



Total Quality Management Practices and Community Interest in Enrollment at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan: A Qualitative Case Study

Asroviyatun^{1*}, Muhammad Zuhaery², Dian Hidayati³

^{1,2,3} Educational Management, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail : 2507046041@webmail.uad.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Aisyiyah Kindergarten; Community Interest; Early Childhood Education; Total Quality Management; Qualitative Case Study.	This study describes Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and their perceived relationship with community interest in enrollment at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan. A qualitative single case study design was employed. Data were collected through four semi structured interviews with four informants, consisting of the principal and three school committee members who were also parents, supported by non participant observations, WhatsApp group monitoring, and documentation. Data were analyzed through data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, comparison across data sources, and triangulation. The findings show that TQM practices were implemented through identifying parents' needs, evaluation based quality planning, stakeholder involvement, learning standardization, integration of religious and life skill programs, teacher competence development, responsive communication, and continuous service improvement. These practices were perceived by stakeholders as supporting parental trust and community interest through perceived service quality, religious value alignment, teacher responsiveness, communication, accessibility, reputation, and social recommendations. However, changes in enrollment from 56 applicants in 2024/2025 to 73 in 2025/2026 represent descriptive enrollment dynamics and do not demonstrate that TQM directly caused enrollment growth. The study contributes a contextual understanding of TQM practices in a faith based early childhood education institution.
Article History Received: August 03, 2026 Revised: August 13, 2026 Accepted: August 20, 2026	
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To cite this article: Asroviyatun, Zuhaery, M., & Hidayati, D. (2026). Total Quality Management Practices and Community Interest in Enrollment at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan: A Qualitative Case Study. <i>Vokatek: Journal of Research and Community Service</i>, 4(2), 172–187. https://doi.org/10.61255/vokatek.v4i2.1769	

INTRODUCTION

Community interest is an important contextual indicator for early childhood education institutions, including kindergartens. In this study, community interest refers to parents' attention, preference, confidence, and perceptions toward an educational institution, particularly in considering it as a potential choice for their children's education. Rather than treating interest as a direct outcome of a particular managerial intervention, this study understands community interest as a context-specific perception shaped by service quality, institutional reputation, communication, accessibility, religious values, and recommendations from other parents. In early childhood education, parents' decisions are commonly influenced by perceived safety, teacher responsiveness, learning suitability, communication quality, and value alignment between school and family (Alam & Ogawa, 2023; Kevin & Coley, 2023).

Total Quality Management (TQM) provides a useful framework for describing how schools organize quality-oriented services through customer focus, stakeholder involvement, standardization, evaluation, and continuous improvement (Mahmood et al., 2024). In Islamic-based kindergartens such as TK Aisyiyah, quality is also associated with religious habituation, character formation, and trust developed through relationships among school leaders, teachers, parents, the foundation, and the surrounding community. Accordingly, this study employs TQM as an analytical

lens to examine how quality-oriented practices are implemented and perceived by stakeholders, rather than as a framework for testing causal effects.

The contextual condition at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan illustrates the importance of understanding these quality practices in relation to enrollment dynamics. Admission data for the last three years show a fluctuating trend: 64 applicants in the 2023/2024 academic year, a decrease to 56 applicants in 2024/2025, and an increase to 73 applicants in 2025/2026 (PPDB Document of TK Aisyiyah Pembina, 2026). This fluctuation needs to be understood within the broader context of early childhood education, where parental decisions may be influenced by demographic conditions, school accessibility, competition, service quality, communication, and school-family relationships. In early childhood education, school-family partnerships and digital parenting programs have been shown to strengthen parental participation and the continuity of child stimulation at home (Latif et al., 2023).

Pre-observation results and interviews with parents indicated that the decline in applicants in 2024/2025 was influenced by demographic factors. The number of children aged 4–6 years in the surrounding area of Aisyiyah Kindergarten had decreased compared with the previous year. Although the market size decreased, competition among early childhood education institutions for prospective families remained relevant. This situation highlights the importance of examining how the school manages and communicates the quality of its educational services within a competitive local environment. At TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan, preliminary observations indicated several TQM-related practices that require attention, particularly two-way communication, continuous improvement in learning services, and broader stakeholder involvement. These conditions provide a contextual basis for examining how quality management practices are implemented and perceived by school stakeholders in relation to parents' perceptions and considerations regarding school choice.

TQM emphasizes customer focus, continuous improvement, and total involvement as interconnected elements of quality management (Canbay & Akman, 2023; Filippi et al., 2024). The implementation of Total Quality Management at TK Aisyiyah can be examined through efforts to understand parents' needs, maintain communication, involve stakeholders, evaluate educational programs, and improve school services. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of teamwork and partnerships among educational personnel, parents, government, private institutions, and the wider community in supporting educational quality (Liu, 2021). Research on satisfaction with early childhood education services shows that teacher quality, facilities, communication, and parental involvement are related to parental trust and loyalty toward institutions (Aleksić et al., 2024; Demissie & Pearse, 2025). These findings provide a basis for examining TQM-related practices as part of the broader quality management context in which parents form perceptions of educational institutions and consider enrollment.

Previous studies on Total Quality Management (TQM), early childhood education, and parental enrollment decisions can be grouped into three main areas. First, studies have examined TQM as a framework for quality management and continuous improvement in educational institutions (Busahdiar et al., 2023; Susilowati, 2025). Second, research has focused on service quality, parent, teacher relationships, and parental involvement as factors shaping parents' perceptions and educational choices in early childhood education (Burns et al., 2025; Keengwe & Onchwari, 2024). Third, studies on faith-based school choice have highlighted the role of religious values, academic quality, and school characteristics in parents' enrollment decisions (Lee et al., 2024; Leukert, 2022). However, these strands of research have generally examined TQM, early childhood service experiences, parental choice, and faith-based education as separate areas of inquiry. Limited research has examined how TQM practices are implemented and perceived by stakeholders within faith-based early childhood education institutions operating within specific religious values, local community relationships, and foundation governance. In particular, limited attention has been given to how these practices are perceived in relation to community interest and enrollment dynamics within a specific institutional context. This contextual gap is the focus of the present study.

