

Implementing Total Quality Management in a Post-Conflict Educational Context: A Case Study of MSU-Integrated Laboratory School, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) at Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS), Philippines, as a strategic effort to build sustainable educational quality. MSU-ILS is a laboratory school under the College of Education, Mindanao State University, which plays a dual role as a provider of basic and secondary education and as a training ground for prospective teachers. Located in Marawi City, a post-conflict area recovering from armed conflict, the school operates within a complex social context that shapes its educational practices. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this research collected data through document analysis, direct observations, and in-depth interviews with school leaders and teachers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of quality management practices. The findings reveal that MSU-ILS applies TQM principles in an integrated manner through a clear institutional vision, student-centered educational services, continuous improvement initiatives, quality-oriented leadership, and strong collaboration among internal and external stakeholders. These practices are embedded in academic programs, character education, peace education, and organizational culture, supporting the development of an inclusive, transformative, and peace-oriented learning environment. The study demonstrates that successful implementation of TQM in education extends beyond academic achievement to include character formation, innovation, stakeholder engagement, and long-term organizational commitment. This research provides practical insights for educational institutions, particularly those operating in post-conflict settings, to adopt TQM principles as a strategic framework for enhancing educational management, institutional effectiveness, and sustainable school development.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational quality is a crucial issue in the management of educational institutions, particularly in the context of educational institutions being required to adapt to social change, student needs, and global dynamics. Educational institutions that are not managed with a sound quality management system are prone to inefficiency, low quality educational services, and a weak organizational culture. In this context, educational management plays a strategic role as a primary instrument for ensuring the effective and sustainable achievement of educational goals. Therefore, strengthening the quality management system is an urgent need to improve the quality of educational institutions.

One of the efforts to improve management in educational institutions is to implement Total Quality Management or TQM, which is also known as Integrated Quality Management. (Syafaruddin, 2002) TQM is not only understood as a set of managerial techniques, but as a management philosophy that emphasizes continuous improvement, the involvement of all stakeholders, and an orientation toward customer satisfaction in education. In the context of education, TQM encourages the formation of a quality culture that involves leaders, educators, education staff, students, and the community collaboratively in improving the quality of the

institution.(Sallis, 2014);(Oakland, 2014)The main principles of TQM, such as customer focus, continuous improvement, and total involvement, are believed to be able to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of educational management.(Goetsch & Davis, 2015).

Various previous studies have shown that the implementation of TQM contributes positively to improving school quality, educator performance, and the effectiveness of educational leadership.(Juhri et al., 2023)However, most of these studies still focus on public schools or madrasahs within a specific national context, and position TQM more as a normative framework than as a managerial practice integrated with organizational culture and institutional vision. Research examining the implementation of TQM in integrated laboratory-based schools and oriented towards peace education is still relatively limited, especially in the context of educational institutions in the Southeast Asian region.

Schools/madrasahs as educational institutions are institutions that function as objects of change to overcome all these problems in order to produce quality education by implementing the concept of Total Quality Management.(Erfiyana et al., 2024). Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS) in Marawi City, Philippines, is an interesting educational institution to study in this context. As a laboratory school under the auspices of Mindanao State University's College of Education, MSU-ILS functions not only as an elementary and secondary educational institution but also as a model for educational practices and school management. Based on official school documents, such as PANGINDAW: The Official Publication of MSU-ILS 2023–2025, it is clear that MSU-ILS consistently develops academic programs, student services, and learning facilities oriented towards continuous quality improvement. This indicates that TQM principles have been integrated into policies, organizational culture, and daily educational practices.

However, empirical studies specifically analyzing how TQM principles are systematically applied in the management of integrated schools based on integrated laboratories and peace education, such as MSU-ILS, remain limited. This gap becomes more significant when considering that MSU-ILS operates in Marawi City, a post-conflict area recovering from armed conflict, where educational institutions are required not only to improve academic quality but also to contribute to social reconstruction and peacebuilding. This lack of research indicates the need to further explore quality management practices that are oriented not only toward academic outcomes but also toward the formation of an inclusive, adaptive, and socially responsive quality culture.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the application of Total Quality Management principles in the management of MSU-ILS in the Philippines, particularly within the post-conflict context of Marawi City, and to examine how TQM contributes to the development of a quality culture and the improvement of educational quality at the institution. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education management studies and practical contributions as a reference for educational institutions, especially those operating in post-conflict settings undergoing transformation toward a sustainable quality culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the management of Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS). This approach was chosen

because it allows researchers to comprehensively explore the processes, managerial practices, and dynamics of quality management implementation within the context of educational institutions.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: documentation study, observation, and in-depth interviews. The documentation study was conducted by reviewing official school documents, including the school's vision and mission, organizational structure, institutional policies, and institutional publications such as PANGINDAW: The Official Publication of Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School. These documents were used to identify institutional policies and practices that reflect the implementation of TQM principles.

