# APPLICATION OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION:

## A Case Study of Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al-Hikmah, Karangmojo, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta

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## Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan bagaimana penerapan Manajemen Mutu Total (*Total Quality Management)* di sekolah Islam dapat memenuhi permintaan pasar atas lulusan yang berkualitas dengan menggunakan Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al-Hikmah Karangmojo, Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta sebagai studi kasus. MA Al-Hikmah adalah salah satu sekolah yang telah beupaya menawarkan pendidikan gratis untuk semua siswanya dan telah menghasilkan lulusan yang berkualitas. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dalam artikel ini akan ditunjukkan bahwa: (1) dalam hal manajemen layanan, MA Al-Hikmah memberikan layanan kepada konsumennya (para siswa) dengan tidak memungut biaya untuk keperluan operasional pendidikan, akomodasi, asuransi kesehatan serta fasilitas pendidikan seperti buku dan pelajaran, (2) dalam hal manajemen proses pendidikan, para guru MA al-Hikmah menggunakan berbagai metode dan strategi pembelajaran. Selain itu, pembelajaran juga dilakukan baik di dalam maupun di luar kelas. MA Al-Hikmah juga menyiapkan tim pengajar yang secara khusus menangani kelas 12 dalam menghadapi Ujian Akhir Nasional; (3) dalam hal manajemen produk, MA Al-Hikmah terus berupaya meningkatkan kualitas lulusannya baik secara moral maupun akademik. Misalnya, MA Al-Hikmah berupaya memberikan kesempatan bagi lulusannya untuk memperoleh beasiswa untuk melanjutkan pendidikan ke tingkat pendidikan tinggi atau kesempatan kerja sesuai dengan kebutuhan pasar.

**Kata kunci:** kualitas, manajemen, pendidikan, konsumen.

## Abstract

*This article examines how Total Quality Management in Islamic School can fulfill market demands of quality graduate using Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al-Hikmah Karangmojo Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta as a case study. MA Al-Hikmah is one of schools that has tried to offer free education for all of its students and provided qualified outcomes. Based on the results of the research, the article will show that: (1) in terms of service management, MA al-Hikmah provides service to its customers (the students) by not charging them any fees for educational operational costs, accommodation, health assurance, and educational facilities such as books and courses; (2) in terms of educational process management, MA Al-Hikmah's teachers teach students using various teaching methods and strategies. In addition, teaching processes are conducted both indoor and outdoor. MA Al-Hikmah also has a teaching team to handle the 12th graders so that they can pass the national examination; (3) in terms of product management, MA Al-Hikmah continuously improves its educational quality through various ways. MA Al-Hikmah also has a special team to maintain students' achievements morally and academically. MA Al-Hikmah also makes efforts to provide its graduates with opportunities to get scholarships in higher education and job vacancies to meet the market needs of quality graduates.*

***Keywords***: *total quality management, education, consumer, quality graduates*

## Context

Today education is becoming more and more competitive as commercial enterprises are influenced by economic forces. According to Freeman (2002), this competition between various academic institutions/ colleges is the result of the development of global education markets and the decreasing pool of money for research and teaching with only the more reputable institutions getting a bigger piece of the pie from government and industry funding.

In 2009, the Indonesian government socializes the program of free schools throughout the country to improve the educational quality in this developing country (Pikiran Rakyat, November 2009). The free tuition campaign was primarily focused on junior and senior high schools to support the country's educational quality. However, confusions arouse to many parents (Dony Sophandi, Kompas, Juli 2009). They wonder how the

schools can provide a quality education for their students with minimum funding.

On the other hand, some schools offer quality education curriculum without ignoring the education quality service. Unfortunately parents must pay more to get these facilities. There are some schools, however, that offer good facilities and service costlessly. One of them is Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al-Hikmah which is located in Karangmojo, Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. The school has tried to apply a free tuition fee policy for all of its students with good quality condition and has produced quality graduates. MA Al-Hikmah does not charge its students any fees for educational operational cost, monthly fees, building/facilities development, operational fee, and students' medical fees. The students also get their school uniforms for free except for the green school uniform. Since most of the students also stay in Al-Hikmah Islamic boarding-school, they also get additional free facilities such free health treatment, daily food and books.

