



IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES AND SCHOOL QUALITY STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Integrated Quality Management (IQM) is a managerial approach that emphasizes continuous improvement, the involvement of all elements of the organization, and an orientation toward stakeholder satisfaction. In the context of secondary education, the implementation of MMT is important to meet the increasingly complex demands of improving the quality of education. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Integrated Quality Management in secondary education by highlighting the structural challenges faced as well as strategies to strengthen school quality. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design based on a literature review. Data were obtained from a review of books, scientific journal articles, academic papers, and education policy documents relevant to quality management and secondary education. The results of the study show that the principles of MMT, such as focusing on learners, continuous improvement, and school citizen involvement, have been widely discussed and recommended in the literature, but their implementation in secondary schools still faces various structural challenges, including rigid bureaucracy, limited resources, resistance to change, and in continuity of education policies. This study confirms that the success of MMT is largely determined by the leadership of the principal, the participation of school residents, and contextual policy support. Therefore, a quality strengthening strategy is needed that emphasizes leadership development, policy alignment, and sustainable development of a quality culture in secondary schools.

Keywords: *Integrated Quality Management, Secondary Education, School Quality*

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A. Introduction

Secondary education plays a strategic role in the national education system because it is a bridge between basic education and higher education, as well as the world of work. At this level, students are not only prepared to master academic knowledge but also develop the character, skills, and readiness to face social dynamics and global demands. Therefore, the quality of secondary education is a crucial issue that continues to receive attention from the government, education practitioners, and academics. However, efforts to improve the quality of secondary education still face various problems, especially those related to the effectiveness of school management, educational leadership, structural policies, and human resource management.

In practice, the quality of secondary education is often understood narrowly as the academic achievement of students or the results of national standard evaluations. This approach tends to place quality as the end result rather than as a process that must be managed systematically and sustainably. As a result, many secondary schools focus on fulfilling administrative indicators and short-term targets without balancing them with the strengthening of a management system that can ensure continuous quality improvement. This condition shows that the problem of the quality of secondary education is closely related to the weak managerial approach in the school management.

One of the main challenges in improving the quality of secondary education is effective school management. In many cases, school management is bureaucratic, hierarchical, and less adaptive to change. The process of planning, implementing, and evaluating school programs often runs in a formality without being supported by a strong culture of quality (M. Subandi, Suherman, Kurniawati, Khamim, & Fachrurroji, 2025). In addition, the leadership of school principals has not been fully oriented towards systemic quality development. Leadership is still understood as an administrative function, not as a driver of change and quality improvement. However, the participation of teachers and education personnel in school strategic decision-making is often limited, so a joint commitment to quality improvement has not been optimally formed.

Another challenge that is no less important is the aspect of educational policy and human resource management. Centralistic and often changing education policies cause difficulties for schools in maintaining the consistency of quality programs (Sallata, Djafri, & Lamatenggo, 2024). Schools are required to adapt to various regulations but are not always equipped with adequate managerial support and resources. Simultaneously, the development of human resources in secondary schools, especially teachers and education personnel, still faces obstacles in terms of continuous training, a collaborative work culture, and a reward system that encourages quality performance. The combination of these factors shows that the problem of secondary education quality is complex and structural, requiring a comprehensive management approach.

In this context, Integrated Quality Management (MMT) is a relevant managerial approach to be applied in secondary education. MMT emphasizes continuous improvement, the involvement of all elements of the organization, orientation to customer satisfaction, and data-driven decision-making. In the world of education, customers are not only interpreted as students, but also as parents, the community, and other stakeholders. This approach views quality as the result of a planned, systematic, and participatory process, so that it is in line with the needs of dynamic and complex school management (Rabiah, 2019).

The relevance of MMT in secondary education is increasing in line with the demands of public accountability and quality competition between educational institutions. Secondary schools are required to develop sustainable institutional excellence. MMT offers a framework that allows schools to build a culture of quality, strengthen transformational leadership, and integrate education policy with managerial practices at the school level (Sofiah, Sitiainmah, & Pratama, 2024).

Various studies have examined the application of Integrated Quality Management in the context of education. A number of studies show that the application of MMT principles can improve school performance, school community satisfaction, and the effectiveness of the learning process (Yusmina, Ar, & Niswanto, 2014). Other research emphasizes the importance of the leadership role of school principals in encouraging the successful implementation of MMT, especially in building commitment and quality culture (Retnomurtiningsih, Haryati, & Wuryandini, 2024). In addition, studies on school quality management also highlight the need for the involvement of teachers and education staff as the main actors in the quality improvement process (Juda, 2025).