Based on this contextual gap, this study aims to describe the implementation of TQM practices at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan and to interpret how these practices are perceived by stakeholders in relation to community interest in enrollment. The study focuses on quality planning, quality control, quality improvement, stakeholder involvement, communication, and contextual factors associated with parents' trust, perceptions, and considerations regarding school choice. The

contribution of this study lies in providing contextual understanding of quality management practices within a single faith-based early childhood education institution. Rather than developing or validating a generalizable TQM model, this study provides an empirical account of how quality management practices are implemented and perceived within a specific institutional context.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design. This approach was selected because the study aimed to understand in depth how TQM practices were implemented in the real institutional context of TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan and how stakeholders perceived these practices in relation to community interest and enrollment dynamics. The case-study design enabled the researchers to explore planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up practices through multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, non-participant observations, and documents (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Younas & Inayat, 2025).

The research was conducted at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan during the 2025/2026 student-admission period and related school activities. Informants were selected purposively because they had direct knowledge of school quality management, services, and enrollment considerations. The study involved four informants, consisting of one principal and three school committee members who were also parents of students. The inclusion criteria were direct involvement in school management, learning services, parent-school communication, committee activities, or enrollment decision-making. The selected informants were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding the implementation of TQM practices and perceptions of school quality. The object of the research was the implementation of TQM practices and stakeholder perceptions of their relationship with community interest and enrollment dynamics at the institution.

Instruments

The main instrument in this qualitative study was the researcher. Interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation guidelines were used as supporting instruments. The interview guidelines covered parents' needs, flagship programs, communication practices, evaluation mechanisms, service improvement, and factors influencing enrollment decisions. Observation sheets were used to record service processes, learning activities, facilities, religious habituation, and school interactions with parents. Documentation guidelines were used to examine admission data, activity photographs, school programs, learning modules, communication media, and evaluation documents. Field notes were prepared during observations, while interview notes were organized according to informant category and research focus.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and documentation. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with one principal and three school committee members who were also parents of students, with each interview lasting approximately 30–60 minutes. The interviews explored customer focus, stakeholder involvement, program standardization, communication, service quality, and continuous improvement.

Two non-participant observations were conducted, at the beginning and middle of the study, each lasting approximately six hours from 07:00 to 13:00. The observations focused on learning activities, religious habituation, life-skill programs, service communication, school-parent interactions, and quality management practices. Ongoing monitoring through the school's WhatsApp group provided supplementary data on communication and interactions between the school and parents. Documentation included admission data, activity schedules, school social media, child development reports, learning modules, photographs, and other supporting documents. Data collection continued until recurring patterns emerged across sources and no substantially new themes were identified, indicating data saturation (Naeem et al., 2024; Rahimi & khatooni, 2024).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. This process followed a thematic approach in which qualitative data were systematically coded and grouped into themes to identify meaningful patterns across the dataset (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022; Ozuem et al., 2022). First, interview, observation, WhatsApp group monitoring, and document data were read repeatedly and organized according to the research focus. Second, initial codes were assigned to statements and evidence related to parents' needs, planning, stakeholder involvement, flagship programs, learning standardization, communication, teacher competence, evaluation, service improvement, and enrollment considerations. Third, similar codes were grouped into broader themes: quality planning, quality control, quality improvement, stakeholder involvement, communication, and perceived relationship with community interest. The grouping of codes into themes was used to identify recurring patterns while maintaining attention to the contextual meaning of participants' accounts (Ozuem et al., 2022). Fourth, the themes were compared across interviews, observations, WhatsApp group monitoring, and documents to strengthen triangulation. Comparing evidence from different data sources can strengthen the rigor of qualitative interpretation by allowing researchers to examine consistency and complementary perspectives across sources (Jensen et al., 2022). Credibility was supported through source triangulation, technique triangulation, repeated checking of evidence, and careful use of descriptive and interpretive language to avoid unsupported causal claims. The findings were also compared across participant accounts and observational and documentary evidence to assess the consistency of information. Ethical considerations included obtaining permission from the school, informing participants about the research purpose and their participation in the study, and presenting findings without identifying individual parent informants by name.