Previous studies done by some researches have explored several aspects of Total Quality Management (TQM). However, they did not discuss thoroughly the implementation of TQM. While Any (2007) tends to examine the educational systems, Dayun (2003) focused on managerial problems, and Choirin (2008) paid more attention to TQM from the aspect of costumer services. Filling this gap, the present author intends to know how the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in term of service management, educational process and product management in this school and how it can meet market needs of quality graduates. The author focuses on three Total Quality Management (TQM) components: Service Management, Educational Process Management and Product Management. In term of Service Management, the author examines whether or not MA Al-Hikmah focuses on customers and how they service the customers. In term of Educational Process, she focuses on exploring the teaching learning management of MA Al-Hikmah and how they implement the management system into teaching learning process in the class. In term of Product Management, she focuses on examining the results of management, teaching learning process both in the class and in the boarding school.

The research, from which this article is based, is a qualitative research. As such, it seeks to take and describe some data about Total Quality Management implementation in three aspects, i.e. Service Management, Educational Process Management and Product Management, and analyze them from the point of view of TQM studies in which the vision and skills in leadership, management, interpersonal communication, problem solving and creative cooperation are considered as important qualities for successful implementation of TQM. To analyse the data, the model of Miles and Haberman is used. In this model, data analysis process consists of the following steps: data collection, data reduction, data display and lastly data verification (Miles and Haberman, 1984: 10-12).

**Conceptual Framework**

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a philosophy of continuous improvement, which can provide any educational institution with a set of practical tools for meeting people and exceeding present and future customers needs, wants ad expectations (Sallis, 1993: 64). It is a set of management processes and systems that create a delighted customers through empowered employees, leading to higher revenue and lower cost. The concept of quality assurance and of TQM have been derived from industry, but have become important in education. For example, in Hong Kong, 'Quality School Education' enshrined in the consultative document ECR7 recommended the development of a complete framework for developing and monitoring quality school education (Dimmock, 1998: 365).

The concept of TQM is also applicable to academics. Many educators believe that the Deming's concept of TQM provides guiding principles for needed educational reform. In his article, "The Quality Revolution in Education," John Jay Bonsting outlines the TQM principles he believes as the most salient to education reform. He calls them the "Four Pillars of Total Quality Management" (Mehrotra, 2009).

- 1st Principle : Synergistic Relationships
    According to this principle, an organization must focus, first and foremost, on its suppliers and customers. In a classroom, teacher-student teams are the equivalent of industry's front-line workers (ibid).

- 2nd Principle : Continuous Improvement and Self Evaluation
  The second pillar of TQM applied to education is the total dedication to continuous improvement, personally and collectively. Within a Total Quality school setting, administrators work collaboratively with their customers: teachers.. Total Quality is, essentially, a win-win approach which works to everyone's ultimate advantage (ibid). According to Deming, no human being should ever evaluate another human being. Therefore, TQM emphasizes self-evaluation as part of a continuous improvement process.

- 3rd Principle:  A System of Ongoing Process
  The third pillar of TQM as applied in academics is the recognition of the organization as a system and the work done within the organization must be seen as an ongoing process. The primary implication of this principle is that individual students and teachers are less to blame for failure than the system in which they work.

- 4th  Principle : Leadership
  The fourth TQM principle applied to education is that the success of TQM is the responsibility of top management. The school teachers must establish the context in which students can best achieve their potential through the continuous improvement that results from teachers and students working together. Quality speaks to working on the system, which must be examined to identify and eliminate the flawed processes that allow its participants to fail. Since systems are made up of processes, the improvements made in the quality of those processes largely determine the quality of the resulting product (ibid).

