

# Quality Culture Design In Building Madrasah Competitiveness At MAN 2 Malang And MBI Amanatul Ummah Mojokerto

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## Abstract.

*Building quality Islamic educational institutions to produce competitive graduates is an urgent need today. The quality is derived from a quality culture, so the quality of Islamic educational institutions should be from 'the Islamic quality culture' managed by the institutions themselves. The design of a quality culture is worthy of consideration. Since Islam is a perfect religion, if the 'Spirit of Islam' is successfully adapted by an educational institution, the institution deserves to be called a true Islamic educational institution. Such kind of institution can answer most of the public demands. This research was conducted at two Islamic education institutions, MAN 2 Malang and MBI Amanatul Ummah Mojokerto. From the qualitative study, it was found that both institutions had implemented the principles and mechanisms of 'taking the spirit of Islam' and using it as the design of the institutions' quality culture. Thus, this resulted in various quality excellences in students, teachers, educational staff, and educational institutions. The design of the quality culture of both institutions followed the principles of: 1) focus on God's truth, 2) the power of dedication, 3) riyadlah/self-discipline, and 4) commitment to quality. This is the design of a quality culture with the spirit of Islam in Islamic educational institutions, which is able to produce optimal and sustainable quality.*

**Keywords:** Design; quality culture and institution quality.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The current dynamics of Islamic educational institutions in achieving quality are truly intense within the context of vigorous competition, which deserves appreciation. This is a positive impact of the policy of decentralizing education management by district/city governments, as well as the increased awareness among individual schools. Institutional quality is finally seen as a fundamental issue and has become a concern for educational institution managers to maximize. This is an interesting fact to examine because quality is derived from a culture of quality. Therefore, an institution's quality culture is a more fundamental factor in shaping students into individuals who are optimistic, courageous, cooperative, and possess personal and academic skills. An institution can be considered quality if it can achieve success, especially if students demonstrate high academic achievement, meet established standards, possess values of honesty, piety, politeness, and an appreciation of culture, demonstrate a high level of responsibility, and demonstrate abilities that are manifested in the form of skills by the knowledge base they have acquired.<sup>1</sup>

In this article, the researchers present the results of a study on quality culture design in building the competitiveness of *madrasahs* at MAN 2 Malang and the International Standard Madrasah (MBI) Amanatul Ummah Mojokerto. Both institutions have similarities in the design of their educational quality culture, although there are differences in their operationalization. Both apply professionalism in education, as Arcaro claims that educational professionalism does not recognize comfort zones in the efforts to improve the quality of education<sup>2</sup>. Both always find the momentum for achievements, as Chatib's opinion regarding the comfort zone, which means that people do not want to be creative anymore for higher achievements<sup>3</sup>. This is one of the unique aspects that researchers have recorded and presented in this article

## II. METHODS

This research used a qualitative method because it was intended to reveal in detail a phenomenon that cannot be quantified and was descriptive, such as the process of stages, the understanding of a variety of concepts, the characteristics of programs, images, styles, procedures of a habit, the physical model of an artifact, and others<sup>4</sup>. The qualitative approach can describe and understand the meaning underlying the behavior of participants, describe complex settings and interactions, explore to identify types of information, and describe phenomena.<sup>5</sup> This is fundamental to reveal and picture the true reality of the design of quality culture in the two institutions studied. The stages of research were reviewing the literature and collecting research data through interviews and observations, processing the research data, trying to extract the purest data that had never been achieved before, and making conclusions.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education today is under intense pressure to change. Numerous restructuring programs have been implemented to improve teachers' performance, enrich the curriculum, meet the demand for students, and advance school connections. These educational reform efforts have yielded limited success because many parties hold a narrow view of education. Quality, on the other hand, views education as a total system, shaped by some internal and external components. Only by reforming the entire education system can education professionals achieve the quality improvements demanded by society.<sup>6</sup> The leader of a madrasah is the one who can lead the improvement of the entire education system in a madrasah. Dryden argues that one of the leadership skills is being able to involve everyone in the school in the transformation effort<sup>7</sup>. Top leaders have the authority and it is expected that leaders have the capacity and integrity to think about sparking and mobilizing every potential in the entire education system. Therefore, the culture of quality can be influenced by the first factor, the madrasah leader. At MAN 2 Malang and MBI Amanatul Ummah, the madrasah leaders are the main factors because from their great thought, the seeds of a quality culture can be sown and then disseminated. Essentially, madrasah leaders are the source of values that become the springs of quality in the quality culture building of madrasahs. Their existence as philosophy founders, formulators of vision and mission, and role models that are closely linked to the functions of *uswah* and *qudwah*, which require maturity. The influence of the leaders of both madrasahs as top leaders is truly present and noticeable. The leaders at both madrasahs are truly capable of motivating the administrators to become intelligent, agile, and creative individuals.