RESULTS

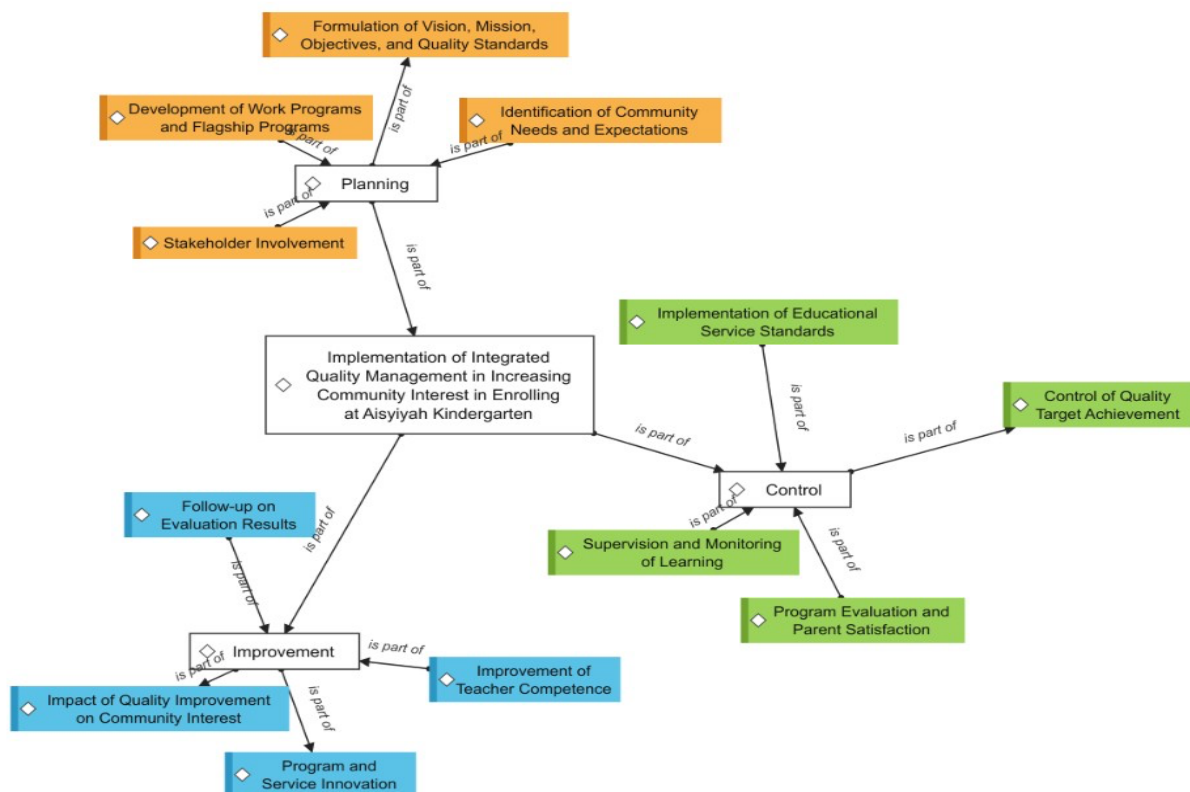


Figure 1. Visualization of tqm practices and their perceived relationship with community interest

The findings show that TQM-related practices at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan were implemented through interrelated processes of planning, control, and improvement. These findings should be read as a contextual description of a single case. They do not prove that TQM directly caused the increase in enrollment; rather, they show how stakeholders perceived quality practices, communication, religious programs, and institutional reputation as factors associated with community interest.

Table 1. Summary of Qualitative Findings on TQM Practices and Community Interest

Theme	Interview evidence	Observation/document evidence	Interpretation
Quality planning	Parents expected safe, communicative, religiously oriented, and flexible services.	Annual work meeting, monthly meetings, admission inquiries, and parent communication records.	Planning was linked to parent needs and stakeholder input.
Quality control	Parents valued worship habituation, memorization, teacher patience, and clear communication.	Learning modules, AIK activities, activity schedules, and school documentation.	Program standardization helped maintain service consistency.
Quality improvement	Parents and teachers reported follow-up through WhatsApp, meetings, and direct communication.	Child development reports, activity documentation, and admission data.	Improvement practices existed but required more formal written instruments.
Community interest	Parents mentioned recommendations, proximity, religious programs, and responsiveness as enrollment considerations.	Enrollment changed from 64 to 56 and 73 applicants across three academic years.	Enrollment growth was associated with multiple contextual factors, not attributed solely to TQM.

Quality Planning Practices and Community Interest

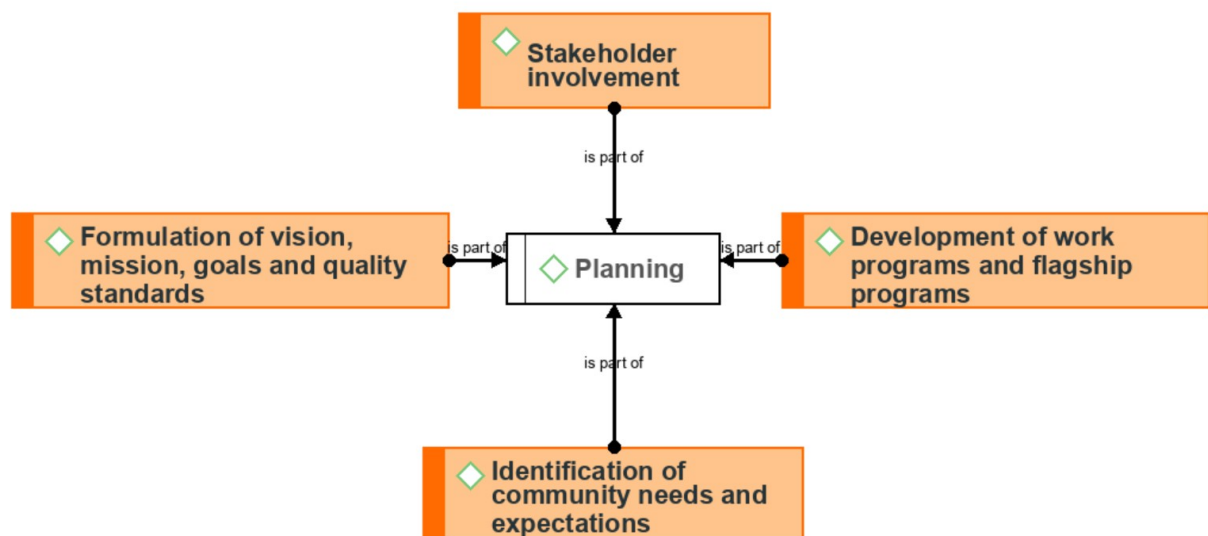


Figure 2. Quality Planning

Identifying Parents' Needs and Expectations as the Basis of Customer Focus

The findings indicate that the school identified parents' needs and expectations through direct communication, inquiries during the enrollment process, social media, and feedback from parents. The principal explained that parents expressed different expectations regarding religious programs and learning schedules, including regular, half-day, and full-day programs. The principal stated:

