

Quality Assurance in Faith-Based Education: A Case Study of MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| <p>Article history: Received: 04/21/2025 Revised: 06/15/2025 Accepted: 07/31/2025</p> | <p>Purpose – This study aims to examine the quality assurance system at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta and to analyze how institutional policies align with graduate outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction within a faith-based secondary school context.</p> |
| <p>Keywords: <i>Quality Assurance; Faith-Based Education; Islamic Schooling</i></p> | <p>Design/methods – This research employs a qualitative single-site case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with school leaders and teachers, direct classroom and institutional observations, and document analysis of internal policies and quality assurance records. The data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, supported by triangulation, member checking, and audit trails to ensure trustworthiness.</p> <p>Findings – The findings reveal that strong religious culture, structured disciplinary systems, adaptive pedagogy, teacher professionalism, and strategic utilization of facilities contribute significantly to high graduate quality and positive stakeholder perceptions. Graduates demonstrate discipline, religious commitment, resilience, communication skills, and collaborative competence. However, challenges remain, including limited digital integration, uneven student participation in quality assurance processes, restricted technology access for boarding students, and limited dissemination of teaching innovations beyond the institution.</p> <p>Research implications/limitations – This study is limited by its single-case qualitative design and reliance on participant perspectives, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should adopt comparative or mixed-method approaches across multiple madrasah to deepen understanding of quality assurance implementation in diverse faith-based educational contexts.</p> <p>Practical implications – The study suggests that quality assurance in Islamic secondary education should be multidimensional, integrating academic, spiritual, social, and managerial dimensions. Schools are encouraged to strengthen technology-enhanced quality assurance systems, expand student involvement in evaluation processes, and promote structured professional development and knowledge-sharing mechanisms to support continuous improvement.</p> <p>Originality/value – This study contributes original empirical insights into the enactment of quality assurance at the madrasah level, an area that remains underexplored in the literature. By providing a context-sensitive analysis of quality assurance in a faith-based secondary school, the study bridges policy-level discussions and everyday school practices, offering a nuanced model for improving quality assurance in Islamic education.</p> |



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Introduction

Quality assurance in education is widely recognized as a cornerstone for institutional accountability, continuous improvement, and the attainment of high learning standards across diverse schooling systems globally (Benz-Camino, 2023a; Takala, 2018a; Yang, 2022a). Within the field of educational management, robust quality assurance mechanisms help standardize teaching practices, align curricula with national and international frameworks, and foster ongoing professional growth among educators (Chukwuma, 2019; Kohan, 2024; Rice, 2022). At the same time, the operationalization of quality assurance frequently encounters persistent challenges related to institutional autonomy, uneven resource allocation, and inconsistencies in policy enactment (Candido, 2020; Falabella, 2016; Mccheka & Mislay, 2025). In Islamic education, particularly at the level of Madrasah Aliyah, quality assurance must simultaneously safeguard academic rigor and the cultivation of religious and moral character, demanding a careful integration of faith-based values and modern educational standards (A. Idris et al., 2022; Shofiyah & Karimah, 2022; Yanto et al., 2024). Against this backdrop, an in-depth examination of quality assurance implementation in a faith-based institution such as MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta becomes crucial for mapping existing strengths and identifying strategic areas for refinement (Busahdiar et al., 2023; El Widdah, 2022; Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

Building on this broad significance, prior research has underscored the pivotal role of leadership in the design and effectiveness of school quality assurance systems (Anastasiadou & Anastasiadis, 2019; Hartati & Muktar, 2019; Olowoselu, 2024). Studies of accreditation and external quality schemes indicate that structured frameworks and clear standards can reconfigure institutional practices, decision-making processes, and long-term strategic orientations in higher and basic education institutions (Matte & Lanphear, 2018; Thoyib et al., 2025; Wolff, 2015). In Islamic higher education and pesantren, the adoption of international and regional accreditation regimes has been shown to enhance academic quality, global networking, and cultures of continuous improvement, while also raising questions about contextualization and local relevance (Hidayatullah & Yusuf, 2025; A. Idris et al., 2022; Winoto, 2022). At the level of madrasah and faith-based secondary schools, transformational and supervisory leadership that is grounded in Islamic values has proven influential in strengthening teacher professionalism, planning, and school reform agendas (Iskarim et al., 2025; Siagian et al., 2025; Subandi et al., 2021). These patterns suggest that leadership in faith-based institutions must navigate the dual mandate of preserving religious identity while meeting contemporary expectations of accountability and competitiveness in the wider education system (Ali, 2022; Basri et al., 2023; Ritonga & Amaro, 2022).