However, most of these studies have limitations. Many studies have placed MMT normatively and conceptually without delving deeply into the structural challenges schools face in its implementation. Research on educational leadership and policy is often discussed separately from the MMT framework, so it does not provide a complete picture of the integration of leadership, policy, and school context. In addition, studies that specifically highlight secondary education as the context of MMT implementation are still relatively limited, even though this level has different characteristics and challenges compared to primary and higher education.

Based on these conditions, this study examines the implementation of Integrated Quality Management in secondary education by emphasizing structural challenges and strategies to strengthen school quality. The focus of this research includes how MMT principles are implemented in secondary school management, the factors that influence the success of such implementation, and the various structural challenges that arise in practice. In addition, this study also seeks to identify strategies that can be carried out to

strengthen the implementation of MMT in order to be able to make a real contribution to improving the quality of schools.

In line with this focus, the formulation of the problem in this study includes questions about how to implement the principles of Integrated Quality Management in secondary education, what factors play a role in supporting or hindering its implementation, what structural challenges are faced, and how school quality strengthening strategies can be formulated. This study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of MMT in secondary education, identify the role of leadership, participation, and educational policies, and formulate quality strengthening strategies relevant to the school context.

This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution by enriching the study of education quality management, especially in the context of secondary education and the Integrated Quality Management approach. In addition, this research is expected to make a practical contribution in the form of recommendations for schools, principals, and policymakers in designing and implementing sustainable quality improvement strategies. This research is oriented towards the development of academic discourse and strengthening the practice of quality management of secondary education in a real and contextual manner.

B. Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design based on library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand in depth the concepts, principles, and implementation of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) in secondary education, as stated in various academic sources. This type of descriptive-analytical research is used to systematically describe the ideas, findings, and views of experts related to the implementation of Integrated Quality Management in the context of secondary education, as well as to analyze them using relevant theoretical frameworks.

The data source for this study was entirely in the form of secondary data. Data were obtained from various relevant academic literature, including textbooks, articles in national and international scientific journals, seminar proceedings, dissertations, and educational policy and regulatory documents related to quality management and secondary education. The sources were selected based on the relevance, credibility, and novelty of the information.

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies, namely by searching, reading, and studying in depth various literature related to the research topic. This process includes the identification of key concepts of Integrated

Quality Management, implementation models in education, structural challenges faced by secondary schools, and recommended strategies for strengthening school quality.

Data analysis was carried out through several stages: data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. The data that have been collected are selected and grouped based on key themes, such as the principles of Integrated Quality Management, the role of educational leadership, policy integration, and structural challenges in its implementation. Furthermore, the data were analysed descriptively using the MMT theoretical framework to identify thought patterns, suitability, and differences of views between sources (Sutarto Hp, 2015). The validity of the data was maintained through triangulation of literature sources by comparing and confirming findings from various credible academic references.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Implementation of Integrated Quality Management Principles in Secondary Education

Based on a review of the literature, the implementation of the principles of Integrated Quality Management (IQM) in secondary education is understood as an effort to improve the quality of educational services that are carried out systematically and sustainably. One of the main principles of MMT that is widely discussed in the context of education is the focus on the customer, which in secondary education includes learners and their parents. The literature shows that this approach places learners as the primary subjects of educational services, so that their needs, potential, and satisfaction become the basis for the design and implementation of school programs (Amen 2022).

Several studies confirm that the focus on customers in MMT is realized through the development of responsive learning and feedback mechanisms from students and parents. Feedback is an important instrument for evaluating the quality of education services and continuous improvement. However, various studies have also noted that the use of feedback is often not optimal and tends to be administrative; therefore, it has not been fully used as a basis for strategic decision-making. This indicates a gap between the ideal concept of MMT and its implementation, as recommended in the literature.

The principle of continuous improvement also occupies a central position in the study of Integrated Quality Management in secondary education. The education management literature emphasizes the importance of the cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement as the foundation for improving school quality. Program evaluation, learning supervision, and school work plan review are considered practices that support continuous improvement (Sarvitri & Supriyanto, 2020). However, several studies show that continuous improvement in the context of secondary education is still often understood in a reactive manner and oriented towards meeting

external demands, such as accreditation and formal evaluation, so that it has not developed into a sustainable quality culture.