According to the practical evidences, the TQM principles help the schools in following clauses:

    a.    Redefine the role, purpose and responsibilities of schools.
    b.    Improve schools as a "way of life."
    c.    Plan comprehensive leadership training for educators at all levels.
    d.    Create staff development that addresses the attitudes and beliefs of school staff.
    e.    Use research and practice-based information to guide both policy and practice.
    f.    Design comprehensive child-development initiatives that cut across a variety of agencies and institutions.

TQM principles could be applied as a means of improving students/ academic and non-academic morale, increasing productivity and delivering higher quality services to customers/students. Brigham (2000) argues that both students and businesses need to be treated as customers and they employ the concept of co-production that requires the involvement and cooperation of educators, students, parents or businesses to achieve the quality outcome of the educational service.

Education is a provider of service (Sallis, 1993: 31). Implementing Total Quality Management principles in term of service management, customer focus must be used. Applying the principle of customer focus typically leads to: (1) researching and understanding customer needs and expectations, (2) ensuring that the objectives of the organization are linked to customer needs and expectations, (3) communicating customer needs and expectations throughout the organization, (4) measuring customer satisfaction and acting on the results. (5) systematically managing customer relationships, (6) ensuring a balanced approach between satisfying customers and other interested parties (such as owners, employees, suppliers, financiers, local communities and society as a whole (Quality Management, 2010).

Services could include tuition, assessment and guidance to pupil and students, their parents and sponsors. Edward Sallis argues that the customer can be classified in this term:

The customer in education:

| Education (Value added to learners) | The service |
|---|---|
| The Learner | Primary External Customer or Client |
| Parents / Governors/ Society | Secondary External Customer |
| Labour Market/ Government | Tertiary External Customer |
| Teachers / Support Staff | Internal Customers |

Table 13. Table of the customer's classification in Education

**Results and Discussion**

It seems that MA Al-Hikmah always try to offer and provide quality service despite its limited financial resources. During the visit of Malaysian students, for example, MA Al-Hikmah can only serve the best they can do with limited cost. But it always makes sense for everyone who

visits this place since they know that they use their money so carefully so that it will be always adequate for the needs of students.

Soft indicators such as courtesy, care, concern, friendliness, and helpfulness are often uppermost in customers' mind. Intangibility makes it very difficult to turn around poor service, because it is sometimes impossible to convince dissatisfied customers that a service has changed for the better.

Additionally, Allah has said in Qur'an *surah* Ali-Imron verse 159 :

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ (١٥٩)

*"And by the Mercy of Allâh, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about you" (QS. Ali Imron ; 03: 159)*

According to the verse above, Allah tries to remind us that when we deal with people, we must treat them gently. Because if we face them with harsh hearted, they will run away. Everyone will be pleased when we treat them well, communicate with them with good speech, gently and friendly. As reviewed from the service quality, MA Al-Hikmah has tried to give an ultimate service by not only listening to people, but also responding what they say and want.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالا فَخُورًا (٣٦)

*"Worship Allâh and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al-Masâkin (the poor), the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allâh does not like such as are proud and boastful" (QS. An-Nisaa'; 04: 36)*

Harun Al-Rasyid states the reasons why he and his friends take care of this institution are: first because they want to help the government to smarten young generation and lead them to the bright future. Secondly, they want to apply one particular *surah*, namely surah Al-Ma'un, which continually supports and motivates them to always commit to run this institution well.

MA Al-Hikmah needs to fully work out strategies for meeting its customers' requirements. Generally, many customers are often initially uninformed of both about the service and what constitutes its quality. So that is why MA Al-Hikmah needs to initially inform clearly about its service quality to public. In other words, keeping physical environment clean and comfort, keeping friendly in welcoming guests, and giving the best products and education for students with no requirements will become some of masterpiece reasons for customers especially parents and visitors to trust MA Al-Hikmah as the provider of education for their children.

A further challenge is that education's customers play an important role. The customers have a unique function in determining the quality of what they receive from education. There are difficulties with notions of consistency in the interactive process of learning. To overcome those potential problems, it is necessary to ensure the motivation of both the learners and the staffs who serve them. It is also really important to make clear what is being offered and what is expected of learners. MA al-Hikmah can start this by asking further to students, parents and other customers about their opinion and follow it up with further action to solve any possible problems.