Observations were conducted to directly observe the school environment, the learning process, and interactions between educators and students in both academic and non-academic activities. These observations aimed to obtain a concrete picture of the implementation of quality management in daily educational practices, particularly those related to quality culture, teamwork, and quality-based leadership.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers as research informants to gain a more comprehensive perspective on quality management practices at MSU-ILS. The interviews focused on each informant's experiences, views, and roles in implementing TQM principles in the school environment.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis, by grouping the research findings into relevant themes based on the main principles of TQM, namely focus on customers, continuous improvement, quality-based leadership, and teamwork (Teamwork and Stakeholder Involvement). To maintain the validity of the data, this study applied technical triangulation, by comparing the results of documentation studies, observations, and interviews so that valid and academically accountable findings were obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study examines the results of the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles in the management of Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS). The results were obtained through analysis of institutional documents, observations of the school environment and activities, and in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and students. The presentation of the results focuses on empirical findings that illustrate how the main principles of TQM are applied in the school's policies, programs, facilities, and culture. The TQM principles used as the analytical framework include customer focus, continuous improvement, quality-based leadership, and teamwork and stakeholder involvement.

Customer Focus

The research results show that MSU-ILS places students and parents at the center of educational services. This is reflected in the provision of a child-friendly, gender-sensitive learning environment that respects cultural diversity. The school develops various programs oriented towards meeting students' academic and non-academic needs, such as a Literacy and Numeracy Remediation Program, guidance and counseling services, school health facilities, and the provision of a free dining hall for students from low-income families.

Furthermore, MSU-ILS demonstrates responsiveness to the demands of today's development by designing programs to strengthen 21st-century competencies, including the

Robotics Program and the currently pioneering Gender and Development Program. These efforts demonstrate that the school focuses not only on academic achievement but also on meeting the social, emotional, and future skills needs of students. These findings indicate that the principle of customer focus is effectively implemented in MSU-ILS' educational policies, services, and facilities.

Continuous Improvement

The research also shows that MSU-ILS consistently applies the principle of continuous improvement in school management. This is evident in the institution's ongoing development since its founding as a Laboratory Elementary School in 1964 to its current status as an Integrated Laboratory School with an inclusive and comprehensive educational approach. Program evaluation and development are conducted periodically to adapt to student needs and educational dynamics.

Based on the document PANGINDAW: The Official Publication of MSU-ILS Volume 6 No. 1 Year 2023–2024, the commitment to improving academic quality is reflected through the implementation of the Review Booster Program, REX Roadshow 2025, and benchmarking-based learning against the latest curriculum such as the MATATAG Curriculum. The school also makes continuous investments in learning facilities, including the development of STEM hubs, smart televisions, digital learning facilities, and strengthening robotics facilities. (Alyanna H. Yassin, 2023) The integration of peace education, leadership, and cultural preservation into the curriculum demonstrates a systematic cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement.

Quality-Oriented Leadership

The research findings indicate that leadership at MSU-ILS plays a crucial role in promoting the implementation of Total Quality Management principles. The principal possesses a clear vision in placing quality as the primary foundation of institutional management, reflected in the school's policy direction, which emphasizes academic excellence, character building, spiritual values, and global competitiveness. The leadership philosophy espoused, "We rise by lifting others," serves as the foundation for building a participatory work climate and empowering the entire school community.

The implementation of quality-based leadership is evident in various policies and programs that support teacher professional development and the well-being of the school community. The school routinely provides adequate learning facilities, supports pedagogical innovation, and rewards educators through the Educators Deserve A Break program. Furthermore, the principal encourages the implementation of inclusive and interfaith education as part of a commitment to quality and social harmony. This leadership is further strengthened through a strategic collaboration with Mindanao State University, which enables integration between educational practices in the school and the academic development of prospective teachers.

