren and families. These documents demonstrate that relationships with parents have become an integral part of the quality assurance system, rather than merely an administrative activity.

A child's character will develop better if the boarding school and parents share the same educational goals and communicate openly with one another. (OT-03).

We routinely involve parents in evaluating students' progress so that character development can proceed continuously." (KP-01).

This finding indicates that *ḥifẓ al-naṣl* functions as an ethical mechanism that strengthens the synergy between families and Islamic boarding schools in ensuring the sustainability of education, character development, and the quality of future generations, which are the primary objectives of Islamic education. The dimension of *ḥifẓ al-māl* was cited by 11 out of 22 informants as a principle that strengthens accountability in the management of pesantren resources.

The research findings indicate that financial transparency, efficient budget utilisation, and the responsible use of resources are viewed as part of the implementation of Total Quality Management, which not only meets the demands of modern governance but is also a trust that must be accounted for morally. These findings are supported by an analysis of annual financial reports, internal audit documents, and budget management guidelines, which demonstrate the existence of procedures for planning, implementation, reporting, and periodic evaluation of fund usage.

These documents show that the financial management system has been integrated into the quality assurance mechanism through the principles of transparency, efficiency, and accountability. These findings indicate that *ḥifẓ al-māl* functions as an ethical control mechanism that ensures the implementation of Total Quality Management not only results in organisational efficiency but also strengthens integrity, public trust, and institutional accountability in accordance with Islamic values.

Table 1. Research Findings and Data Triangulation Summary

Research Focus	Key Research Findings	Data Validation
VIP Orientation (Visionary, Integrated, Prestigious)	- Transforms institutional vision from a symbolic slogan into a strategic governance instrument. - Integrates academic administration, dormitory life, and parent partnerships - Builds reputation as a form of social legitimacy derived from quality governance.	Observation: Integration of character-building programs into daily student activities. Informants: KP-02 (IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri) & G-05, G-06 (Al-Irsyad Tenggara) Documents: Strategic Plan of IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri 2023–2028, Development Plan of Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra, & Institutional Profile.
Total Quality Management (TQM)	- Shifts the pesantren-parent relationship from a paternalistic model to a participatory partnership - Embeds continuous evaluation into the organisational culture rather than just an administrative task	Observation: Active involvement of teachers/ustaz during semester-based quality review meetings. Informants: KP-01, KP-02, G-03, G-04, G-06, & OT-01. Documents: Internal Quality

	3. Fosters an objective, transparent, and data-driven decision-making process.	Assurance System Guidelines, Annual Quality Evaluation Reports, Internal Quality Audit Report, & Management Review Minutes.
Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah (Ethical Control System)	1. <i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>: Religiosity and moral character serve as core quality indicators 2. <i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>: Guarantees safety, physical <i>health</i>, and psychological well-being 3. <i>Ḥifẓ al-'aql</i>: Intellectual competency and digital innovation guided by Islamic values 4. <i>Ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>: Sustains character development through synchronised family-school goals 5. <i>Ḥifẓ al-māl</i>: Ensures financial transparency, efficiency, and fiduciary trust (p. 9).	Observation: Daily operations of student health services, dormitory counselling, and tahfiz routine Informants: G-05 (<i>ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>), KP-02 & OT-02 (<i>ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>), KP-01 & G-04 (<i>ḥifẓ al-'aql</i>), OT-03 & KP-01 (<i>ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>) Documents: Student Health Services SOPs, Student Development Guidelines, Pesantren Curriculum, Parent Partnership Guidelines, & Annual Financial Reports.
Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG Framework)	1. Synthesises managerial effectiveness, social legitimacy, and moral-spiritual responsibility into a cohesive framework 2. Develops contextually across different pesantren based on organisational capacity and culture.	Observation: Alignment and harmony between the spiritual authority (kiai/mudir) and quality management operations. Informants: Cross-case interview synthesis of 22 informants across 3 research sites. Documents: Institutional Strategic Policies and Integrated Synthesis Framework.

Source: Data Collection, 2026

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that Total Quality Management (TQM) in elite Islamic boarding schools does not function as a neutral set of managerial techniques but rather as a governance mechanism that enhances organisational effectiveness while maintaining the institution's moral legitimacy. (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These results expand upon the classical view that positions TQM as an approach to improving efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and continuous improvement (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014). In the three Islamic boarding schools studied, the implementation of TQM did not supplant religious authority. However, it was adapted to align with the organisational culture and Islamic values that form the foundation of the educational program.