In parallel, teacher professionalism and pedagogical competence have emerged as central determinants of quality assurance success across both secular and religious educational settings (Chen & Mohamed Mokhtar, 2023; Kaushal, 2023). Research on internal quality audits and school-based monitoring highlights the importance of systematic evaluation, data use, and feedback loops for improving instructional quality and institutional performance (Abidin et al., 2023; Mukhibat & Sutoyo, 2021; Raso et al., 2017). Work on experiential and practice-based education similarly shows that quality assurance in professional programs requires clear performance indicators, reliable assessment tools, and coherent follow-up mechanisms to translate data into improvement (Assemi, 2019; Khan et al., 2020; Moghaddam et al., 2020). In Indonesian Islamic higher education, outcomes-based approaches and KKNI-aligned curricula have been progressively institutionalized, yet implementation still depends heavily on lecturers' understanding of curriculum design, assessment, and continuous quality improvement cycles (Ahid & Chamid, 2021; Siti Romlah et al., 2025; Solikhah, 2022). Teacher education in Islamic contexts further illustrates the need for integrated standards that combine pedagogical, professional, and religious competencies

to support high-quality instruction across school levels (AlHouli, 2024; Freeh & Hussein, 2021; Zaqiah et al., 2024).

Beyond teacher-related factors, recent scholarship has highlighted the significance of student participation and stakeholder engagement in school quality assurance. Studies on participatory learning and classroom-based assessment suggest that involving students in reflection, feedback, and co-evaluation can deepen learning and enhance the responsiveness of instructional practices (Febriana, 2020; Pulis, 2018). Research on school-based prevention and health programs indicates that quality assurance mechanisms help standardize interventions, strengthen monitoring, and reduce risk behaviors when linked to comprehensive data systems (Miovský, 2023; Sayed et al., 2015; Washi & Saadoon, 2023). At the governance level, community participation structures such as school-based management committees have been shown to improve transparency, accountability, and resource use, particularly in secondary schools (Ezenwaji et al., 2019; Kadir et al., 2020). In Islamic integrated schools, carefully managed marketing and communication strategies that engage parents as partners in quality assurance can enhance satisfaction and reinforce the school's religious and educational mission (Ikhwan et al., 2025; Tharaba et al., 2025). At the same time, growing concerns about radicalization among youth have underlined the importance of embedding religious moderation and civic values within broader quality assurance and student development frameworks (Owolabi, 2020; Yani et al., 2024).

Quality assurance in education is also shaped by infrastructure, information systems, and the effective use of technology for monitoring and evaluation. Evidence from engineering education and cooperative international schools demonstrates that well-integrated quality systems, supported by robust management information infrastructures, can enhance consistency and transparency in teaching and assessment processes (Jiao & Ge, 2022; Oo & Patil, 2015). In higher education, online and blended learning have intensified the need for explicit quality assurance measures to ensure that course design, content delivery, and assessment remain aligned with institutional standards and learner needs (Andrade et al., 2019; Guevara & Barra, 2023). Comparative work on inspection and self-evaluation further indicates that well-calibrated indicators and guidelines can strengthen institutional self-review and external accountability in schooling (Gardezi, 2024; Tagliaferri et al., 2017). Within Islamic higher education and faith-based institutions, the incorporation of remuneration schemes, local values, and technology-enhanced systems has been associated with greater acceptance of quality assurance processes and improved staff performance (Baharun et al., 2025; Hasyim et al., 2025). At the level of school and postgraduate education, structured elimination or progression mechanisms embedded in quality assurance frameworks are used to uphold academic standards and ensure that graduates meet expected levels of competence (Xiao, 2015; Zan et al., 2019).

