



Transformation of Teacher Evaluation in Improving the Quality of Community-Based Madrasah Education

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher performance assessments in improving the quality of education in community-based madrasahs. A descriptive qualitative case study approach was used at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal. Sixteen teachers and one madrasah head were deliberately chosen as informants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and then analyzed using thematic techniques. The results of the study show that the implementation of teacher performance assessments is administrative and unsustainable and has a limited impact on improving learning quality. Senior teachers with civil servant status and more than 15 years of service show low participation in the evaluation process due to a lack of follow-up and professional development. Other inhibiting factors include low digital literacy, a lack of learning innovation, and an organizational culture that is less open to feedback. The study recommends strengthening reflective supervision and forming professional learning communities based on total quality management principles to improve sustainable teacher performance.

Keywords: Teacher Performance Assessment, Education Quality, Academic Supervision, Total Quality Management, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic tool for developing high-quality, competitive human resources. In the face of globalization and accelerating digital transformation, education must produce not only academically superior individuals but also those with strong character, social competence, and high integrity (UNESCO, 2023). Teachers play a central role in ensuring learning success. Thus, the quality of education depends heavily on teachers' performance in carrying out their professional roles (OECD, 2022).

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, an Islamic basic education institution, faces challenges in maintaining and improving learning quality, particularly in community-based semi-urban areas. MI (Islamic Elementary School) NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal is a community-based, private madrasah facing structural and cultural problems when implementing teacher performance evaluations. Although systematic performance appraisal efforts have been carried out, implementation remains administrative and lacks contextual and ongoing coaching (Gunawan & Susilo, 2024).

Ideally, teacher performance evaluation is a formative and summative process that aims to improve teacher professionalism and responsibility. Fair and reflective formative assessments have been shown to encourage deep teacher involvement in self-development (Van der Veen, 2021). Guskey (2002) also emphasizes that effective professional development must be based on evaluation data so that coaching becomes more targeted. However, many evaluation practices still emphasize annual formalities without providing constructive feedback (Putri & Mardison, 2021).

Psychologically, the effectiveness of teacher evaluations is greatly influenced by perceptions of fairness and transparency in the evaluation process. According to Deci and Ryan's motivational theory (2000), evaluations carried out openly and constructively can increase teachers' intrinsic motivation. These evaluations encourage active engagement, a sense of belonging, and a commitment to quality learning (Van der Veen, 2021).

Teacher evaluations are also an important part of institutional accountability. According to Elmore (2004), the teacher evaluation system is a quality control instrument that reflects an institution's responsibility to society and the state. Effective evaluation requires a good system and an organizational culture open to reflection and continuous improvement (Cheng & Shen, 2025).

Fitria and Sutiah's studies (Fitria & Sutiah, 2024) show that continuous coaching after evaluations significantly improves teacher professionalism. However, Augustine et al. (2023) found that low motivation, an unoptimal head of the madrasah, and an organizational culture that avoids criticism are the main obstacles to implementing meaningful evaluations.

In the context of Islamic education, teacher evaluations assess pedagogical and professional competence and must also consider moral and spiritual values. Teachers are moral role models as well as educators (Eryandi, 2023). Therefore, performance evaluations in madrasahs must be holistic and integrate Islamic values, not just technical.

The Total Quality Management (TQM) approach to educational management provides a relevant conceptual framework for developing an ongoing, participatory, reflective, and quality-improvement-oriented evaluation system. According to Saihu (2020), TQM-based academic supervision can improve teacher competence when implemented collectively and consistently.

However, scientific studies on teacher performance evaluation in madrasahs that consider local sociocultural aspects and Islamic values are limited. Therefore, this study is important for describing the implementation of teacher performance evaluations in community-based private madrasahs, identifying challenges and supporting factors, and evaluating their contribution to improving the quality of Islamic education sustainably.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to deeply explore the practice of teacher performance evaluation and its supporting and inhibiting factors within community-based madrasahs (Creswell, 2013).