"There are several specific programs that parents expect, such as memorization or Qur'anic tahfidz. There are also expectations regarding learning hours. We have three learning-time programs: regular, half day, and full day." (N1)

Parents' accounts further showed that their school-choice considerations included religious orientation, service quality, accessibility, communication, and recommendations from other parents. One parent emphasized the importance of religious education *"Because TK Aisyiyah prioritizes religious education. So, I chose TK Aisyiyah rather than other kindergartens"* (N2). Another parent highlighted the role of recommendations, social media, and responsive communication in becoming familiar with the school:

"The most convincing information came from recommendations from other parents. Besides that, I saw the school's social media, which showed documentation of activities and announcements. When I asked through WhatsApp, the response was also quick." (N3)

The findings indicate that parents' needs and expectations were not limited to a single aspect of school services. They included religious education, program flexibility, communication, responsiveness, and information obtained through social networks and digital media. These factors appeared in the accounts of both the principal and parents as part of their experiences and considerations in choosing TK Aisyiyah.

Evaluation-Based Quality Planning and Stakeholder Involvement

The findings show that quality planning at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan was conducted through annual work meetings, routine monthly meetings, and incidental meetings when specific issues required immediate attention. The principal explained that annual evaluation was conducted through work meetings related to education and curriculum, while additional evaluations were held when issues needed to be addressed outside the regular schedule. The principal stated:

"Annual evaluation is conducted through work meetings related to education and curriculum. In addition, we also conduct incidental evaluations. When there is an issue that needs to be discussed outside the regular monthly meeting schedule, we hold an incidental meeting to evaluate and follow up on it" (N1).

The findings further indicate that stakeholder involvement was incorporated into school planning and quality development. The principal explained that parents were involved in learning, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities, while the school committee and foundation were involved in decisions concerning facilities and learning policies. Parents' input was also incorporated through deliberation and communication when planning school activities.

Parents' accounts support the presence of structured services and opportunities for feedback. One parent explained that the school provided clear information about schedules, costs, equipment, and regulations, while also providing opportunities for parents to give input:

"Yes, I can see that the school maintains certain standards. For example, the children's daily schedule is clear, the activities are structured, and developmental reports are provided. When there are complaints, the school usually responds quickly. They also often ask for feedback through meetings or groups" (N3).

Another parent highlighted the communication of children's progress as part of the school's service to parents:

"Usually, if there is anything concerning my child, I am contacted. When report cards are distributed, the teacher also explains the child's strengths and areas that need improvement" (N4).

Overall, the findings indicate that quality planning at TK Aisyiyah involved periodic evaluation, follow-up meetings, parent participation, and coordination with the school committee and foundation. Stakeholder involvement occurred through both formal planning and evaluation processes and ongoing communication and feedback concerning school activities and children's development. These findings provide empirical evidence of how quality planning and stakeholder involvement were practiced within the institution.

Quality Control Practices and Community Interest

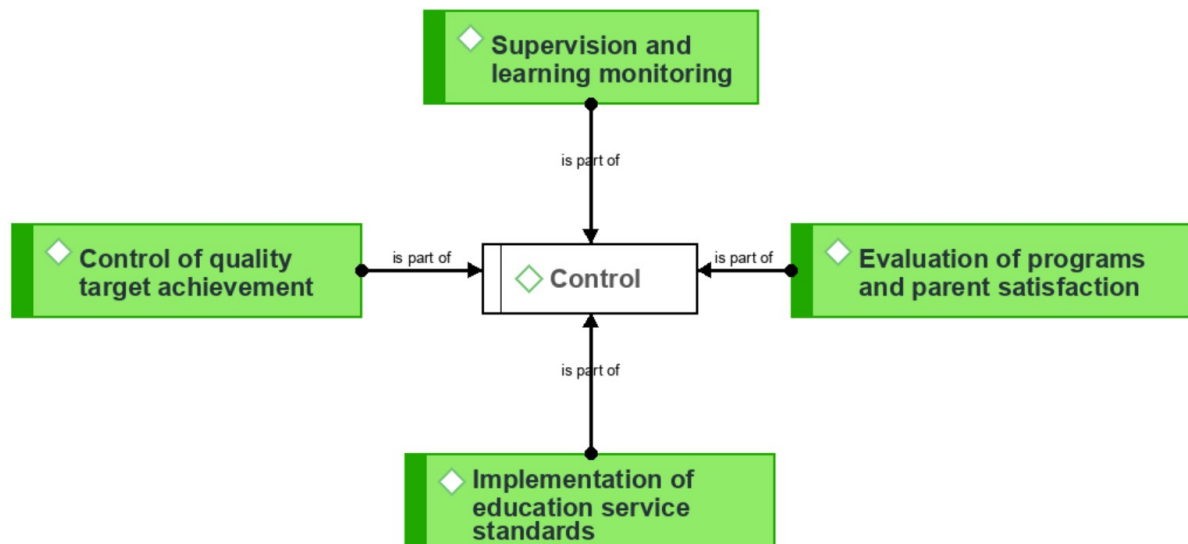


Figure 3. Quality Control

Implementation of Flagship Programs as an Institutional Attractiveness Factor

The findings indicate that TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan implemented several flagship programs that were perceived by stakeholders as distinctive features of the institution. These programs included religious habituation, memorization of daily prayers and short Qur'anic surahs, *dhuha* prayer, AIK/Aisyiyah learning, character development, and life-skill activities. The school also developed contextual learning activities, such as mosque visits, cooking classes, educational visits, performances, and participation in competitions.