In addition to focusing on customers and continuous improvement, the involvement of all school residents is an MMT principle widely emphasized in the literature. Studies on education quality management show that the participation of teachers, education staff, and students contributes to the effectiveness of the MMT implementation. This participation is generally realized through teamwork, internal communication, and collaboration in implementing school programs. However, the literature also reveals that participation rates are often still limited to operational aspects, while involvement in strategic decision-making is not fully developed and is heavily influenced by the school leadership styles.

Conceptually, Integrated Quality Management demands alignment between the vision of quality, management system, and organizational culture. The results of the literature review show that the implementation of MMT in secondary education is still in the early stages, where quality principles have been known and adopted procedurally, but have not been systemically integrated into school culture. The implementation of MMT often focuses on the preparation of documents and the implementation of formal programs, without being accompanied by a profound transformation of values and quality mindsets (Paradise, 2024).

Thus, a review of the literature shows that the implementation of Integrated Quality Management principles in secondary education has led to more structured and participatory quality management, but it remains partial. Strengthening conceptual understanding, consistency in the application of quality principles, and internalizing MMT values in school culture are the main prerequisites for Integrated Quality Management to function optimally as a strategic managerial framework for improving the quality of secondary education.

2. The Role of Leadership, Participation and Human Resource Development in MMT

The literature on Integrated Quality Management (IQM) in secondary education consistently places the leadership of school principals as a key factor in the success of quality implementation. Within the framework of MMT, the principal is not only understood as an administrator but also as a quality leader who is responsible for building a vision, strategic direction, and quality culture in the school environment (Manora, 2019). The education management study emphasizes that the ability of school principals to translate the principles of MMT into school operational policies and practices is a prerequisite for creating sustainable quality improvement.

Various studies have shown that participatory and transformational leadership is more effective in supporting the implementation of MMT. The literature reveals that principals with this leadership style tend to encourage the involvement of school

residents, strengthen a shared commitment to quality, and create an organizational climate that is conducive to change and innovation. However, administrative and hierarchical leadership often limits the space for participation and inhibits the internalization of quality values in school organizations.

The participation of teachers and education personnel is also an important element in the implementation of MMT, as emphasized in various studies. The literature shows that the involvement of school residents contributes to the effectiveness of the implementation of quality programs, especially in the field of learning and academic evaluation. However, a number of studies have also noted that such participation is still often limited to the operational level, while involvement in strategic planning and quality decision-making has not been fully developed (Riduansyah, Syahrani, Muammar, Aslamiah, & Cinantya, 2025). This condition shows that participation is not yet fully substantive but is still at the operational level.

Human resource development is a central component of Integrated Quality Management, considering that the quality of an educational organization is highly determined by the quality and competence of individuals in it. The secondary education literature emphasizes that human resource development strategies include professional training, academic supervision, and continuous professional development for teachers and education staff (A. R. Subandi, Putri, Sanusi, & Kusumaningrum, 2024). In addition to improving technical competence, human resource development is also directed at the formation of a collaborative, reflective, and quality-oriented work culture so that each individual is aware of and responsible for improving the quality of educational services.

When associated with educational leadership theory, the role of principals in MMT is aligned with the concepts of transformational and instructional leadership (Mahlan, Tambunan, Dahyanti, & Azainil, 2025). Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and empower school citizens, whereas instructional leadership focuses on improving the quality of learning as the core of educational quality. A literature review shows that integrating the two leadership approaches is an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of MMT. Without strong, participatory leadership and support from sustainable human resource development, Integrated Quality Management has the potential to be applied formally and lose its transformative power in improving the quality of secondary education.

3. Integration of Integrated Quality Management with Education Policy and School Context

A literature review shows that the integration of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) with education policies is an important factor in ensuring the sustainability of quality implementation in secondary education. Normatively, the principles of MMT are in line with the direction of education policy that emphasizes quality improvement, public

accountability, and performance-based evaluation. Policies on national education standards, internal quality assurance systems, and strengthening school-based management provide a regulatory basis for implementing management approaches oriented towards continuous improvement. Within this framework, MMT is seen as a conceptual instrument that can operationalize quality policies in school management practices.

However, various studies have revealed that the alignment between the concept of MMT and education policy has not been fully realized in its implementation. The literature shows that education policies are often translated administratively and procedurally, so the implementation of MMT is more directed towards fulfilling formal regulations rather than strengthening the quality of substance. Consequently, MMT tends to be understood as part of a reporting and documentation system rather than as a strategic managerial framework that drives organizational culture change. This indicates that the integration of MMT with education policy is still partial and has not fully supported the development of school quality sustainably.