Heri Suwasono, the head master of MA Al-Hikmah, stated that the curriculum was previously adopted from the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. But they reformed it into the new one which they think more applicable for them. They reformed the curriculum and syllabus because they think that their concept and education system are different from those governed by the two institutions system. They made their own curriculum to fulfill the educational needs of students. As a formal institution, however, Al-Hikmah does not forget to include the subjects that will be tested in the National Final Examination. Since even though it is an independent educational institution, it has to join the National Final Examination which is held by the government

together with other schools in Indonesia to legalize their certificate for their students to be be accepted by other institutions when they want to continue their study to higher education such as universities or colleges.

For the next academic year period, they plan to complete their vision and mission in order to improve the education quality. They also want to make new short-term and long-term educational targets to increase their quality. The chief of every team is the head master of the school himself. He has many great ideas to deal with the quality improvement, especially in performing quality team related to management. One of the most important projects that they are doing right now is how to make all students of MA al-Hikmah graduate with the government standard.

The teaching-learning processes are done in a variety of ways. Experienced teachers do not always teach students in the classrooms. Sometimes if teachers think that students are bored, lazy, sleepy, etc, they try to refresh the teaching learning process. For this matter, classes can be done both in indoor and outdoor. Sometimes, some teachers have created their own time to take their students to study out of the class. Other learning activities are sometimes held in tourism places. The Teachers takes the students to come to the tourism places (such as beaches or tourism village) to refresh their mind and at the same time allow them to study about some cases related to the subject such as natural science.

In addition, students also get intensive education in the affiliated Islamic Boarding School. Apart from studying in a formal school, they also study continuously in Al-Hikmah Islamic Boarding School. They do not only study science but more importantly religious subjects that will make them valuable generations. In the boarding school, they join some extracurricular activities such as *pencak silat* or computer course. It is a continued step to make students really master what they study. The boarding school has strict regulations that must be obeyed by all members in dormitory.

Recognizing that not all students are willing to go the extra mile in their learning, this model suggests that one should guide and motivate those who are less likely to work extra hard and persevere towards a goal, for example by adopting Maslow's pyramidal model to develop learning motivation for students (Maslow, 1970). This model requires a passion or burning desire to teach students with conviction. In this context, it is a

teachers' responsibility to motivate and cause students to learn, but students are required to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers need to get feedback and listen to students to see what we may need to change to become more effective e.g. changed lesson plans, style, appropriate humor, gently embracing problem students (Aina and Kayode, 2012).

Training for teachers in quality concepts and thinking is an important element in the required culture change. Staff need to understand how they and their students will get benefits for a change to customers focus. Total Quality Management is more than being nice to customers and smiling. It is about listening and entering into a dialog about people's fears and aspirations. The best aspects of professional role are about care and high academic and vocational standards. Blending the best aspects of professionalism with total quality is essential to success.

With minimum equipments, they try to apply Philips B Crosby's concept of "*zero defect*" by trying to deliver the lesson with many kinds of methods and strategies. They try to prevent the faults from occurring in the in first place. For example, when students feel bored, teachers still try to teach them in different strategy such as by inviting them into different place like frontyard or other shady places to keep them comfortable with the learning process.

TQM is about creating a quality culture where the aim of every member of the staff is to delight their customers (Sallis, 1993: 26). Some teachers support one another in developing their methods. They share each other how to teach the students with active learning strategies. Actually, they do not know officially the concept of active learning, but they apply these strategies based on their own feeling as teachers. Besides teaching them with good strategies, they also give students examples, motivation and guidance. They speak calm, politely, honestly. They treat the students patiently and politely. This is the value of the teaching learning process that creates the generation of good men and women. This is what Islam teaches since centuries ago. As stated in Al-Qur'an *surah* Al-Ahzab verse 21, Allah states that Rasulullah Muhammad SAW is the best model for all Muslims since every little thing about him is good.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا (٢١)

*"Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad ) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day and remembers Allâh much."(QS. Al–Ahzab, 33: 21)*

Learning from the verse above, if we want to connect it to the educational management, managing students is not only about giving them many good messages, but also giving them good examples, guiding them, and supporting them. Education is about quality of learning. An educational institution which takes the Total Quality route must take seriously the issue of learning styles and needs to have strategies for individualization and differentiation in learning (Sallis, 1993: 41).