The study was conducted at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal, a private Islamic elementary school in a semi-urban area of Kendal Regency, Central Java. This school was deliberately selected because it implements an internal evaluation system for teachers and reflects the typical challenges of community-based education.

This study included 17 informants, consisting of 16 teachers and one headmaster. The interviewed teachers have diverse backgrounds in terms of personnel status (10 teachers have civil servant status, and six are honorary teachers) and work experience (most have worked for more than 10 years, and eight

have worked for more than 15 years). In terms of educational qualifications, most teachers have a bachelor's degree (S1), and two have a master's degree (S2). Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in the performance evaluation process and their willingness to provide reflective information.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with semi-structured guidelines, direct observation of learning activities, and document studies of learning plans, evaluation instruments, and performance assessment results. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was conducted in two sessions to ensure depth of data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014), through data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as by re-examining several informants to ensure accurate interpretation (member checking).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation and Obstacles to Teacher Performance Assessment

Based on the results of observations and documentation, the implementation of the Teacher Performance Assessment at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal has been carried out routinely and in an orderly administrative manner. The assessment is carried out twice a year and includes an evaluation component that refers to the four main teacher competencies regulated by the Ministry of Religion. The head of the madrasah and the internal assessment team fill out the Teacher Performance Assessment instrument according to official guidelines. Assessments are carried out through direct classroom observations, examination of learning tools, and informal discussions with the relevant teacher. The results are compiled into grades and stored in school archives.

However, this assessment practice does not fully reflect efforts oriented toward quality professional development. There is no evidence of meetings that thoroughly discuss teacher performance assessment results or follow-up documents with recommendations for individual teachers based on the Teacher Performance Assessment findings. In fact, no written feedback is delivered to teachers, which should be an important part of formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Teachers have no reflective or post-Teacher Performance Appraisal

improvement records. This indicates that the coaching function of the Teacher Performance Assessment has not been systematically implemented.

Upon additional inquiry, most teachers, particularly those with civil servant status and over 15 years of service, said the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) is merely a routine activity, and the scores have little effect on their duties or incentives. Some teachers said they view the Teacher Performance Assessment as a control measure, not a development tool. This shows that the TPA process has not instilled a reflective and collaborative culture that motivates teachers to improve themselves.

Another major limitation is the low digital literacy of senior teachers. Six out of sixteen teachers still have difficulty using computers to prepare digital lesson plans, access madrasah e-learning, or perform Excel-based class processing. These teachers tend to delegate administrative tasks to younger teachers or administrative staff. In fact, teachers' ability to master learning technology is an important benchmark of professional competence. This also impacts the low integration of technology in the teaching and learning process. No teacher uses interactive media, such as PowerPoint presentations, learning videos, or digital quiz apps. All learning is based on lecture methods and whiteboards.

Although training efforts have been made, such as the Google Classroom training organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, they have not significantly changed teachers' practices. Based on the principles of andragogy, senior teachers require an approach that considers their internal motivations, prior learning experiences, and unique needs (Knowles et al., 2015). Material-intensive, one-way training only adds to the burden and is not the solution. Therefore, mentoring between teachers, especially peer coaching models, is a more effective way to empower teachers in a real-world context.

In addition to technical limitations, the dominant organizational culture poses an additional challenge. The madrasah upholds family values and solidarity, which positively impacts the loyalty and stability of the work team. However, in the context of Teacher Performance Assessments, these scores tend to lead to resistance to critical evaluation. The head of the madrasah said he was "wary" of giving a low score because he was worried it would damage personal relationships. In one interview, a coaching teacher mentioned that the assessment score was set so that it would not hurt, particularly for long-time teachers. This practice clearly violates the principle of fair, objective, and accountable evaluation (Elmore, 2004) and

impacts the validity of Teacher Performance Assessment data as a basis for quality improvement.