Teamwork and Stakeholder Involvement

The research findings show that the implementation of TQM at MSU-ILS is supported by a strong collaborative culture among teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. MSU-ILS's structure as a laboratory school allows for collaboration between educational practitioners and student teachers in the learning process and school program development. This collaboration not only enriches pedagogical practices but also strengthens reflection-based learning and continuous quality improvement.

Stakeholder involvement is also evident in the implementation of various academic and non-academic activities, such as arts and cultural development, sports, and character and leadership

development programs. The school encourages the participation of parents and the Mindanao State University campus community in supporting a conducive and inclusive learning environment. This collaborative spirit is reflected in the school motto, "In ILS, we rise by lifting others," which emphasizes that achieving quality education is the result of the collective work of the entire school community and related partners.(Esmail Haron, 2024).

DISCUSSION

This study aims to interpret the research findings by linking them to the theoretical concept of Total Quality Management and the results of relevant previous research in the field of educational management. This discussion places the research findings within a broader context to examine their suitability, reinforcement, and differences with TQM theory and practice in education. Through this approach, the discussion not only explains what happened at MSU-ILS but also examines the meaning and implications of implementing TQM principles for developing a quality culture, effective school management, and continuously improving the quality of education.

The research findings regarding the implementation of customer focus principles at MSU-ILS align with the Total Quality Management concept in education, which places students as the primary customers of educational services. Sallis emphasized that a quality school is one that is able to identify and meet customer needs sustainably through relevant and humane educational services.(Sallis, 2014). MSU-ILS's practice in providing academic, social, and student welfare services demonstrates that quality orientation is not only understood normatively, but is also realized in concrete policies and programs. Simply explained by Susanto et al., Total Quality Management (TQM) is a managerial approach used to achieve an organization's long-term goals by fulfilling and improving customer satisfaction.(Susanto et al., 2024).

This approach is also in line with the views of Goetsch and Davis who state that customer satisfaction in TQM is not only related to the final result, but also to a fair, inclusive and sustainable service process.(Goetsch & Davis, 2015)MSU-ILS's responsiveness to 21st-century competency needs through the development of robotics and gender awareness programs demonstrates the school's ability to anticipate changes in the external environment and strategically adapt its educational services. This aligns with research that suggests schools play a role in maximizing and optimizing customer demand identification and fostering consumer engagement based on the principle of mutual benefit.(Lidan et al., 2023)This strengthens the argument that the implementation of TQM in education contributes to increasing the relevance and competitiveness of educational institutions.

Furthermore, the implementation of the principle of continuous improvement at MSU-ILS reflects the core character of TQM as a philosophy of continuous improvement. Oakland emphasized that organizations that effectively implement TQM will build internal evaluation systems that encourage continuous innovation and renewal.(Oakland, 2014). The evolution of MSU-ILS as a laboratory school that continuously updates its curriculum, programs, and learning facilities shows that the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle is actively running in school management.

The results of this study also support the findings of Hasan et al. who stated that routine evaluation and involvement of all school members are the keys to successful education quality management.(Hasan et al., 2022)The integration of peace education, leadership, and cultural

preservation into the MSU-ILS curriculum demonstrates that quality improvement is not solely focused on academics but also on character development and organizational culture. Thus, the implementation of continuous improvement at MSU-ILS not only enhances the quality of learning but also strengthens the school's identity as an inclusive and transformative educational institution.

The research findings on quality-based leadership at MSU-ILS align with the Total Quality Management perspective, which positions leadership as a key factor in the successful implementation of organizational quality. Sallis reiterated that leadership in the context of TQM serves as the primary driver of quality culture change through a clear vision, ongoing commitment, and empowerment of human resources. The study stated that quality management requires the establishment of clear quality standards, both in the process and the outcome of education.(Armadan, 2023). Leadership practices at MSU-ILS, which emphasize participation, teacher well-being, and learning innovation, demonstrate alignment with these principles. This aligns with research indicating that the concepts of educational management and quality management need to be understood and implemented by principals in their roles as school managers to support the performance of teaching and learning staff. A principal's success is reflected in their ability to effectively manage resources, resulting in high-quality and superior school performance.(Ulfa & Shalahuddin, 2023).

