

Transformational Leadership Based on Quality Culture in Improving Madrasah Graduate Quality in South Lampung Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze transformational leadership practices based on quality culture and their contribution to improving madrasah graduate quality in South Lampung Regency. This research is important because improving graduate quality requires leadership practices that strengthen teacher capacity and establish a sustainable culture of quality. A qualitative approach with a multisite case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving madrasah principals, vice-principals, teachers, and students. Data were analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that transformational leadership practices vary across the three madrasahs. Transformational leadership is reflected through shared vision, motivation, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, collaboration, and the integration of Islamic values. These practices are strengthened through teacher development programs, professional learning communities, coaching, mentoring, collegial supervision, and curriculum development. The findings indicate that a quality culture strengthens the relationship between leadership practices and graduate quality by supporting academic achievement, Islamic character development, life skills, and readiness for further education. The study concludes that transformational leadership based on a quality culture provides a contextual framework for sustainable madrasah quality improvement.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Quality Culture, Madrasah Leadership, Teacher Development, Quality Improvement

INTRODUCTION

The quality of graduates is one of the measures of the success of education implementation in madrasahs. (Rohman et al. 2023) Graduates of Madrasah Tsanawiyah are expected not only to have strong academic achievement but also to possess Islamic character, skills, and readiness to continue their education (Juhaeni et al. 2021). These achievements are related to the quality of madrasah management, especially the ability of madrasah heads to set visions, develop teacher competencies, manage learning, and build a work environment that supports quality (Wafa and Khusna 2022). The head of the madrasah has a role in mobilizing all madrasah residents to achieve educational goals and improve the quality of graduates.

The need for leadership capable of encouraging change is increasingly important in efforts to improve the quality of madrasahs (Aminullah et al. 2024). Madrasah heads not only carry out administrative functions, but also need to provide motivation, encourage innovation, empower teachers, and build a shared commitment to quality (El Widdah 2022). A culture of quality is needed so that quality improvement becomes

part of the work habits of madrasah residents through the implementation of standards, evaluation, cooperation, and continuous improvement. This condition indicates that transformative leadership and a culture of quality need to be studied as part of efforts to improve graduate quality.

However, the conditions in madrasahs in South Lampung Regency indicate differences in leadership practices and organizational culture. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin Jati Agung implements transformational leadership through a clear vision, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, and strengthening Islamic values. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar Cintamulya emphasizes participatory and collaborative leadership by involving teachers in decision making and in the development of madrasah programs. MTs Darul Ma'arif Natar emphasizes supervision, control of the learning process, and achievement of academic targets. These differences are also evident in the patterns of teacher development and the quality characteristics of graduates from each madrasah.

The difference in leadership patterns is related to the teacher development process and the achievement of graduate quality. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin shows strong academic achievements and character through innovative learning and the cultivation of Islamic values. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar showed increased motivation and competence through collaborative leadership and teacher empowerment. MTs Darul Ma'arif can maintain discipline and stability through strong supervision, but students' creativity and innovation remain limited. The findings show that improving the quality of graduates is not only related to supervising the learning process but also to madrasah heads' ability to build a work environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and teachers' professional development (Humaishi et al. 2024).

The transformational leadership theory, developed by Burns and further elaborated by Bass and Avolio, describes four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Pitichat and Riggio 2025). The four dimensions are related to the role of leaders, providing motivation, encouragement for thinking and innovation, and attention to individual development. A culture of quality complements the process through a commitment to quality standards, involvement of madrasah residents, evaluation, collaboration, and continuous improvement (Suriyati et al. 2023). The findings in the document show that communicative leadership that supports teacher development can create a positive work atmosphere, increase motivation, and improve the quality of learning and graduates.