This kind of work culture reveals a discrepancy between formal systems based on procedures and social practices influenced by personal relationships. Consequently, Teacher Performance Assessments serve primarily as a control tool to ensure compliance rather than as a means to promote professionalism. The success of an education quality system based on the Total Quality Management approach depends not only on procedural aspects but also on an organizational culture that adapts to changing dynamics and is committed to continuous self-evaluation (Cheng & Shen, 2025). Transformation is key to making madrasah culture a learning organization that incorporates feedback and reflection into the daily work process.

2. The Relationship between Teacher Performance Assessment and Education Quality and the TQM Principles

A thorough study of the implementation of the Teacher Performance Assessment in madrasahs has revealed that it has not significantly improved learning quality. There is no evidence that the results of the TPAs are used to develop sustainable professional development activities, such as thematic training, learning innovation workshops, or teacher learning communities. In several leading madrasahs, the Teacher Performance Assessment serves as the basis for preparing regular meetings to discuss teaching reflections and is even considered when promoting teachers. However, this relationship has not yet been established at MI NU 09 Kauman.

In terms of managerial quality, the Teacher Performance Appraisal cycle lacks a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) mechanism. In fact, within the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM), the PDCA cycle is essential to ensuring sustainable quality (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996). The Teacher Performance Assessment process is not used in the planning stage of quality improvement. There are no further actions in the form of training or mentoring. The results of the assessment are not analyzed reflexively, and there is no system improvement based on previous evaluations. In other words, the Teacher Performance Assessment cycle is not fully integrated into the Madrasah Quality Management System.

Nevertheless, the existence of the Teacher Performance Assessment has positive value, especially in strengthening learning administration governance. Learning documents are more organized, lesson plans are routine, and learning

journals are completed. For some young teachers, the Teacher Performance Assessment is a means of adjusting to a systematic work culture. This demonstrates that, although not optimal, the TPAs have the potential to strengthen a culture of quality if developed in a targeted manner (Subaidi et al., 2024).

Thus, this study confirms that although the Teacher Performance Assessment at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal has been administered, it has not yet functioned as a sustainable quality improvement system. Various structural, cultural, and professional barriers hinder its strategic role as a coaching tool. Therefore, serious efforts are needed to reform the TPAs, beginning with structuring the work culture, strengthening teachers' digital literacy, preparing follow-up programs, and integrating TPAs into the madrasah TQM system. Once these reforms are implemented, the Teacher Performance Assessment will serve not only as a control tool but also as the foundation for reflective, contextual, and sustainable teacher development.

An important indicator of the effectiveness of the TPA that is lacking at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal is an actively functioning teacher learning community forum. During the interviews, none of the teachers mentioned discussion groups, peer teaching, or post-performance reflection forums. Teacher development activities are limited to early-year work meetings and collectively filling out learning tools. There are no reflection-based professional learning activities or sharing of good practices between teachers. In fact, the Learning Community (PLC) is essential to fostering a culture of quality in modern schools.

According to the literature, the teacher-learning community is intended to create a collaborative space for reflection on learning, analysis of learning problems, and development of collaborative teaching innovations (Rahmawati & Sumantri, 2022). The absence of such a community suggests that teachers work individually and are not connected in a structured professional development scheme. According to the principles of Total Quality Management in Islamic education, fostering collaboration among teachers and promoting collective learning are essential to cultivating a culture of continuous improvement (Gunawan & Susilo, 2024). Without a learning community, teachers will continue to work in their comfort zones, missing out on the opportunity to improve their teaching quality through collaboration. These findings are complemented by theoretical perspectives related to Total Quality Management (TQM), instructional leadership, and professional learning community development.

Ideally, the implementation of teacher performance evaluations should not only be administrative but also integrated into the cycle of continuous quality improvement, as per the principle of TQM. Recent studies show that implementing TQM in educational institutions can improve teacher professionalism and service quality and build a more transparent evaluative culture when implemented through cycles (Aspinwall & Owlia, 2024). This process is known as Plan-Do-Check-Act (Saputra et al., 2025). In the context of community-based madrasahs, TQM integration is important because it is able to connect the teacher assessment process with managerial decision-making and professional development programs.