The results of this study also support Nusantara's findings which state that the principal's ability to carry out his role as a leader, manager and supervisor has a significant influence on the quality of school management.(Nusantara, 2025)The integration of peace education and interfaith inclusivity into MSU-ILS policies demonstrates that quality-based leadership is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward establishing a harmonious and sustainable school culture. Thus, leadership at MSU-ILS acts as a catalyst in internalizing quality values into daily educational practices.

Furthermore, findings related to teamwork and stakeholder involvement reinforce the concept of total involvement in Total Quality Management. Goetsch and Davis emphasize that the success of TQM depends heavily on the active involvement of all organizational members and relevant stakeholders. Another study also found that open and effective communication between all stakeholders is a key factor in the successful implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM).(Hadijaya et al., 2024)The collaborative culture that has developed at MSU-ILS, between teachers, students, parents, and the university community, demonstrates that the principle of total involvement has been consistently applied. This aligns with Tanjung's statement that improving the quality of education in educational units can only be achieved if all school components demonstrate changes in attitude and behavior that support a culture of quality.(Tanjung et al., 2022).

This finding is also in line with the concept of School-Based Management which gives broader authority to the school community in decision-making and managing the quality of education.(Sihombing et al., 2022)The collaboration between MSU-ILS and Mindanao State University, the parent institution, strengthens the school's role as an educational laboratory and a space for practice- and research-based quality development. Thus, stakeholder involvement not only strengthens the effectiveness of school management but also broadens the impact of TQM implementation on the sustainable development of educational quality. This aligns with research findings that qualitatively demonstrate that a quality school is determined by the quality of its individuals, as reflected in their skills and demonstrated behavior.(Siswopranoto, 2022).

Furthermore, the literature on TQM measurement and implementation in education confirms that continuous improvement and leadership support are key factors driving the effectiveness of overall quality management. (Ihsany & Arsyad, 2024) This concept reinforces the finding that MSU-ILS's success in building a culture of quality depends not only on individual strategies, but also through systemic structures and the collective involvement of all school components.

Thus, empirical findings and TQM theory consistently show that systematic implementation of TQM can create an educational environment that is adaptive, responsive to stakeholder needs, and ready to face the challenges of social change and the demands of educational modernization.

This discussion demonstrates that the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles at Mindanao State University–Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS) is systematic and integrated into the school's policies, programs, leadership, and culture. The implementation of TQM at MSU-ILS emphasizes that educational quality is not built through partial approaches or short-term programs, but rather through sustained institutional commitment, the involvement of all school members, and leadership oriented toward human development and inclusive values.

The context of MSU-ILS as an educational institution located in a post-conflict area demands alignment between the social conditions of the community and the demands of changing times. In this context, TQM functions as a sustainable management system with direct implications for social life. Therefore, school quality management cannot be carried out individually but requires collaboration between various stakeholders to achieve integrated quality management that is adaptive, high-quality, and sustainable.

The implications of these findings suggest that implementing TQM in the context of primary and secondary education, particularly in laboratory schools and educational institutions that serve as practice models, can be an effective strategy for building an adaptive and contextual quality culture. This is especially evident in the post-conflict context of Marawi, where the implementation of TQM is shaped by the need to foster inclusive education, peace-building values, and social cohesion. MSU-ILS's success in integrating customer focus, continuous improvement, quality-based leadership, and teamwork demonstrates that TQM can strengthen the quality of educational services while creating an inclusive, participatory, and future-oriented learning environment.

This research suggests that educational institutions, particularly schools undergoing transformation toward continuous quality improvement, should comprehensively adopt TQM principles by adapting them to local characteristics and needs. Furthermore, strengthening school leadership, actively engaging stakeholders, and ongoing program evaluation should be prioritized in efforts to build an effective and competitive education management system.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it is concluded that the implementation of Total Quality Management at MSU-Integrated Laboratory School demonstrates that educational quality is built through a clear vision, servant leadership, responsive learning programs, and a culture of continuous improvement. In the post-conflict context of Marawi City, this implementation also reflects the role of education in fostering inclusivity, peace-building values, and social cohesion.

The focus on student needs and the collaboration of all school members position MSU-IILS as an inclusive and transformative educational model. These findings imply that improving educational quality is not only oriented toward academics, but also toward character development, innovation, and sustained institutional commitment. The limitation of this research lies in its focus on a single case study; therefore, further research is needed in more diverse institutional and socio-cultural contexts.

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