Despite this substantial body of work, important gaps remain in the literature on quality assurance in faith-based education. Bibliometric and qualitative studies show that research on pesantren and Islamic universities has grown, yet madrasah-level quality assurance—particularly at Madrasah Aliyah—has received comparatively less systematic attention (Lathifah et al., 2025; Yunilarosi, 2025). Analyses of legal harmonization and institutional governance highlight how Islamic schools and dayah must negotiate national regulations and exam regimes, but they rarely provide detailed accounts of how school-level quality processes operate in practice (Haddade et al., 2024; Yunus Abu Bakar et al., 2024). Studies in Islamic finance and service quality illustrate sophisticated models of compliance and assurance, yet their insights are not fully translated into frameworks for evaluating educational quality in faith-based schools (Dandis et al., 2021; Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2020). Moreover, research on competence-based curricula and regional quality officers underscores varying capacities and understandings of quality standards across local contexts, raising questions about consistency in implementation (Dismas et al., 2023). Finally, discussions of voluntary quality codes suggest persistent tensions between formal frameworks and school-level realities,

especially where traditional authority and community expectations strongly shape educational practice (Grant-Maintained Schools—Quality Assurance: A Voluntary Code of Practice, 2018).

Within this context, there is a clear need for in-depth, context-sensitive case studies that examine how quality assurance is enacted in everyday practice in faith-based secondary schools. Existing work on judicialization and governance in quality assurance systems indicates that regulatory and legal frameworks can significantly shape school coexistence, conflict resolution, and the meaning of accountability (López et al., 2020). At the same time, comparative studies on inspection and self-evaluation in national systems show that the configuration of internal and external evaluation tools has important implications for schools' capacity to reflect, learn, and improve. This study responds to these gaps by focusing on the concrete mechanisms, cultural norms, and relational dynamics that underpin quality assurance in a specific Islamic secondary school context. It places particular emphasis on how institutional policies translate into student outcomes, teacher practices, and stakeholder satisfaction in a faith-based environment. By doing so, the study aims to bridge the divide between macro-level policy debates and the micro-level realities of school life in an Islamic educational institution.

Accordingly, this article examines the quality assurance system at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta, with specific attention to the alignment between institutional policies, graduate outcomes, and stakeholder perceptions of quality. The study analyzes how dimensions such as discipline, religious values, resilience, communication skills, and collaboration are embedded within school routines and are reflected in students' academic and character development. It also explores how digital learning tools, internal monitoring procedures, and documentation practices support or constrain the implementation of quality assurance in this faith-based setting. Furthermore, the research considers the extent to which students, parents, and external stakeholders are involved in quality processes, and how their participation shapes the school's responsiveness to changing educational demands. In doing so, the article seeks to contribute to international debates on quality assurance in religious schooling by offering empirically grounded insights and practical recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness, inclusiveness, and sustainability of quality assurance in Islamic secondary education.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the quality assurance system implemented at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta and to understand how policies, practices, and stakeholder interactions contribute to institutional performance. A single-site case study approach was selected to obtain an in-depth and holistic understanding of internal organizational processes within their natural context, allowing the researchers to explore how quality assurance is interpreted and enacted rather than only measured through predefined variables. The research design was interpretive in orientation, emphasizing meanings, experiences, and institutional dynamics that surround quality assurance in a faith-based school environment. The unit of analysis comprised the institution as a whole, including its leadership structures, instructional practices, and mechanisms for monitoring student development and stakeholder satisfaction. Ethical procedures were observed throughout the study, and all participants received informed consent information and confidentiality assurances prior to their involvement.

Data collection followed a structured fieldwork protocol combining in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to enhance triangulation and strengthen the richness of the empirical evidence. Purposive sampling was used to identify key stakeholders who held formal responsibilities related to quality assurance, including the school principal, vice principals for curriculum and infrastructure, teachers, and administrative staff. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually in private settings, with

durations ranging from 45 to 90 minutes depending on participant roles, and followed an interview guide designed to explore policy implementation, monitoring practices, instructional quality, and stakeholder engagement. Documentary analysis involved systematic review of institutional regulations, internal evaluations, accreditation records, and quality assurance reports, which provided insights into formalized compliance mechanisms and institutional planning. Observations were conducted in classrooms, administrative offices, and shared spaces to assess how quality assurance principles—such as discipline, religious practices, teacher professionalism, and stakeholder communication—were reflected in everyday school routines.