The research findings also indicate that VIP Orientation is a factor driving the transformation of pesantren governance amid increasing demands for competition, accountability, and public trust. (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Contrary to the view that interprets prestige merely as an institutional image-building strategy, this study demonstrates that an orientation toward vision, system integration, and reputation actually serves as a driver for the formation of more adaptive and sustainable governance. These findings reinforce the argument that organisational legitimacy is built through a combination of internal capacity and external recognition. (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

On the other hand, the results of this study do not fully align with the view that increasing competition tends to push educational institutions toward increasingly technocratic and market-oriented governance. (Dyusheeva et al., 2025; Jesus-Silva et al., 2023). In the three pesantren studied, the prestige orientation actually strengthened organisational reflection, transparency, and commitment to quality improvement without compromising Islamic values. (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Therefore, VIP Orientation can be understood as a process of institutional transformation that links the demands of professionalism with the strengthening of religious identity, so that reputation is not built solely through symbols but through consistent, high-quality governance grounded in integrity.

Further research findings confirm that *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* functions as an ethical control system that guides the implementation of Total Quality Management to ensure it remains aligned with the objectives of Islamic education. Until now, *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* has primarily been positioned as a normative framework in Islamic law, Islamic economics, and values-based governance. (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). This study expands upon that perspective by demonstrating that *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* also functions as an operational mechanism that both constrains and guides decision-making processes, innovation, accountability, and resource management in day-to-day institutional practices.

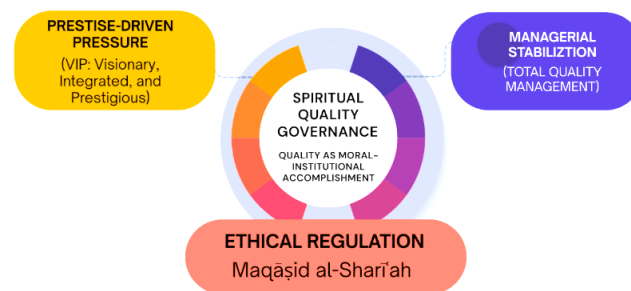
Each dimension of *maqāṣid* serves a distinct regulatory function, ranging from maintaining religious orientation, ensuring the well-being of students, fostering intellectual development, promoting family involvement, to ensuring transparency in financial management. (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These findings reinforce the view that the effectiveness of governance in Islamic educational institutions cannot be adequately measured solely through organisational performance indicators but must also be assessed by the ability to maintain a balance between managerial efficiency and moral responsibility. (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014). Thus, *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* serves as a source of ethical legitimacy that ensures all quality management practices remain oriented toward the public good and Islamic values.

A synthesis of all research findings leads to the formulation of Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) as a conceptual framework for explaining quality governance in elite Islamic boarding schools. (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). This study demonstrates that effective governance is not shaped by Total Quality Management (TQM), VIP Orientation, or *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* in isolation, but rather by the dynamic interaction among all three. In this configuration, VIP Orientation drives institutional transformation through the strengthening of vision, system integration, and institutional legitimacy. (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014). Furthermore, Total Quality Management provides operational mechanisms through standardisation, continuous evaluation, and quality control.

At the same time, *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* serves as an ethical safeguard that ensures all managerial practices remain oriented toward the public good, justice, and Islamic values. Thus, SQG does not view quality merely as the achievement of organisational performance indicators, but as the result of the integration of managerial effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, and moral-spiritual responsibility. (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This framework expands the study of Islamic educational governance by offering the perspective that the success of quality systems in faith-based institutions is determined by the ability to harmonise modern managerial rationality with the ethical values embedded in the organisational culture. (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014).

Although all three pesantren apply the same principles, this study shows that Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) develops in different configurations according to the characteristics of each institution. Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra places greater emphasis on strengthening public legitimacy through institutional reputation and measurable quality achievements. IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri exhibits the most systematic configuration through the integration of quality assurance systems, organisational accountability, and ethical controls throughout the entire governance process.(Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Meanwhile, the Al-Irsyad Tengeran Islamic Boarding School places greater emphasis on the internalisation of the values of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as the foundation for every institutional policy and practice.