As an instructional leader, the head of the madrasah plays a strategic role in ensuring the success of teacher performance evaluations. According to international research, active instructional leadership through classroom observation, feedback, professional mentoring, and monitoring of lesson plans significantly improves teaching quality and teacher motivation (Hallinger, 2020; Sun & Leithwood, 2022). However, when academic supervision becomes merely a routine formality, teachers are less encouraged to innovate, and evaluation loses its role as a coaching tool.

Additionally, establishing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is an important factor in transforming teacher evaluation. PLCs have been shown to improve self-efficacy, promote learning innovation, and foster a collaborative culture through regular discussions, peer coaching, and data-driven reflection (Harris & Jones, 2024; Bui & Ha, 2023). The absence of PLC forums in madrasahs results in teachers working individually, with no opportunity for collective reflection. This collaboration is actually an important foundation for the sustainable professional development of teachers.

Recent research shows that the effectiveness of teacher performance evaluations is greatly influenced by the quality of the evaluation tools and the clarity of the evaluation criteria. Sari and Hamzah (2024) emphasized that evaluations only impact teacher professionalism when followed by coaching aligned with the assessed competencies. These findings align with those of Hidayati and Salam (2023), who found that the evaluation of teacher performance in community-based madrasahs is often hindered by unclear standards, rendering the evaluation results ineffective for teacher development.

In the context of quality management, teacher performance evaluations should be integrated with consistent academic supervision based on the principles of total quality management (TQM). Rahim and Latif (2023) emphasize that effective supervision must utilize the PDCA cycle as the basis for sustainable quality

improvement. Furthermore, Arifin and Nugroho (2025) added that strong instructional leadership is essential in establishing a culture of quality in schools, enabling evaluation results to be systematically followed up through academic coaching and mentoring. Teachers' involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has been proven to strengthen reflective and collaborative cultures, improving teaching quality. Sukmadewa and Affandi (2024) demonstrate that PLCs provide a space for teachers to discuss learning practices, analyze evaluation results, and design collaborative solutions. Latifah and Murti (2024) emphasize that follow-up on teacher performance evaluations is more effective when teachers have the opportunity to reflect together and receive assistance through structured professional development programs.

The discrepancy between administrative evaluations and the necessity of improving teacher competence indicates that the evaluation process has not fulfilled its strategic function as a tool for developing quality. According to the latest literature, the effectiveness of teacher evaluations is largely determined by data-driven follow-up, competency analysis, and the integration of assessment results into coaching plans (Martínez, 2020; Gavora, 2021). Within the scope of quality management, teacher performance assessments should be part of a continuous improvement cycle that incorporates planning, monitoring, and measurable quality improvement (Aspinwall & Owlia, 2024). However, in community-based madrasahs, the absence of training need mapping causes evaluations to stop at grade preparation without strategic utilization. Another study confirms that educational institutions that successfully implement TQM-based evaluations use the evaluation results as the main basis for teacher development planning (Saputra et al., 2025; Saleh & Yusuf, 2024). This ensures that each teacher receives an intervention that addresses their competency needs.

Low follow-up of evaluations is also related to teachers' diverse professional readiness. Teachers who do not receive competency improvement interventions tend to stagnate in learning innovation even when evaluations are carried out regularly. Studies (Bui & Ha, 2023) have shown that teachers who receive structured feedback and ongoing coaching experience significant increases in self-efficacy and learning creativity. Similarly, Harris and Jones (2024) emphasize that collaboration in professional learning communities directly increases teachers' accuracy in using innovative learning strategies. In the context of madrasahs, the absence of professional discussion spaces and PLCs prevents teachers from reflecting on their practice, hindering the optimal development of their learning competencies.