In both madrasahs, the leaders do not simply act as administrators, pilots, or locomotive engineers who carry out tasks based on textual instructions. Rather, they resemble drivers, climbers, and entrepreneurs. They constantly strive to create added value by leveraging their strengths to cover weaknesses, continuously thinking about exploring their potential, seeking and exploiting existing opportunities, and transforming threats into challenges. Society has its demands, while madrasahs, as educational institutions, also have their own rules and mechanisms to follow. Madrasahs do not need to focus solely on the demands of the society as their sole consideration, but should also balance this with the awareness that the demands are a reality that needs to be addressed, not an absolute reality that must be used as a guideline. The second factor is the concept of quality culture itself, which is closely related to the first factor. However, while the first factor considers the existence of madrasah leaders, the second factor is at their implementation. What the leaders thought when playing an active role raises awareness on the need for school improvement and expectations of higher achievement, as well as consensus for change. This is intended to ensure that school quality improvement is the result of a shared consensus, so that each element of the school has awareness and commitment to the desired quality. The ability to mobilize shared commitment through a concept is the expertise required for madrasah leaders. The leaders from both Islamic institutions used the inspiration of the

Quran and Hadith in designing the madrasah quality culture. As stated by Usmuni, the Quran is the source of inspiration for the emergence of Islamic philosophy<sup>8</sup>. There is an esoteric process in formulating the vision and mission of a madrasah, which begins with taking inspiration from several verses to create a philosophy and then formulating the vision and mission based on that philosophy.

This process is believed as the process to connect the spirit of Islam, and this is fundamental, considering that a madrasah is an Islamic educational institution. To emphasize, if the initial inspiration comes from the Quran and Hadith and lead to a philosophy, and from that philosophy to madrasah's vision and mission, then from here the journey of a complete quality culture begins. The esoteric process on the emergence of a vision inspired by the source of absolute truth has been proven to result in an exoteric process that can reflect the nobility and greatness of Islam completely in the quality of education produced. The quality culture of madrasah is the heart beat of the institution, its formulation must be with clear, viable, and measurable commitment from the school community, including teachers, students, and society<sup>9</sup>. The two institutions in this study have made measurable commitments that are similar in their principles but differ in their implementations. The principles are: First, Focus on God, which means that the leaders of both institutions have the awareness that educating humans is mandatory from God. Therefore, it is necessary to find the right verses or articles as a reference for education in implementing 'what God wants'. This first principle leads to various competencies, including being on target and on time, having a complete vision and mission, having strong faith, and being value dense. The second is Strong dedication, which means a strong determination to practice the knowledge in education and devotion to knowledge. Several competencies emerging from this second principle include thinking big, daring to take risks, total involvement, being responsible, and being decisive.

The third principle is *Riyadlah* or self-discipline, which means implementing a self-discipline program such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays or following Prophet David, reciting regular *wirid*, and so on. This is due to the awareness that a complete education lies in providing programs that address both the physical and spiritual dimensions of students. This fosters various competencies such as student discipline, steadfastness in principles, empathy, resilience, moral depth, and exemplary behavior. All of these prophetic competencies are crucial for fostering internal motivation in students to achieve the best quality of life. The fourth is 4) Commitment to Quality which refers to instilling the urgency of quality in students' consciousness. This is the true result of the careful implementation of the first to third principles. From this principle, various competencies emerge are competitiveness, continuous improvement, sensitivity to change, agility in seizing opportunities, objective measurement, and a championship mentality. All of these competencies are based on precision, speed, and accuracy in decision-making. John West Burnham argues that quality culture of a madrasah can be seen in at least 10 things,<sup>10</sup>, including the values and mission of the madrasah, the structure of organization, communication, decision-making, work environment, recruitment and selection, curriculum planning, resource and budget management, discipline, and public relations. According to Arcaro, a quality school begins with the formulation and development of vision and mission. Quality visions and missions focus on customer needs, encourage total community involvement in the program, develop a system for measuring educational value, support the necessary systems, staff, and students to manage changes, and promote continuous improvement by always striving to make better educational products.