All interviews were recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim, while observation notes and documentary records were consolidated into a unified dataset. Field materials were organized chronologically and thematically to support systematic interpretation, and a document review matrix was used to extract relevant information from institutional records. An inductive thematic analysis was undertaken, beginning with open coding of transcripts, observation notes, and internal documents, followed by focused coding to identify patterns related to leadership, instructional quality, student development, and institutional accountability. Iterative comparisons were made within and across data sources to identify convergences, tensions, or contextual nuances in the enactment of school quality assurance. Digital word-processing tools and spreadsheets were used to support data management, coding, categorization, and theme refinement, ensuring analytic consistency and transparency.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, multiple trustworthiness strategies were applied, including methodological triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and reflexive note-taking. Triangulation involved cross-verifying interview accounts with observational data and documentary evidence to reduce interpretive bias and increase the credibility of the conclusions. Member checking was undertaken by sharing thematic interpretations and draft summaries with selected participants, who reviewed them for accuracy and contextual appropriateness, offering clarifications where necessary. Dependability was enhanced by documenting methodological decisions, coding procedures, and analytic reflections, allowing the research process to be traceable and replicable. Confirmability was strengthened through the use of reflexive memos, where researchers recorded assumptions and examined how positionality might influence interpretation, while transferability was facilitated by providing rich descriptions of the institutional context, quality assurance mechanisms, and cultural environment so that readers can assess the applicability of the findings to similar faith-based or secondary school settings.

Results

1. *Exploring Graduate Excellence: Insights from MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta*

The interview conducted on November 28, 2024, at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta with the Head of Madrasah, Bapak Rosidul Anwar, M.Pd.I., provides significant insights into the quality of graduates from the institution. Various aspects were discussed during the interview, focusing on discipline, religious behavior, and resilience. Other key areas included anti-bullying measures, communication skills, and collaboration. Additionally, critical thinking, creativity, and stakeholder satisfaction were evaluated. These findings highlight both the strengths and challenges in maintaining high graduate quality within the madrasah environment.

The discipline of students at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta varies based on the type of learning model they follow. Students in the boarding school system (full asrama) exhibit higher levels of discipline due to the structured environment, whereas regular students sometimes face punctuality challenges, mainly due to transportation issues. However, the school implements corrective measures such as requiring latecomers to engage in religious

activities like Quran recitation and duha prayers. Uniform discipline is well maintained as the school provides and tailors uniforms for students, ensuring uniformity. The adherence to school regulations is also strong, with only minor instances of non-compliance, mainly in morning wake-up routines due to early prayer schedules.

Religious behavior is a primary focus at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta. The institution mandates daily Quran recitation before classes begin, a practice supported by both students and teachers. Special programs are designed to help students improve their Quranic reading skills, including tailored guidance for new students. Teachers and staff also practice communal Quran recitation and prayers before meetings, reinforcing the religious culture. The school fosters a tolerant environment, emphasizing interfaith harmony, which contributes to a peaceful and cooperative school atmosphere. Additionally, students who achieve advanced memorization levels (hafidz 30 juz) have opportunities to pursue higher education with scholarships, particularly in international Islamic universities.

In terms of resilience and responsibility, students demonstrate strong commitment to learning. Both regular and boarding school students actively seek additional lessons beyond class hours, showing high motivation for academic excellence. Some students request early morning or extra evening sessions with their teachers, especially in subjects like mathematics. This indicates a high level of accountability and self-driven learning. Students also take initiative in organizing events, handling logistics, and leading peer activities, which helps in developing leadership and teamwork skills. The emphasis on responsibility extends to practical activities such as collaborative projects and extracurricular engagements.

The madrasah maintains a strict anti-bullying policy, with a history of swift action against any incidents. Although bullying is rare, an incident in 2022 led to the immediate expulsion of the perpetrators, reinforcing the institution's zero-tolerance stance. Preventive measures include regular awareness programs conducted by local authorities and religious counselors. The school also integrates anti-bullying education into its religious and ethical teachings. Furthermore, communication and collaboration skills are actively nurtured. Boarding school students receive intensive training in English and Arabic, equipping them with multilingual communication competencies. Participation in public speaking events and national competitions further enhances their skills, as demonstrated by their achievements in regional and national contests.