Previous research has shown that leadership and organizational culture are related to improving the quality of education. In 2022, Karacabey MF, Bellibaş MŞ, and Adams examined collective teacher efficacy and school leadership in teacher capacity development (Karacabey, Bellibaş, and Adams 2022). Khuwaja, Ahmed, and Hussain examine authentic leadership and academic innovation in educational organizations (Hadian and Rahimi 2022). Research on madrasahs in South Lampung Regency shows that transformational, participatory, and instructional leadership lead to different patterns of teacher development and in the quality of graduates. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin demonstrates transformational leadership in innovation and teacher development, while MTs Mathla'ul Anwar and MTs Darul Ma'arif exhibit different leadership characteristics in line with their respective organizational cultures.

The study has provided an overview of leadership's contributions to teacher development, organizational culture, innovation, and graduate quality. A study that specifically formulates a transformative leadership model based on quality culture in State MTs in South Lampung Regency still needs to be developed. This research offers novelty by integrating transformative leadership and quality culture to explain the process of improving graduate quality. Quality culture is embedded in an institutional process that strengthens leadership vision, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

The state-of-the-art aspect of this research lies in the formulation of a transformative leadership model grounded in a quality culture that connects madrasah heads' leadership practices to the formation of

work culture and the improvement of graduate quality. The research focuses on the transformative leadership practices of madrasah heads, the characteristics of quality culture, teacher development and learning strategies, and the quality of graduates' achievement at State MTs in South Lampung Regency. The focus is supported by findings that different leadership styles shape distinct organizational cultures and teacher development patterns.

This study aims to analyze the transformative leadership practices of madrasah heads; identify the development of a quality culture; analyze the relationship between transformative leadership and quality culture in improving graduate quality; and formulate a transformative leadership model based on quality culture in State MTs in South Lampung Regency. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Islamic educational leadership studies, particularly regarding the relationship between transformative leadership and a culture of quality. In practical terms, the research results can serve as a reference for madrasah heads in developing leadership practices, for teachers in building a quality work culture, and for madrasas in designing strategies to improve graduate quality.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design (Bunger et al. 2024). This approach is used to understand the leadership practices of madrasah heads, work culture, teacher development, and their relationship to the quality of graduates, based on real conditions at each research location. Multisite case studies allow researchers to compare the characteristics of madrasah leadership and management across several locations, identifying patterns of similarity and difference (Wu et al. 2023).

The research subjects consist of madrasah heads, deputy madrasah heads, teachers, and students. The head of the madrasah is the primary focus for exploring leadership practices and quality improvement policies (Pyo et al. 2023). Deputy heads of madrasas and teachers are sources of data on program implementation, work culture, and competency development. Students are used as a data source to examine educational processes and achievements related to graduate quality.

The research data consists of primary and secondary data (Ajayi 2023). Primary data was obtained through interviews and observations of madrasah heads, deputy madrasah heads, teachers, and students. Secondary data were obtained from madrasah profiles, organizational structures, curricula, development programs, teacher performance reports, academic documents, and quality data on graduates from the last three years. The use of these two sources helps researchers obtain data related to leadership, madrasah culture, teacher development, and graduate quality (Liang, Hu, and Feng 2020).

Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Taherdoost 2021). Observations were used to examine interactions between the head of the madrasah and the teacher, academic and managerial activities, teacher development programs, the work atmosphere, and the involvement of madrasah residents (Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman 2020). In-depth interviews were used to explore leadership practices, the development of a quality culture, teacher development strategies, and efforts to improve graduate quality (Khoa, Hung, and Hejsalem-Brahmi 2023). Documentation is used to supplement data through institutional documents, work programs, performance reports, academic data, and graduate data. The validity of the data is carried out through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Chand 2025).

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Qomaruddin and Sa'diyah 2024). Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were selected and grouped based on transformative leadership focus, quality culture, and graduate quality. The data were then presented as

descriptions and thematic groupings to identify patterns across research locations. Conclusions are drawn through interpretation of the patterns found and verified by comparing various data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the study show that the leadership practices of madrasah heads across the three research locations differ in character. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin Jati Agung demonstrates transformational leadership through vision development, motivation, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, and the strengthening of Islamic values. The head of the madrasah not only carries out administrative duties but also encourages teachers to improve their competence and develop their teaching. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar Cintamulya demonstrates participatory leadership by involving teachers in decision-making, program development, professional learning communities, and peer coaching. MTs Darul Ma'arif Natar emphasizes administrative and instructional leadership through supervision of learning, discipline, and the achievement of academic targets.