The principal explained that the school continuously developed its flagship programs to maintain their relevance and distinctiveness from other early childhood education institutions. The principal stated:

"Besides the flagship programs that I have mentioned, of course, we have strategies for the future. Programs that are currently considered flagship programs may eventually become common in other schools. Therefore, we need to innovate and look for other activities that can later become an attraction for the community. Currently, one of them is the violin program, which is still rarely offered by other schools." (N1)

The school's program development also extended beyond classroom learning. The principal described *dhuha* prayer activities conducted through mosque visits and cooking classes conducted both outside and inside the school, including activities involving parents as instructors. These activities were presented as part of the school's life-skill and contextual learning programs.

Parents' accounts showed that religious programs were among the aspects they noticed when considering the school. One parent stated *"Because TK Aisyiyah prioritizes religious education. So, I chose TK Aisyiyah rather than other kindergartens"* (N2). Another parent emphasized the perceived relevance of religious habituation to the child's development *"Because of the religious aspect, so that my child can be better at memorizing prayers and become more diligent in praying, even though at home the parents rarely teach them"* (N4).

The findings further indicate that the school communicated its programs and achievements through social media. The principal explained *"We socialize the achievements or outcomes of the*

programs we implement through social media. We show the community that our programs produce results" (N1). This was also reflected in the experience of parents. One parent explained:

"The most convincing information came from recommendations from other parents. In addition, I looked at their social media; there was documentation of activities, announcements, and it looked active. When I asked via WhatsApp, the response was also quick." (N3)

Overall, the findings show that the flagship programs at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan encompassed religious education, character development, life skills, contextual learning, and program innovation. These programs were communicated through direct school activities and social media documentation. Stakeholder accounts indicate that such programs and their documentation were part of the information and experiences through which parents perceived the characteristics of the institution. These findings describe stakeholders' perceptions and experiences and do not establish that the flagship programs directly caused changes in enrollment.

Learning Standardization and Integration of Aisyiyah Values

The findings show that TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan standardized learning through curriculum and learning modules that incorporate AIK/Aisyiyah education, religious habituation, prayer memorization, short Qur'anic surahs, and character development. A specific time allocation was provided for AIK learning each day. The principal explained:

"In preparing the learning curriculum, we prepare modules that serve as standards. They contain Aisyiyah education and habituation. Each teacher implements them according to the standards. We allocate one hour every day for AIK (Al-Islam, Kemuhmadiyah, and Aisyiyah), from 08:00 to 09:00" (N1).

The AIK learning materials included prayers, memorization of short Qur'anic surahs, daily prayers, and Aisyiyah/Muhammadiyah education, all of which were incorporated into the curriculum and learning modules. The school also used these documents as a reference for supervising learning implementation.

However, the standardization was not applied rigidly. When teachers encountered situations in which planned material was less familiar or appropriate for children, adjustments could be made while maintaining the main learning objectives. The principal stated:

"Sometimes the material in the lesson plan is less familiar to the children, so the teacher may deliver different material. However, we still direct the learning to follow the lesson plan and module. If the target is memorization up to Surah Al-Ma'un but a teacher provides more because some children have greater ability, that is actually good. The important thing is that the material in the lesson plan is still delivered" (N1).

The findings therefore show that learning at TK Aisyiyah was organized through standardized curriculum and modules, daily AIK allocation, supervision, and religious habituation, while teachers retained flexibility to adjust learning according to children's abilities and classroom conditions. Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah values were integrated into routine learning rather than treated solely as additional activities.