Stakeholder satisfaction with graduate quality is consistently positive. Parents and community members express appreciation for the well-rounded education provided by the madrasah. Feedback from alumni and their families suggests that students graduate with strong moral values, academic competence, and professional readiness. Many graduates pursue higher education, with some receiving scholarships for international studies due to their academic and religious achievements. The institution maintains close communication with parents to address any concerns promptly, fostering a supportive educational environment. The high level of parental satisfaction is evident in emotional responses during graduation ceremonies, reinforcing the positive impact of the madrasah's educational approach.

2. The Study on Learning Quality

The research findings on the quality of learning at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta reveal several key aspects related to the teaching and learning process. The learning process is adapted to students' conditions, considering the diversity in their abilities and resource limitations. Teachers employ various strategies to engage students, including individualized approaches for less active students and participatory methods such as questioning and discussion. Teachers attempt to encourage student participation by moving around the classroom, asking questions, and fostering direct interaction. Additionally, different strategies are used to maintain student focus and engagement, ensuring that students respond actively to the lessons delivered.

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) are integrated into learning through assignments that require analysis, evaluation, and creativity. For instance, in sociology classes, students are given project-based tasks, such as analyzing globalization. These assignments include aspects such as understanding definitions, characteristics, phenomena, and impacts of globalization. Students are also encouraged to create concept maps or mind maps to visualize their understanding before presenting their findings. To accommodate varying levels of confidence, students are given the flexibility to either present in front of the class or read their findings from their seats. Teachers provide additional explanations where necessary, ensuring students grasp the subject matter effectively.

The use of learning media and methods plays a crucial role in supporting students' comprehension. However, IT-based media usage is limited due to school regulations and infrastructural constraints. Smart TVs in classrooms often remain unused due to connectivity issues, and mobile phone use is restricted. Nevertheless, teachers adapt by allowing students to use their devices selectively for educational purposes, such as watching relevant videos. In sociology classes, visual aids, such as images representing social cases, are utilized to enhance students' understanding. Teachers also adjust media usage based on classroom conditions, relying on available tools like whiteboards and printed materials to optimize learning experiences.

The relevance of learning to students' daily lives is emphasized in various subjects, particularly sociology. Lessons incorporate real-life examples to help students relate to topics such as social norms, interpersonal relationships, and tolerance. By applying sociological concepts to everyday interactions, students develop a deeper understanding of essential values like cooperation, mutual respect, and solidarity. The curriculum is designed to highlight the significance of these values, ensuring that students not only comprehend theoretical aspects but also practice them in their communities. Furthermore, class management is a critical component of effective learning, with teachers implementing various strategies to maintain discipline and foster a conducive learning environment. Ensuring student engagement and upholding classroom rules, such as removing jackets before lessons, contributes to instilling discipline and responsibility among students.

3. *Enhancing Teacher Quality: Insights from MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta*

The research conducted at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta provided an in-depth analysis of teacher quality through interviews and document reviews. The study revealed that teachers have the autonomy to design lesson plans in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers are responsible for selecting learning materials, methodologies, and assessment techniques, ensuring that instructional strategies align with student needs. While the Ministry of Education provides teaching modules and examples of lesson plans, teachers are encouraged to modify them based on their school's context. Additionally, essential components of a lesson plan include learning objectives, instructional methods, and assessment strategies, which collectively support student learning outcomes.

The study also highlighted the utilization of the surrounding environment as a learning resource. MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta incorporates both indoor and outdoor learning experiences to enhance student engagement. For instance, students visit historical sites such as the Muhammadiyah Museum at UAD and the Sonobudoyo Museum to supplement their classroom studies. Within the school premises, students use facilities like computer labs and other learning aids. These efforts demonstrate the school's commitment to integrating real-world learning opportunities that reinforce theoretical knowledge.