These leadership differences are evident in the patterns of teacher development and work culture in each madrasah. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin carries out training, coaching, mentoring, character development, and religious activities. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar develops collaboration through a professional learning community and peer coaching, while MTs Darul Ma'arif focuses more on training in technical, administrative, and learning supervision. A curriculum development team, lesson study, and collegial supervision support these activities. This pattern shows that a culture of quality is formed through professional development activities embedded in madrasa work practices.

The quality of graduates' achievements also varies across the three madrasas. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin shows achievements in academics, character, and life skills through innovative learning and strengthening of Islamic values. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar demonstrates the development of students' motivation, competence, and competitiveness. MTs Darul Ma'arif shows academic stability and discipline, while students' creativity and innovation remain limited. The qualities of graduates identified include academic achievement, Islamic character, life skills, and readiness to continue their education.

A comparison of the three locations shows that each madrasah head uses a different strategy in building a work culture and improving the quality of graduates. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin emphasizes vision, empowerment, and innovation; MTs Mathla'ul Anwar emphasizes participation and collaboration; while MTs Darul Ma'arif emphasizes supervision and discipline. These variations show differences in leadership practices and quality culture in the management of madrasas and in the achievement of graduate quality.

The findings on leadership at MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin indicate a profile of character closest to the concept of transformational leadership. Madrasah heads develop visions, motivate and empower teachers, and encourage learning innovation. This practice aligns with the four dimensions of transformational leadership outlined by Bass and Avolio: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Khan, Amin, and Saif 2025). The example of the madrasah head reflects idealized influence; the motivation and development of a shared vision relates to inspirational motivation; the encouragement of innovation shows intellectual stimulation; while attention to the development of teachers' competencies reflects individualized consideration (Hilton et al. 2023).

These findings show that transformational leadership in the context of madrasah does not stop at the relationship between the madrasah head and the teacher, but is also evident in changes in how madrasah residents work. Giving teachers space to develop encourages the emergence of initiatives, collaboration, and innovation in learning (Campbell 2020). These findings are in line with research by Lewis Winks, Nicholas

Green, and Sarah Dyer, which places collective teacher efficacy and professional learning culture as elements related to student commitment and achievement (Winks, Green, and Dyer 2020). This similarity shows that quality improvement requires leadership that can build teachers' collective capacity, not just supervise their work. Achievement (Lijun and Te 2024). The quality culture in this study is evident in activities that actively involve teachers in improving quality. Training, supervision, coaching, peer coaching, curriculum development, and teacher collaboration are tangible forms of work culture that support quality. The findings align with the views of Wei Lijun and Hsin Chun Te on the importance of a quality culture and stakeholder participation in building a school culture that supports student. The difference is that this study identifies madrasah heads' leadership as the driving force that shapes and strengthens the culture of quality.

The culture of quality also provides space for the sustainability of efforts to improve madrasahs' quality. The madrasah's policy can change with a change in leadership, while the madrasah residents can maintain the work habits that have developed within the organization. This condition indicates that improving the quality of graduates requires a consistent system of work, collaboration, evaluation, and professional development (SITHOLE 2025). A culture of quality thus not only supports leadership but also becomes part of the mechanism that sustains change.

The relationship between leadership and graduate quality is evident in differences in achievement among the three madrasahs. MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin with transformational leadership character shows stronger achievements in academics, character, and life skills. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar, through collaborative leadership, have shown strengthened motivation, competence, and competitiveness. At the same time, MTs Darul Ma'arif, through strong supervision, have maintained academic discipline and stability but have not shown the same level of innovation. The findings reinforce the transformational leadership theory that motivation, intellectual stimulation, and capacity building of members can support improved organizational performance (Adeoye, Baharun, and Munawwaroh 2025).