Additionally, the successful implementation of teacher performance evaluations depends greatly on the capacity of madrasah heads as instructional leaders. Madrasah heads with strong analytical and supervisory skills have been shown to improve learning quality through coaching, systematic observation, and consistent follow-up (Hallinger, 2020; Sun & Leithwood, 2022). However, many madrasah heads are still trapped in administrative roles, preventing them from carrying out their academic supervisory functions optimally. This causes teachers to lack clear coaching direction, and evaluation becomes a mere routine. The absence of a strong quality culture also hinders madrasah heads from thoroughly applying the TQM approach in the process of evaluating and coaching teachers.

This research has important implications for developing teacher performance evaluation systems in community-based madrasahs. Theoretically, the study's results confirm the urgency of integrating Total Quality Management (TQM) and Professional Learning Community (PLC) principles into teacher performance evaluations because these approaches can create consistent, participatory, and continuous improvement-oriented quality cultures. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of instructional leadership in ensuring that the teacher evaluation process impacts learning practices in the classroom.

In practice, madrasahs must implement a follow-up mechanism based on teacher evaluation results, including structured mentoring, post-observation discussions, and training as needed. Forming professional learning communities and strengthening the role of madrasah heads as instructional leaders are strategic steps to improving teacher competence sustainably and strengthening the culture of collective reflection.

These findings align with the literature, which confirms that the effectiveness of the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) depends on the completeness of the evaluation procedure and the existence of constructive feedback, clear follow-up, and ongoing professional development. Studies have shown that the TPA has a significant impact only when its assessment results are integrated into teacher capacity development programs, such as needs-based training, organizing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and providing consistent academic supervision.

The performance management literature emphasizes that evaluations without follow-up are merely administrative and cannot change teaching practices. The results of this study underscore the importance of integrating the TPA with a systematic teacher development system that focuses on improving competencies.

This system should utilize evaluation data for strategic decision-making and implement continuous quality management principles that incorporate evaluation as an integral part of the continuous improvement cycle within the context of madrasah management. This integration will strengthen the TPA's accuracy and evaluative function and create a professional learning ecosystem that encourages teachers to reflect, innovate, and improve the quality of their teaching.

D. CONCLUSION

The Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal is carried out routinely through classroom observations, reviews of learning documents, and informal discussions. It fulfills the formal administrative aspects according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs regulations. The TPA covers four teacher competencies: pedagogical, personality, professional, and social. However, the TPA results have not been used strategically to improve learning quality or teacher professionalism. TPA's function as a reflective development tool is ineffective because teachers do not receive structured feedback, and there is no follow-up mechanism. The TPA is still viewed as a mere administrative obligation. Low ICT literacy among senior teachers hinders the integration of technology into learning and weakens the fulfillment of professional competencies. This is related to the lack of learning innovation, which remains dominated by conventional methods. The absence of a teacher learning community that can serve as a space for collaboration and pedagogical reflection exacerbates this condition, preventing the development of a culture of professional learning. Furthermore, the familial culture in madrasahs causes assessors to give lenient scores to maintain social relationships, especially with senior teachers. This decreases the objectivity of evaluations and weakens the accuracy of the PKG as an evaluation tool. Madrasah principals also receive sporadic academic supervision without documentation or follow-up guidance. This prevents the PKG results from being used as baseline data for developing professional development programs. From a quality management perspective, these findings suggest that the PKG has not been incorporated into the continuous quality improvement cycle recommended by the total quality management (TQM) approach. The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is not consistently applied to PKG planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. This results in static evaluations that do not encourage changes in teachers' professional behavior. PKG results have not been used to design strategic programs to improve madrasah quality. Consequently, PKG's potential as a teacher development instrument has not been realized. Therefore, although the PKG has

been administratively implemented, it has not played an optimal role in improving the quality of education at MI NU 09 Kauman Boja Kendal due to complex structural, cultural, and professional barriers. The PKG approach must be reformulated to bridge the gap between formal procedures and actual teacher development needs. This can be achieved through technology integration, increased evaluation objectivity, strengthened academic supervision, and the implementation of a continuous quality management system. Further research is recommended to explore utilizing PKG results more effectively in the context of digital transformation, organizational culture, and the sustainable development of madrasah quality.

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