In terms of technology integration, the school employs various digital tools to support learning. Teachers utilize internet-based resources such as e-books, e-libraries, and educational videos to supplement teaching materials. However, digital access differs between regular students and those in the boarding school. While regular students have direct access to online learning materials, boarding school students have restricted internet use and

require teacher supervision for digital learning. The use of tools like Google Meet was prominent during the pandemic, but in-person learning has resumed for most students, with limited reliance on online learning platforms post-pandemic.

Teacher evaluation and self-reflection were found to be essential components of professional development at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta. While supervisor assessments play a crucial role in evaluating teacher performance, student feedback mechanisms are not consistently implemented. In previous years, student evaluations were conducted; however, this practice has been discontinued. The school currently relies on supervisory observations and reflective discussions led by the principal. Findings from these evaluations are analyzed, and teachers receive feedback to enhance instructional quality. Nonetheless, the dissemination of evaluation results remains internal and is not widely shared among educators outside the institution.

Finally, the research examined professional development initiatives undertaken by teachers. Participation in training programs, workshops, and subject teacher associations (MGMP) is encouraged to improve pedagogical skills. Teachers engage in self-initiated learning and school-mandated training sessions to refine their teaching practices. Additionally, the impact of professional development is evident in the adoption of innovative teaching strategies and improved student performance. However, the dissemination of best teaching practices is primarily confined within the school. While teachers share insights informally, structured dissemination of successful teaching strategies to a broader audience remains limited. Overall, the study underscores the need for continuous professional development and more systematic knowledge-sharing mechanisms to enhance teacher quality and student learning outcomes.

4. Quality of Teaching Staff

The mini-research on the quality of teaching staff at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta highlights several key aspects related to lesson planning, classroom management, professional commitment, social relationships, and the use of educational media. The interview with Mr. Ajay Tiya Santoso, S.Pd., provided insights into the existing practices and challenges faced by teachers in maintaining high educational standards within the institution.

One of the primary findings concerns the development of lesson plans (RPP) within the school. Teachers are required to prepare lesson plans at the beginning of each semester as part of their administrative responsibilities. MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta follows two curricula: the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Lesson plans are submitted to the administrative office to ensure compliance. Classroom management strategies include strict but fair discipline, ensuring student focus during lessons. However, despite the structured environment, daily classroom dynamics vary, affecting the consistency of student engagement.

The research also explored teachers' comprehension of their subject matter and the integration of Islamic values into teaching. Mr. Ajay actively participates in the Yogyakarta Chemistry Teachers' Community, which enables him to learn and implement new teaching strategies. To integrate Islamic values, he emphasizes ethical behavior inspired by the teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW. By providing behavioral examples aligned with Islamic principles, teachers help instill moral values in students, fostering a holistic learning environment.

Professionalism and role modeling were also key themes in the findings. Mr. Ajay emphasized that teachers should serve as role models both within and outside the school environment. Maintaining professionalism requires dedication to teaching, patience, and perseverance. He highlighted the importance of consistency in exemplifying ethical behavior and upholding the responsibility of being a trusted educator. By doing so, teachers reinforce their credibility and effectiveness in shaping students' character.

The study further examined social relationships between teachers, students, parents, and colleagues. Mr. Ajay is well-regarded by students due to his approachable demeanor and ability to manage the classroom effectively. His positive rapport with students extends to parents, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, since many of his colleagues are of a similar age, communication and teamwork among teachers are smooth, enhancing coordination and school development efforts. Effective communication is crucial in ensuring the successful implementation of educational strategies.

Finally, the research explored the use of educational media and digital safety. At MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta, students residing in boarding schools are prohibited from using mobile phones, which limits their access to digital information. While this poses a challenge, it does not significantly hinder learning. Teachers address this issue by occasionally allowing students to use their devices under supervision. Mr. Ajay frequently utilizes PowerPoint presentations and videos to enhance student comprehension, making lessons more interactive and engaging. These technological tools help bridge gaps in learning while maintaining a controlled and structured educational setting.