The findings are also in line with research by Khuwaja, Ahmed, and Hussain, which shows that authentic and transformational leadership can drive pedagogical innovation and academic achievement when supported by positive organizational conditions (Murugi and Mugwe 2023). In the context of this study, the organization's conditions can be observed through teacher empowerment, collaborative activities, professional development, and a work culture that supports innovation. This means that transformative leadership does not work in isolation, but requires an organizational environment that allows teachers to implement changes in learning practices.

The comparison of the three madrasahs also shows that leadership applications need to consider the organization's condition. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar demonstrated the benefits of a participatory approach by involving teachers in decision-making and program development. MTs Darul Ma'arif show that supervision and control are still necessary to maintain academic discipline and stability. The findings are in line with Fiedler and Hallinger's perspective, which emphasizes the suitability of leadership for the organization's context and environment. Transformative leadership in this study, therefore, is not understood as the elimination of administrative, instructional, or supervisory functions, but rather as a leadership pattern that integrates those functions with teacher empowerment, innovation, and development.

Based on findings and comparisons across locations, the transformative leadership model in this study, grounded in quality culture, is built around several interrelated elements: quality vision, example, motivation, teacher empowerment, professional development, learning innovation, collaboration, evaluation, and continuous improvement (Hines et al. 2020). The vision provides direction for madrasah development, sets an example, and motivates madrasah residents to build commitment, while empowering efforts to increase teacher capacity, with innovation and collaboration strengthening learning practices. Evaluation and

continuous improvement keep implemented programs aligned with quality improvement needs (Benabid, EL IMADI, and Alqatawneh 2025).

The model shows that a culture of quality strengthens transformative leadership practices (Mincu 2022). The head of the madrasah plays a role in shaping the direction of change, while the culture of quality translates this direction into collective work habits (Alzoraiki et al. 2024). Teacher development is an important part because teacher capacity building is related to the quality of the learning process (Kilag and Sasan 2023). The quality of graduates is then reflected in academic achievements, character, life skills, and readiness to continue their education.

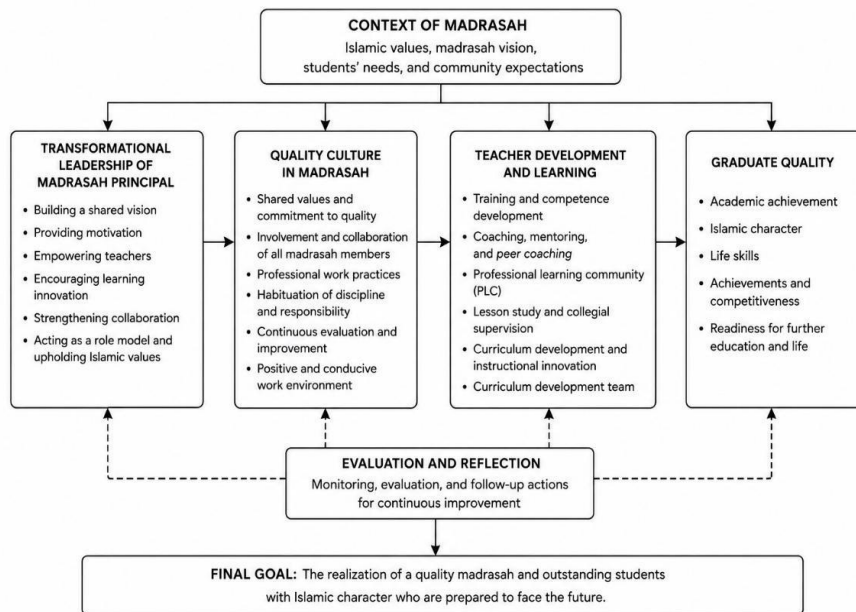


Figure 1. Model of Transformational Leadership Based on Quality Culture for Improving Madrasah Graduate Quality

The findings of this study expand on previous research that more discussed transformational leadership, organizational culture, teacher development, or student achievement as stand-alone aspects. This research integrates these aspects into a single framework for transformative leadership grounded in a culture of quality. Quality culture serves as the basis that connects leadership practices to teacher development and the improvement of graduate quality. This position is the main contribution of the research because it shows that the success of leadership is determined not only by the head of the madrasah's ability to lead, but also by his ability to build values, habits, and work systems that support quality.