Quality Improvement Practices and Community Interest

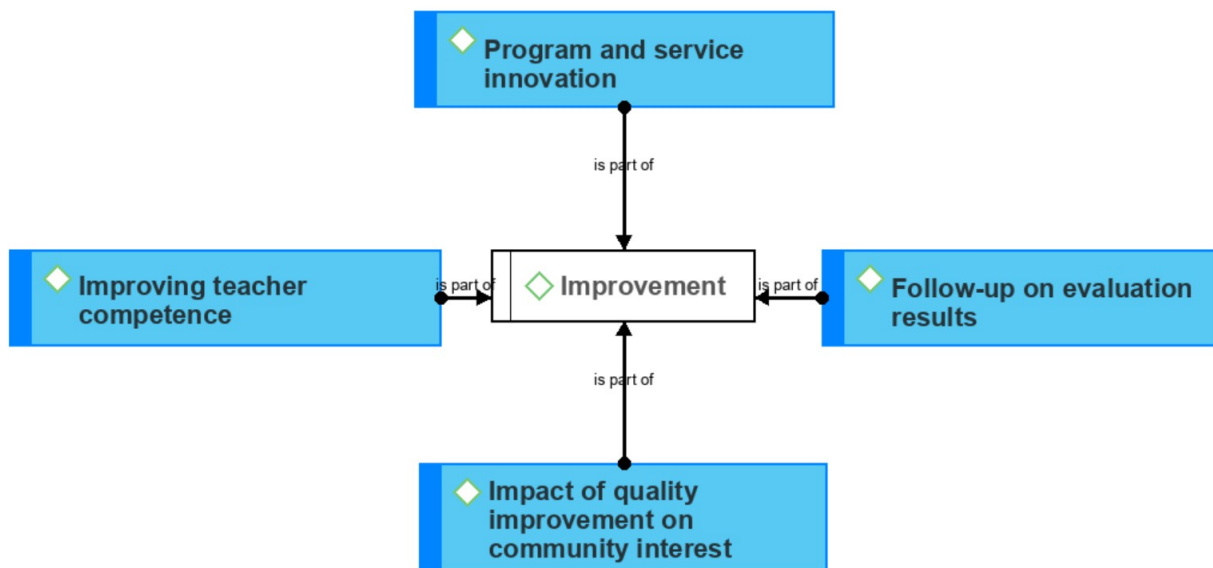


Figure 4. Quality Improvement

Improving Teacher Competence as the Implementer of Quality Services

The findings show that TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan undertakes several efforts to improve teacher competence, particularly in religious education and Qur'anic learning. The school invites an external *tahfidz* teacher, while classroom teachers participate in and learn from the learning process. Teacher competence is also supported through internal evaluation and Qur'an reading and writing improvement activities facilitated by Aisyiyah. The principal explained:

"One example is competence improvement related to memorization, particularly the ability to read and write the Qur'an. We invite an external tahfidz teacher. Although the tahfidz teacher is not present every day, on other days our classroom teachers continue teaching and can learn from them. When the tahfidz teacher is present, the classroom teachers accompany the sessions and learn together" (N1).

The school also conducts internal activities to support teachers' religious competence. The principal explained that teachers evaluate their Qur'an reading through *tadarus* during certain meetings, while several teachers participate in Qur'an literacy improvement activities facilitated by Aisyiyah.

From the parents' perspective, teacher competence was reflected in teachers' ability to manage classrooms, understand children's characteristics, and communicate with parents. One parent stated:

"The teachers appear to be well trained. They can manage the classroom, understand children's characteristics, and communicate well. I also see teacher training activities or coordination meetings, because sometimes the teachers mention that they have just completed an evaluation" (N3).

Another parent highlighted the quality of teacher-parent communication in supporting children's development "The communication is good. The teachers' communication with parents regarding my child's development is also very good" (N2).

Overall, the findings indicate that teacher competence was strengthened through mentoring by an external *tahfidz* teacher, collaborative learning, internal evaluation, and professional development activities facilitated by Aisyiyah. From the parents' perspective, teacher competence was evident in classroom management, understanding children's characteristics, communication, and support for children's development.

Communication, Evaluation, and Follow-Up as Forms of Continuous Improvement

The findings show that communication between TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan and parents was conducted through WhatsApp groups, communication books, direct communication,

meetings, and child development reports. Parents reported that information about activities, schedules, and children's development was communicated clearly. One parent stated:

"The communication is through the class WhatsApp group, and sometimes through the communication book. The teacher provides information about assignments or activities for the following day. If there is a problem with the child, the teacher contacts us privately. I feel that the communication is two-way, and parents are allowed to ask questions" (N3).

Evaluation and follow-up were conducted through annual work meetings, monthly meetings, and incidental meetings when issues required immediate attention. The principal explained that the school had not yet used a formal written instrument to measure parental satisfaction:

"In writing, we have not yet provided a formal satisfaction questionnaire for parents. However, we measure it through participation and communication. The activities we conduct involve parents or guardians, and their participation indirectly becomes an indicator of the extent to which they support the school programs" (N1).

Parents' feedback was also considered in planning and improving school activities. The principal stated *"We also collect input from parents. Not all activities are determined entirely by the school or teachers. We first determine the general framework and then invite parents to discuss it" (N1).*

Overall, the findings indicate that continuous improvement at TK Aisyiyah was supported by two-way communication, parental feedback, periodic evaluation, and follow-up. However, parental satisfaction was still identified primarily through participation and direct communication rather than through a formal written instrument. This indicates that the school's quality evaluation mechanism has been implemented participatively, while systematic measurement of parental satisfaction remains an area for further improvement.

Perceived Relationship between TQM Practices and Community Interest

Admission documents show that the number of applicants at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan changed from 64 applicants in the 2023/2024 academic year to 56 in 2024/2025, and then increased to 73 in 2025/2026. These figures are presented as descriptive enrollment dynamics and are not interpreted as evidence of a direct effect of TQM practices.

Interview findings show that parents considered several aspects when choosing TK Aisyiyah. One parent mentioned proximity, information from the local community, program quality, teacher attentiveness, and communication as considerations:

"At first, I received information from neighbors and parent groups in the neighborhood. They said that TK Aisyiyah had well-organized programs, attentive teachers, and clear communication with parents. I also saw that the school was close to home, so access was easy" (N3).

Another parent emphasized religious education as an important reason for choosing the school *"Because TK Aisyiyah prioritizes religious education. So, I chose TK Aisyiyah rather than other kindergartens" (N2).* The interviews also indicate that recommendations from other parents and social media were sources of information about the school. One parent stated:

"The most convincing information came from recommendations from other parents. In addition, I looked at their social media; there was documentation of activities, announcements, and it looked active. When I asked via WhatsApp, the response was also quick" (N3).

Ease of registration and payment flexibility were also mentioned as considerations "The registration process was easy. The tuition fee could also be paid in installments. Therefore, the process was very easy" (N4).

Perceptions of the school's reputation and children's development also emerged from the interviews. One parent stated *"Its reputation and the results. Many parents say that their children have developed well" (N3).* The findings also indicate that parents recommended TK Aisyiyah to people in their social networks. One parent stated *"Yes, I have, and now their child is also a student there" (N4).*

Overall, the interview evidence shows that parents' considerations in choosing TK Aisyiyah included proximity, religious education, teacher quality, communication, school programs,

recommendations from other parents, social media information, ease of registration, affordability, and perceptions of children's development. These findings describe the factors mentioned by participants when considering TK Aisyiyah and should not be interpreted as evidence that any particular TQM practice directly caused changes in enrollment.