5. The Quality of Facilities and Infrastructure

The findings from the interview conducted on November 28, 2024, at SMAN 7 Yogyakarta with Mr. M. Ainil Hana, M.Pd, Deputy Head of Facilities and Infrastructure, highlight the importance of optimizing school resources to enhance learning effectiveness. The use of facilities and infrastructure at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta has been maximized to support the learning process. Available resources such as computer laboratories, libraries, and classrooms equipped with smart TVs significantly contribute to digital-based learning. Although the library's book collection is outdated and the number of computers is limited, these facilities are still considered sufficient given the student population. The efficient utilization of these resources is expected to improve learning quality, increase student enthusiasm, and enhance academic performance.

The impact of school facilities on students' learning experiences is notably positive. The availability of comfortable classrooms with proper ventilation, sturdy desks and chairs, and smart TVs fosters a conducive learning environment. A well-maintained library provides students with access to reference materials, despite its limited collection. Additionally, the computer laboratory plays a vital role in equipping students with digital and practical skills, which are crucial in the modern era. Even though the school's facilities are not as extensive as those of other institutions, they are considered more than adequate for the existing student population. Moreover, students are granted unrestricted access to these resources, allowing for independent learning and exploration beyond the classroom, which further enriches their educational experience.

The school implements a structured approach to managing its facilities and infrastructure to maintain efficiency and consistency. Regular cleaning and maintenance programs are in place, including routine cleaning schedules for classrooms, bathrooms, laboratories, and the library. Periodic deep-cleaning activities, such as clearing out storage rooms and disposing of outdated books, help in optimizing available space. Weekly inspections are conducted to ensure the proper functioning of essential facilities. Additionally, major cleaning efforts involving students, such as collective maintenance activities before midterm and final exams, contribute to sustaining a clean and organized learning environment. These systematic measures play a crucial role in maintaining the functionality and longevity of school facilities.

The involvement of all school members and external stakeholders is integral to the effective management of facilities. Regular evaluations are conducted to gather feedback from teachers, staff, students, and parents regarding the adequacy of existing infrastructure. Collaborative activities such as communal clean-up efforts foster a sense of responsibility and ownership among the school community. Partnerships with alumni and external

organizations that support education further strengthen resource availability and contribute valuable expertise. Establishing effective communication channels, such as discussion forums or WhatsApp groups, facilitates transparency and active participation in decision-making processes. Continuous evaluation and reporting on facility conditions to relevant stakeholders ensure ongoing improvements and sustainable development.

Effective facility management directly enhances the quality of education by creating an optimal learning environment. Adequate resources such as comfortable classrooms, computer laboratories, and a library encourage student engagement and motivation. A clean and safe environment supports students' health and concentration, thereby maximizing their learning potential. Consequently, well-organized facilities and infrastructure significantly contribute to the overall improvement of educational quality, ensuring that students receive the best possible learning experience.

Discussion

The discussion of this study begins by revisiting how the quality assurance system at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta aligns institutional policies, graduate outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction within a faith-based secondary school context. The findings indicate that discipline, religious character, resilience, and collaborative competencies are systematically cultivated through a combination of structured routines, boarding programs, and co-curricular activities, reflecting the broader role of quality assurance in shaping school culture and student formation (Benz-Camino, 2023; Falabella, 2016; Yang, 2022). This configuration resonates with studies in Islamic education that underline the centrality of internal quality assurance systems for maintaining both academic excellence and moral-spiritual development in madrasah and pesantren settings (A. Idris et al., 2022; Lathifah et al., 2025; Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023). The consistently positive feedback from parents and alumni suggests that the school succeeds in translating its quality assurance framework into outcomes perceived as relevant, credible, and transformative, especially in terms of character and further study trajectories (Busahdiar et al., 2023; Shofiyah & Karimah, 2022). At the same time, the results reveal ongoing challenges in digital integration and student participation in formal quality assurance processes, pointing to areas where the existing system could be strengthened to respond to contemporary educational demands.