Figure 1. Spiritual Quality Governance in Pesantren



Source: Synthesis Finding by Researcher

These variations indicate that the implementation of SQG does not follow a single, standardised pattern but rather evolves contextually in accordance with institutional history, organisational capacity, leadership orientation, and pesantren culture. These findings reinforce the view that value-based governance is adaptive to the institutional environment without losing consistency in its fundamental principles.(Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Therefore, SQG is more appropriately understood as an analytical framework that explains the diversity of quality governance practices in Islamic educational institutions rather than as a normative model that must be applied uniformly.

This study offers important implications for the development of theory and practice in Islamic educational governance.(Andrews & Glendinning, 2024; Fomba et al., 2023). Theoretically, this study expands the body of research on Total Quality Management (TQM) by demonstrating that the effectiveness of quality systems in religion-based educational institutions requires the integration of managerial mechanisms, institutional legitimacy, and ethical control through Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG). (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024).

Practically, these findings provide guidance for administrators of Islamic boarding schools and other Islamic educational institutions in designing quality assurance systems that are oriented not only toward organisational performance but also toward strengthening values, character, and moral accountability. The main contribution of this study lies in the development of SQG as an analytical framework that explains the dynamic relationship between VIP Orientation, Total Quality Management, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. This framework has the potential to serve as a basis for analysis in various value-based educational institutions that face demands for professionalism without neglecting their moral and spiritual identities.

Table 2. Discussion Analysis, Theoretical Linkage, and Novelty

Research Findings	Theoretical Analysis	Research Novelty
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1. VIP Orientation as Governance Driver	1. Refutes the view that educational competition forces institutions toward market-oriented and technocratic governance	Demonstrates that prestige-driven pressure can strengthen transparency and organisational reflection instead of diluting spiritual values
2. Vision, integration, and reputation function as instruments for sustainable structural transformation	2. Expands Social Capital Theory (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998)	
3. Prestige acts as social legitimacy derived from quality, not a commercial marketing stunt.	3. Organisational Legitimacy by aligning professionalism with religious identity (p. 10).	
1. TQM Adaptation in Faith-Based Settings	1. Expands classical Total Quality Management frameworks (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014)	Redefines TQM from a neutral set of corporate techniques into a value-embedded mechanism that preserves moral legitimacy.
2. TQM does not displace religious authority but acts as an operational stabiliser	2. Shows how quality management tools adapt seamlessly to the idiosyncratic culture of an Islamic institution.	
3. Fosters participatory governance, data-driven decisions, and continuous quality loops.		
1. Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as Operational Control	1. Shifts Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (Auda, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024) out of its traditional silos.	Establishes Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as a functional, operational control system that guides day-to-day administrative innovations.
2. The five dimensions (<i>ḥijāz</i>) serve as concrete metrics for daily managerial decisions, student safety, family synergy, and finance.	2. Moves the concept beyond standard normative legal theory or Islamic economics into active school operations.	
1. The Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) Model	1. Overcomes the fragmentation in previous educational management literature	Proposes the SQG Framework as a novel, non-uniform analytical lens to evaluate quality in faith-based education without sacrificing religious identity.
2. Synthesis of VIP Orientation, TQM, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah forms the SQG model	2. Bridges the gap between modern managerial rationality and faith-based educational cultures.	
3. SQG operates contextually and adaptively depending on institutional traits.		

Source: Data Collection, 2026

CONCLUSION

Total Quality Management (TQM) in elite Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia does not function merely as an instrument for improving organisational efficiency but has evolved into a governance mechanism capable of integrating managerial effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, and moral responsibility. The implementation of TQM is influenced by VIP Orientation, which drives institutional transformation through the strengthening of vision, system integration, and the building of institutional reputation. At the same time, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* serves as an ethical control system that guides decision-making, innovation, accountability, and resource management to ensure they remain aligned with the goals of Islamic education. The interaction of these three elements forms Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) as an analytical framework that explains how

quality governance in Islamic boarding schools can respond to the demands of professionalism without losing its religious identity.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the study of Total Quality Management through the development of the Spiritual Quality Governance (SQG) concept as an analytical model for value-based quality governance in Islamic educational institutions. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for pesantren administrators in developing a quality assurance system that is not only oriented toward achieving performance indicators but also toward strengthening integrity, accountability, and institutional character. This study is limited to three elite Islamic boarding schools; therefore, the findings cannot yet be generalised to all types of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Consequently, future research is recommended to test the application of SQG in various types of Islamic educational institutions using a comparative approach or mixed-methods design to broaden empirical validity while developing a value-based quality governance model within a more diverse educational context.

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