In addition to policy factors, the education management literature emphasizes the importance of a school's internal context in influencing the successful implementation of MMT. Organizational culture, resource availability, and the characteristics of the school's social environment are factors that determine a school's readiness to adopt quality management principles. Studies have shown that schools with an open, collaborative, and learning-oriented organizational culture are more capable of consistently integrating MMT. However, resource limitations, both in terms of infrastructure and human resource capacity, often hinder the implementation of systemic and sustainable quality management.

The literature also highlights that the dynamics of education policy are a challenge in the integration of MMT into secondary education. Relatively rapid policy changes, overlapping regulations, and lack of implementation assistance cause schools to face difficulties in maintaining consistency in long-term quality strategies (Khoiriyah, Amiruddin, Salik, & Zaini, 2023). This condition shows that the success of MMT integration does not only depend on the internal readiness of the school, but also on the synchronization of education policies with the needs and the real context of the educational unit.

The study confirms that the integration of Integrated Quality Management with education policies and school contexts is a complex and multidimensional process. Alignment between policy frameworks, school managerial capacity, and organizational culture is needed so that MMT can function optimally as a strategic approach to improving the quality of secondary education. Without adequate integration, the

implementation of MMT has the potential to be formalistic and significantly impact the quality of schools.

4. Structural Challenges and Strategies for Strengthening the Implementation of Integrated Quality Management

The literature review results show that the implementation of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) in secondary education faces several systemic structural challenges. One of the main challenges is the character of the educational bureaucracy, which tends to be hierarchical, centralistic, and procedurally oriented (Adawiyah, Sirozi, & Sumanti, 2024). This bureaucratic structure limits schools' autonomy in designing and executing contextual quality strategies. The literature indicates that schools are often more focused on fulfilling administrative regulations than on developing quality-based managerial innovation. As a result, the implementation of MMT has the potential to be reduced to a formal activity that emphasizes document compliance rather than substantive quality transformation.

Another structural challenge is the limited resources available to high schools. Various studies have confirmed that financial limitations, infrastructure facilities, and human resource capacity are significant obstacles to the implementation of MMT (Akhyar, 2024). These limitations affect the school's ability to organize continuous professional development, build a systematic quality evaluation system, and create a learning environment that supports continuous improvement. From the perspective of MMT, organizational quality is highly dependent on the readiness of resources; therefore, without adequate support, the implementation of quality principles tends to be partial and unsustainable (Zahro, Putri, Fathurrobbani, & Mu'allimin, 2025).

In addition to structural and resource factors, the literature review identified resistance to change as a crucial challenge in the implementation of MMT. Quality management requires a change in the work paradigm towards a collaborative, reflective, and continuous improvement-oriented pattern. However, several studies have shown that such changes often face rejection, both individually and institutionally, especially when MMT is perceived as an additional administrative burden or a threat to established work practices (Intan, Health, & Saguni, 2024). This resistance is reinforced by the discontinuity of education policy, where relatively rapid and inconsistent regulatory changes make it difficult for schools to build a stable, long-term quality strategy.

In facing these challenges, the education management literature recommends several comprehensive strategies to strengthen the implementation of MMT. Strengthening the leadership of school principals is the main strategy, especially in building a quality vision, managing organizational changes, and encouraging the active participation of all school residents (Majid & Arifin, 2025). In addition, adjustments to educational policies are needed to provide more flexibility and trust to schools in

developing quality strategies according to their context and needs. The development of a sustainable quality culture is also seen as an important prerequisite for internalizing quality values, strengthening collective commitment, and habituating the practice of continuous reflection and evaluation in school management.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the implementation of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) in secondary education has been pursued through the application of basic quality principles, such as a focus on students, continuous improvement, and school community involvement. However, its implementation is still partial and has not been systematically integrated into school management. MMT tends to be understood as an administrative procedure, while the internalization of quality values as an organizational culture has not developed optimally, resulting in a gap between ideal concepts and implementation practices.

Leadership, school community participation, and human resource development are key factors in determining the success of MMT implementation. School principals play a strategic role in building a vision of quality and managing organizational change, while the participation of teachers and education personnel contributes to the effectiveness of implementing quality programs. However, such engagement needs to be strengthened, especially in strategic decision-making and sustainable competency development.

In addition, MMT integration with education policies and school contexts has not been fully aligned. Structural barriers, such as bureaucracy, resource limitations, resistance to change, and policy inconsistency, limit the consistency and sustainability of MMT implementation. Therefore, MMT needs to be positioned as a strategic managerial framework for improving the quality of secondary education, supported by strengthening a culture of quality, visionary leadership, and more flexible policies oriented towards continuous improvement.

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