DISCUSSION

Quality Planning and Stakeholder Involvement

The findings indicate that quality planning at TK Aisyiyah was developed through identifying parents' needs, adapting programs, periodic evaluation, and stakeholder involvement. Parents' needs were identified through communication, program information, feedback, and inquiries during the enrollment process. This finding is consistent with Wang et al. (2023), who found that parents' perceptions of institutional responsibility and children's development contribute to their evaluation of early childhood education services. Similarly, parents at TK Aisyiyah considered communication, teacher quality, accessibility, school programs, and institutional responsiveness when evaluating educational services.

However, previous studies show that the factors emphasized in school choice may vary according to institutional and family contexts. Eba & Geta (2022) found that parents choosing faith-based kindergartens placed greater emphasis on moral and religious education and learning facilities, whereas cost was more prominent among parents choosing community-based kindergartens. This pattern is reflected at TK Aisyiyah, where religious education, Qur'anic memorization, and religious habituation were important considerations, although parents also considered communication, accessibility, and service quality. Leukert (2022) likewise emphasized the role of cultural-religious identity in parents' choice of faith-based schools, while Ferreira & Coley (2023) showed that early childhood education choices are also influenced by family goals, social context, trust, and parental circumstances. These findings suggest that customer focus at TK Aisyiyah is multidimensional, encompassing service responsiveness, program suitability, perceived quality, accessibility, and alignment with religious values.

The findings further show that identified needs were incorporated into quality planning through annual evaluations, routine meetings, incidental follow-up, and stakeholder involvement. This finding is consistent with Ülker (2023), who positions continuous evaluation, quality assurance, and stakeholder collaboration as important elements of educational quality management. The involvement of parents, the school committee, and the foundation also aligns with research emphasizing the importance of parent engagement and school-family collaboration in early childhood education (Bartoli et al., 2022; Gross et al., 2022). However, the mechanism at TK Aisyiyah shows a contextual difference because parental involvement was primarily facilitated through meetings, school activities, communication groups, and direct feedback, while formal written instruments for measuring parental satisfaction had not yet been implemented. Thus, stakeholder involvement in this case was more participatory and relational than formally measured.

Overall, these findings extend the TQM perspective by showing how customer focus, quality planning, evaluation, and stakeholder involvement operate as interconnected processes within a faith-based early childhood education institution. The contextual contribution of this study lies in showing how parents' needs and religious values are incorporated into quality planning through relational mechanisms such as communication, deliberation, participation, and follow-up. However, these practices should be understood as mechanisms supporting quality management and shaping stakeholder perceptions, not as evidence that TQM or stakeholder involvement directly increases community interest or enrollment.

Quality Control Practices and Community Interest

The findings indicate that quality control at TK Aisyiyah was reflected in the consistent implementation of religious, character-building, life-skill, and contextual learning programs, as well as in the use of curriculum and learning modules as references for teaching. The presence of these structured programs provided parents with observable characteristics of the institution. This finding is consistent with McIsaac et al. (2023), who found that parents' perceptions of early childhood education programs were shaped by factors such as accessibility, communication, familiarity with

the school, and the learning experiences provided. Similarly, the present study shows that religious habituation, Qur'anic memorization, AIK learning, and character development were among the program features recognized by parents when perceiving the quality and identity of TK Aisyiyah.

The importance of religious programs in the present study also corresponds with recent research emphasizing the role of religious and value-based education in early childhood. Law-Davis (2023), for example, examined teachers' confidence and the factors influencing the implementation of religious education in early childhood settings and highlighted the importance of institutional context in shaping religious education practices. In the context of TK Aisyiyah, religious education was not implemented as a separate activity but integrated into daily routines through AIK learning, prayer memorization, worship habituation, and character development. This integration therefore represents a distinctive form of quality control because the school's institutional values are embedded in routine learning practices.

However, the findings also show a different emphasis from approaches that view quality primarily through standardized service indicators. Research on early childhood service quality has demonstrated the importance of systematically assessing whether institutional services meet parental expectations. For example, Arslan et al. (2022) found that parents' perceptions of service quality and the extent to which institutional services meet their expectations are important dimensions in evaluating early childhood institutions. In contrast, quality control at TK Aisyiyah was primarily demonstrated through the consistency of programs, learning routines, curriculum documents, and direct supervision rather than through formal measurement of parents' perceptions. This difference suggests that quality control in the present case is more practice-oriented and internally regulated, while external perceptions are primarily obtained through communication and stakeholder feedback.

The findings concerning learning standardization further reveal an important balance between consistency and flexibility. The use of curriculum and modules establishes common standards for AIK, religious habituation, memorization, and character education, while teachers are allowed to adjust the delivery of learning according to children's abilities and classroom conditions. This approach is consistent with the broader understanding that quality in early childhood education requires both structured learning environments and responsiveness to children's developmental needs. At the same time, it differs from a rigid interpretation of standardization in which teachers are expected to follow predetermined content without contextual adaptation. Thus, the case of TK Aisyiyah suggests that quality control does not necessarily require uniform implementation; rather, standards function as a quality reference while professional flexibility allows teachers to maintain developmental appropriateness.

Overall, the findings extend the TQM perspective by showing that quality control in a faith-based early childhood institution operates through program consistency, curriculum standardization, value integration, supervision, and contextual flexibility. These practices provide parents with observable experiences through which they interpret the school's quality and institutional identity. Nevertheless, the findings do not establish that flagship programs or standardized learning directly increased community interest or enrollment. Their significance lies in showing how consistent and value-based educational practices can become part of the quality experience through which stakeholders perceive the institution, while enrollment changes remain influenced by a broader institutional and contextual environment.