Practically, the research findings have implications for madrasah heads to build a shared vision of quality, provide space for teacher participation, strengthen competency development, encourage learning innovation, and use evaluation as the basis for program improvement. Teachers need to be included in the quality development process through collaboration, lesson studies, collegial supervision, and professional development activities. This pattern shows that improving the quality of graduates needs to be built from the madrasah's internal processes, not only through final-result targets.

Overall, the research shows that transformative leadership based on a quality culture is a leadership pattern that combines a vision for change, teacher empowerment, innovation, collaboration,

evaluation, and madrasah values to support the improvement of graduate quality. Leadership becomes a driver of change; a quality culture becomes a work environment that sustains change; teachers become implementers and developers of quality in learning; and the quality of graduates is an achievement of the process. These findings reinforce the results of research in the document that leadership, teacher competency development, and organizational context contribute to the quality of graduates in academic, character, and spiritual aspects.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership in madrasahs is not merely associated with administrative responsibilities but also involves the ability of madrasah principals to create a shared vision, develop teacher capacity, and encourage continuous improvement. The leadership practices identified in the three madrasahs demonstrate that quality improvement is strongly influenced by how leaders mobilize organizational members toward common educational goals. This finding supports the concept of transformational leadership, which emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire followers, stimulate innovation, and develop individual potential within organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Khan, Amin, & Saif, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, transformational leadership also needs to integrate institutional values and moral commitments because madrasahs pursue not only academic excellence but also character development and religious identity.

The transformational leadership practices found at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jati Agung reflect the four dimensions proposed by Bass and Avolio, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The madrasah principal demonstrates idealized influence through exemplary behavior and commitment to quality improvement, while inspirational motivation appears through the development of a shared vision among teachers and educational stakeholders. The encouragement of learning innovation represents intellectual stimulation, whereas teacher mentoring and competency development reflect individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hilton et al., 2023). These findings confirm that transformational leadership becomes effective when leaders are able to combine strategic direction with attention to individual teacher development.

The variation of leadership practices among the three madrasahs indicates that transformational leadership is influenced by organizational context. MTs Mathla'ul Anwar Cintamulya emphasizes participation and collaboration, while MTs Darul Ma'arif Natar focuses on supervision, discipline, and instructional control. These differences demonstrate that leadership practices cannot be separated from institutional characteristics, available resources, and organizational needs. This finding is consistent with the contingency perspective of leadership, which emphasizes the importance of adapting leadership approaches to specific situations and environments (Fiedler, 1967; Hallinger, 2011). Therefore, transformational leadership in madrasahs does not eliminate administrative and supervisory functions but integrates them with empowerment and innovation.

The findings further reveal that quality culture functions as an important mechanism connecting leadership practices with graduate quality improvement. A quality culture transforms leadership vision into collective habits through collaboration, evaluation, professional learning, and continuous improvement. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing that organizational culture provides a foundation for sustainable educational improvement because quality values must become embedded in daily practices rather than remain only as institutional statements (Sallis, 2014; Mincu, 2022). In this study, quality culture is demonstrated through teacher collaboration, coaching, mentoring, curriculum development teams, and professional learning communities.

Teacher development emerges as a central element in the relationship between transformational leadership and graduate quality. The results show that madrasah principals who provide opportunities for training, coaching, peer learning, and professional collaboration contribute to strengthening teacher competencies. These findings support research indicating that effective school leadership influences teacher professional learning by creating conditions that encourage collective efficacy, trust, and continuous professional growth (Karacabey, Bellibaş, & Adams, 2022). Therefore, improving graduate quality requires leadership strategies that focus not only on student outcomes but also on developing teachers as key actors in the educational process.