Mulyadi also shares Arcaro's opinion. The three experts on quality culture similarly choose the formulation of the institution's vision and mission, and focus on students. However, this study found that the first thing both institutions do is focus on God. In addition, the inspiration for formulating the vision and mission is through the esoteric process to explore the truth from God's words. Inspirations from an absolute source, combined with the power of dedication, self-discipline (*riyadlah*), and a commitment to quality, have successfully built a culture of superior quality in both madrasahs. This superior quality culture has resulted in

outstanding achievements recognized by the community. As Kusnadi explained, this is a strategy that emphasizes process and comprehensively achieving results<sup>11</sup> that is used by the professionals at both institutions to address emerging issues. They have refined the developed processes and made significant improvements.<sup>12</sup> Many experts and futurologists argue that natural science and technology, along with Islam, have and will increasingly play a major role in the future. Researchers have found that in both madrasahs, the competitiveness has successfully demonstrated excellence and success, thus becoming a consideration for customers when choosing them. Both madrasahs have been able to strengthen their market share, connect with their environment, continuously improve performance, and establish a profitable position.

<sup>13</sup> The third factor is societal demands. Most people understand that a selection process is necessary to select good workers capable of completing work with quality, speed, and affordability. Competitive educational institutions are those that are innovative, creative, possess quality, serve as a reference for interested students, and also offer distinctive and attractive programs that appeal to educational customers.<sup>14</sup> In the modern business world, people no longer care about where someone comes from, but rather what they are capable of. Race, ethnicity, nationality, or religious issues are not taken into consideration. Someone considered devout in their religion, for example, will not be accepted if they are incompetent in the recruitment process. Companies will not want to be burdened with unqualified workers. In an era characterized by such free and open competition, cultural values, primordial relationships, and even trust will increasingly disappear. Instead, what is needed is quality to achieve victory in the competition. Rationality, openness, and objectivity are made into true strengths. On the other hand, subjectivity, a hallmark of underdeveloped societies, will be abandoned. Entering the world as briefly described, educational institutions are crucially needed to equip their graduates with the various strengths demanded by society, such as graduates who are capable and willing to compete.<sup>15</sup> The reality of global competition demands that madrasahs produce graduates who are capable and willing to compete. This is what society demands of today's education, which means that madrasahs are truly required not only to meet the challenges of competitive reality but also to provide the best solutions. The researchers observed that both institutions have successfully fulfilled these two roles. Responding to challenges and providing solutions to the demands are two complex issues. Seemingly similar, there are differences between the two. First, in the role of responding to challenges, both madrasahs have successfully proven through various student achievements in academic and non-academic competitions.

Both institutions have also succeeded in assisting their graduates accepted into top universities at home and abroad, with graduation rates of 97% to 100%. The societal demand for competent and competitive graduates has been met admirably by both madrasahs. Furthermore, both institutions play a second, equally important role, which is providing solutions to societal demands. The second significant role has been successfully undertaken by both institutions. Both have equipped students with comprehensive competencies, enabling them to graduate competitively, both physically and spiritually. Outwardly, they are equipped with academic and non-academic excellence, while their inner selves are equipped with superior determination, a result of cultivating self-discipline during the learning process. Public demands are not simply used as a basis for education, but rather directed toward the best perspective in addressing those demands. This role is what the researchers call providing solutions to public demand. The researchers express great appreciation to both institutions for providing the best solutions to public demand by instilling values inspired by the Quran and Hadith, as a manifestation of the principle of 'focus on God'. A quality culture design that begins with a focus on "God's Will" is the key to quality excellence, followed by a strong dedication. Essentially, God does not need humans, but humans need God so that all commands and prohibitions are actually for the good of humans. Likewise, in Islamic educational institutions, "God's Will"

should be the primary benchmark design of their quality culture. Stepping into self-discipline (*riyadlah*) by all school members will be able to form a quality commitment that will produce various achievements from students, teachers, and the institution. This proves that a quality culture of excellence can produce superior institutional quality because it is indirectly “energized by God”.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The quality culture design at MAN 2 Malang and MBI Amanatul Ummah is built on four pillars, namely focus on God, strong dedication, *riyadlah* or self-discipline, and quality commitment. With these four pillars, the quality culture of both institutions is firmly established so that it is able to produce superior quality institutions. Both institutions have achieved success in various competitions at home and abroad in academic and non-academic fields. Both institutions have also graduates who excel in academics and non-academics and are accepted into their favorite universities at home and abroad, with a percentage of 97% to 100%. This achievement deserves appreciation, considering that there is always an increase from year to year. The spirit and habit of achievement are visible and always maintained to continue to improve in quality and quantity. There is always a renewal in the motivation to achieve and that is the excellence of a quality culture that can produce superior quality of Islamic educational institutions. *Wallahu a'lam bisshawab*.

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