Quality Improvement Practices and Community Interest

The findings indicate that quality improvement at TK Aisyiyah was implemented through teacher competence development, collaborative learning, two way communication, parental feedback, periodic evaluation, and follow up. Teacher development through external *tahfidz* mentoring, collaborative learning, and Qur'anic literacy activities is consistent with Hu et al. (2022), who found that professional development and coaching can strengthen early childhood teachers' knowledge and skills. However, Markowitz & Seyarto (2023) showed that the relationship between professional development and classroom quality can vary across early childhood education sectors. This suggests that teacher development does not automatically produce the same outcomes in every institutional context. At TK Aisyiyah, therefore, competence development is better understood as a

quality improvement mechanism, while parents' perceptions of teacher competence provide contextual evidence of its relevance.

The findings on communication and parental feedback are also consistent with Avari et al. (2023), who emphasize communication between teachers and families as an important component of family engagement. At TK Aisiyiah, two way communication was facilitated through WhatsApp groups, communication books, meetings, direct communication, and child development reports. However, the school had not yet used a formal written instrument to measure parental satisfaction. This differs from Wang et al. (2023), who developed and validated a parental satisfaction instrument and identified institutional responsibility and child development as important dimensions of parents' evaluations. This difference indicates that TK Aisiyiah has developed a participatory and relational quality improvement mechanism, although its evaluation system remains less formal and systematic.

Overall, the findings extend the TQM perspective by showing that teacher development, communication, parental feedback, evaluation, and follow up operate as interconnected quality improvement practices in a faith based early childhood education institution. The contextual contribution lies in showing how these practices are integrated with the school's religious programs and stakeholder relationships. Nevertheless, these practices should be interpreted as mechanisms supporting service quality and stakeholder perceptions, not as evidence that quality improvement directly increases community interest or enrollment.

Perceived Relationship between TQM Practices and Community Interest

The findings indicate that parents' considerations in choosing TK Aisiyiah were multidimensional, including religious values, perceived service quality, teacher responsiveness, accessibility, communication, reputation, recommendations, social media, and affordability. This finding is consistent with research on parental choice in early childhood education, which shows that parents consider accessibility, pedagogy, facilities, and security when selecting an institution. In particular, accessibility provides the basic condition for choice, while parents also seek educational services that correspond to their values and perceptions of good childhood (Alasuutari et al., 2024). This is reflected in the present study, where parents considered proximity and ease of access alongside program quality, teacher responsiveness, and religious orientation.

The importance of religious values is further supported by Lee et al. (2024), who examined parental preferences in private Christian schools using a conjoint experiment involving 2,474 parents. The study found that both academic quality and spiritual formation substantially influenced school selection, while tuition and extracurricular opportunities had comparatively smaller effects. This finding is consistent with the present study, in which parents valued religious education, Qur'anic memorization, and religious habituation while also considering teacher quality, school programs, and children's development. Thus, religious orientation in the TK Aisiyiah context appears to function alongside perceived educational quality rather than replacing it.

However, the findings also show a different emphasis from contexts where accessibility is the primary condition for school choice. The Finnish study found that location and opening hours were the basic conditions that enabled parents to exercise choice, followed by considerations of pedagogy, facilities, and security. At TK Aisiyiah, proximity and registration convenience were mentioned, but parents simultaneously emphasized religious values, teacher responsiveness, communication, reputation, and recommendations. This difference suggests that the relative importance of school-choice factors is shaped by the institutional and social context in which parents make decisions.

The role of communication and parent relationships further strengthens this interpretation. Keengwe & Onchwari (2024) demonstrate that parent-teacher relationships are an important dimension of young children's educational experiences. Similarly, Zulauf-McCurdy et al. (2024), through a systematic review of interventions in early care and education, emphasize that strengthening parent-teacher relationships requires deliberate strategies to support the social process between families and educators. In the present study, recommendations from other parents, social media, and responsive WhatsApp communication became important sources through which parents learned about and evaluated TK Aisiyiah.

Overall, the findings suggest that community interest in TK Aisiyiah is formed through the interaction of perceived educational quality, religious value alignment, accessibility, communication, reputation, and social information. This enriches the TQM perspective by showing how quality

practices become part of the experiences through which parents interpret the institution. Nevertheless, the increase in applicants from 56 to 73 remains a descriptive enrollment dynamic and cannot be interpreted as evidence that TQM practices directly caused enrollment growth. The contribution of this study therefore lies in explaining the contextual relationship between quality-management practices and parents' school-choice considerations within a faith-based early childhood institution.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that TQM practices at TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan were implemented through identifying parents' needs, evaluation based program planning, stakeholder involvement, learning standardization, strengthening religious and life skill programs, improving teacher competence, responsive communication, and continuous service improvement. These practices were perceived by stakeholders as supporting parental trust and community interest by providing services aligned with parents' expectations and children's developmental needs. However, the findings represent a single qualitative case study and do not demonstrate that TQM directly caused enrollment growth. Practically, the school needs to strengthen written satisfaction surveys, complaint follow up documentation, systematic program evaluation, and clearer quality indicators. Future research may compare multiple institutions and use mixed methods to examine the relationship among service quality, parental satisfaction, demographic conditions, and enrollment decisions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their gratitude to Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, the Educational Management Study Program, TK Aisyiyah Pembina Banguntapan, the principal, teachers, school committee, and parents who provided support and information during the research. This study received no specific funding from any public, commercial, or non-profit funding agency.

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