The relationship between teacher empowerment and learning innovation is also an important finding of this study. Teachers who receive support and autonomy from leaders tend to develop initiatives in designing learning strategies, improving classroom practices, and implementing innovations. This finding is aligned with previous research showing that supportive leadership and collaborative professional cultures encourage teachers to become active contributors to educational improvement rather than merely implementers of institutional policies (Campbell, 2020; Winks, Green, & Dyer, 2020). In the madrasah context, teacher empowerment is particularly important because teachers carry the responsibility of integrating academic learning with Islamic character formation.

The differences in graduate quality achievements across the three madrasahs illustrate that leadership practices influence educational outcomes through organizational processes. MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin demonstrates stronger characteristics in academic achievement, character development, and life skills through innovation-oriented leadership. Meanwhile, MTs Mathla'ul Anwar strengthens student motivation and competence through collaborative leadership, while MTs Darul Ma'arif maintains academic stability through supervision and discipline. These findings reinforce the argument that educational quality is not produced by a single factor but through interactions among leadership, teacher capacity, organizational culture, and learning processes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Lijun & Te, 2024).

This study contributes theoretically by proposing an integrated framework that connects transformational leadership, quality culture, teacher development, and graduate quality improvement. Previous studies often examine these variables separately, such as focusing only on leadership style, organizational culture, or teacher professional development. The present study extends previous perspectives by showing that quality culture acts as a bridge that translates leadership vision into sustainable organizational practices. This finding supports the argument that leadership effectiveness depends not only on the personal capacity of leaders but also on their ability to construct systems, values, and routines that support continuous improvement (Alzorai et al., 2024).

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that madrasah principals need to develop leadership strategies that combine vision building, teacher empowerment, collaboration, and systematic evaluation. Quality improvement programs should not rely solely on short-term activities such as training but must be supported by sustainable professional learning systems. Professional learning communities, collegial supervision, mentoring, and collaborative curriculum development can become strategic mechanisms for strengthening internal quality improvement capacity (Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Suriyati et al., 2023). This approach enables madrasahs to develop quality improvement based on internal organizational strengths.

Overall, this study confirms that transformational leadership based on quality culture provides a contextual framework for improving madrasah graduate quality. Leadership serves as the driver of change, quality culture functions as the environment that sustains improvement, teachers become agents of learning transformation, and graduate quality represents the outcome of these interconnected processes. The

contribution of this study lies in explaining how leadership practices are transformed into sustainable quality improvement through organizational culture and teacher development mechanisms. Future studies may further examine this model through quantitative approaches or broader comparative studies involving different madrasah contexts and regions (Adeoye, Baharun, & Munawwaroh, 2025; Benabid, El Imadi, & Alqatawneh, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that improving the quality of madrasah graduates is closely related to the implementation of transformational leadership and the development of a quality culture within the madrasah organization. The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership contributes to quality improvement through shared vision development, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement, while a quality culture strengthens these practices by transforming leadership values into sustainable work habits, professional collaboration, competency development, and systematic evaluation. The proposed transformational leadership model based on quality culture provides a framework that explains how leadership practices, teacher development, and organizational processes interact to support improvements in academic achievement, Islamic character, life skills, and students' readiness for further education. The study highlights that sustainable madrasah quality improvement depends not only on the individual capacity of madrasah principals but also on their ability to build organizational systems and collective commitments that can be understood, implemented, and maintained by all madrasah members. However, this study is limited by the scope of the research sites and participant characteristics, which means that the model cannot yet be generalized to all madrasahs with different institutional and regional conditions. Future research is recommended to test and refine this model through quantitative or mixed-method approaches involving broader madrasah contexts, as well as longitudinal studies examining the sustainability of quality culture development and the contributions of teachers, supervisors, students, parents, and communities in strengthening the madrasah quality ecosystem.

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