Education institutions like MA al-Hikmah and Al-Hikmah Foundation have an obligation to make learners aware of the variety of learning methods available to them. They need to give learners opportunities to experience learning in variety of different styles. Institutions need to understand that many learners also like to switch and mix-and-match styles and must try to be sufficiently flexible to provide choices in learning.

Evaluation must be done continuously to improve the quality of learning process. It can be done by giving teachers more knowledge about recent learning styles and learning strategies. It also can be done by sending them to teaching strategies trainings, comparative studies or visit to other schools, etc. Detailed monitoring through progress charting will need to be undertaken by both teachers and students to ensure that timely and appropriate corrective action can be applied if there is a danger of failure. Evaluation should be a continuous process and not just left unexecuted until the end of the program of study.

As stated previously, Al-Hikmah has a commitment to improve its students' quality including their final examination. It becomes one of very important parts of it. MA Al-Hikmah is growing well quantitatively. In its first year MA Al-Hikmah only had four classes with 37-40 student capacity. Then in 2006/2007 academic year, the X grade had only 80 students. And in 2007/2008 academic year, the X had 98 students. In 2000, MA Al-Hikmah had a total number of 120 students. And now under the leadership of Heri Suwarsono, S.Pd, it has released 7 generations.

Besides its quantitative growth year by year, another interesting fact of MA Al-Hikmah is that all educational service and facilities are provided for free. It does not mean this school is unqualified or cannot

create any achievement and good educational outcomes. Since 2004/2005 up to 2006/2007 period, 100% of the students of MA Al-Hikmah could pass the National Final Examination (Ujian Nasional). The number of students who passed the National Final Examionatio, however, decreased into 85,95% in the following period. Heri said that it was because the students were not really serious in joining courses in the class. After the last result, he felt so sorry and promised that he would make the results better. Then he arranged a new special committee to make sure that all of his students are able to pass the National Final Examination.

Students of MA Al-Hikmah also have great achievements. For example, in 2005/2006, MA Al Hikmah was named the second best of Islamic Senior High Schools (MA) in Yogyakarta. The school had also won several competions and contests such as marching competition, MTQ (Reciting Qur'an Competition), speech contest in four languages, *Pencak Silat* competions and many others.

## Conclusion

Formally, MA Al-Hikmah does not use Total Quality Management in running its institution. But it applies Total Quality Management in their management system. It does not call this quality system, but they put standard in any step of its management.

In terms of service management, MA Al-Hikmah focuses on the customers --students, students, parents, society-- by giving good services. MA Al-Hikmah and Al-Hikmah Foundation help the government tasks in relation to education by giving opportunity for poor people and orphans to get free education, free shelter (they stay in Islamic boarding school for free and get free foods), free uniforms, books, studying tools and health insurance. MA al-Hikmah has also a special teaching team to train the 12th graders to pass the National Final Examination.

In term of educational process management, MA Al-Hikmah has a plan and target to always conduct teaching learning process in a good condition. That is why Heri established a educational team to fulfill the goal. This team holds extra classes for the senior students after the regular classes from Monday to Friday at 3 pm. On Saturday they must face tryout. This activity has run for around 2 years. It is used to increase the quality of the graduates.

In term of educational products management, MA Al-Hikmah is committed to always achieve good results of its hard work. The school team always creates new innovations to improve their students capability in passing the National Final Examination standard score in order that all of the students can graduate. Heri Suwasono said that as his responsibility, he and all of the school components support the graduated students who cannot continue their study to higher schools or universities to join some skill courses which are offered by Al-Hikmah Foundation like sewing, electricity and automotive courses.

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