In terms of graduate quality, the study shows that MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta produces students who are disciplined, religiously committed, resilient, and capable of collaboration, particularly among boarding students who benefit from more intensive supervision and structured routines. The enforcement of a strict anti-bullying policy and the integration of religious guidance into daily activities position the madrasah as a protective and formative environment that nurtures moral responsibility and social sensitivity, echoing broader patterns in Islamic schooling that link quality assurance with character-based outcomes (El Widdah, 2022; Ikhwan et al., 2025; Yani et al., 2024). Stakeholder satisfaction, especially from parents and the local community, appears closely tied to these holistic outcomes, indicating that quality in faith-based education is judged not only by academic performance but also by visible piety, social behavior, and readiness for higher education or employment (Ali, 2022; Siagian et al., 2025; Subandi et al., 2021). The strong emotional responses observed during graduation events and the continued engagement of alumni underscore the perceived legitimacy of the school's quality assurance practices in the eyes of its stakeholders. However, the contrast between higher discipline in boarding students and punctuality issues among non-boarding students also suggests differentiated impacts of institutional arrangements that require more nuanced policy responses.

Regarding learning quality, the results highlight that teachers at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta deliberately adapt instruction to student diversity and emphasize higher-order thinking skills through project-based tasks, concept mapping, and contextualized discussion. These practices align with approaches that combine multi-sensory, student-

centered methods to support deeper understanding of complex concepts and to strengthen students' capacity for critical and creative thinking (Andrade et al., 2019; Febriana, 2020; Owolabi, 2020). The integration of real-life examples—particularly in subjects such as sociology—demonstrates an effort to make learning relevant to students' social realities and to connect classroom content with everyday experiences and community issues (Dismas et al., 2023; Solikhah, 2022; Winoto, 2022). At the same time, limited and uneven use of IT-based media due to infrastructural constraints and regulatory restrictions indicates that, despite the availability of smart TVs and other devices, the potential of digital tools for enhancing learning remains underutilized. The selective and supervised use of students' personal devices reflects a cautious approach to digital exposure that safeguards religious and ethical norms but may also restrict opportunities for developing advanced digital literacy.

The findings on teacher quality and professional development reveal a relatively high level of autonomy and initiative among teachers, who design lesson plans, utilize local environments and museums, and engage in professional communities to update their pedagogical practices. This pattern is consistent with research showing that systematic training in quality assurance and assessment, combined with clear professional standards, is essential for sustaining instructional quality and aligning teaching with institutional goals (Chen & Mohamed Mokhtar, 2023; Kaushal, 2023; Zaqiah et al., 2024). The use of digital resources such as e-books, e-libraries, and educational videos indicates that teachers are willing to experiment with technology-enhanced learning within the constraints of local policies and infrastructure. However, the discontinuation of student evaluation of teaching and the reliance on supervisory observations and internal reflections as the primary mechanisms of teacher appraisal suggest a missed opportunity to incorporate student voice into quality assurance processes, which could provide more holistic feedback on teaching effectiveness (Assemi et al., 2019; Freeh & Hussein, 2021; Mukhibat & Sutoyo, 2021). Professional development initiatives appear to positively influence classroom innovation, yet the limited formal dissemination of best practices beyond the school implies that knowledge-sharing remains largely internal and informal.

When these results are compared with broader developments in Islamic higher education and pesantren-based reform, a number of convergences and distinctive features emerge. The institutionalization of quality assurance in universities and Islamic institutions through structured accreditation systems, outcomes-based education, and total quality management has been shown to enhance academic standards, global visibility, and continuous improvement cultures (Iskarim et al., 2025; Tharaba et al., 2025; Thoyib et al., 2025). The emphasis at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta on disciplined routines, clear expectations, and continuous supervision mirrors TQM-inspired approaches in Islamic schools and pesantren that link quality management with improved teaching and learning processes (Hartati & Muktar, 2019; Hidayatullah & Yusuf, 2025). At the same time, the strong religious orientation of the school and its focus on Quranic memorization, ethical conduct, and communal worship resonate with studies that highlight the integration of spiritual, moral, and academic dimensions as a hallmark of quality in faith-based institutions. These parallels suggest that, although the context differs from higher education, similar quality assurance logics are being adapted and scaled to the madrasah level. Nevertheless, the more modest scale of resources and the dual curriculum demands at the secondary level create unique tensions that are not fully captured in higher-education-focused quality assurance models.

Further comparison with research on digital quality assurance, data-driven evaluation, and participatory governance underscores both the strengths and limitations of the school's current practices. International studies point to the potential of integrated information systems, digital portfolios, and datafication to support real-time monitoring, transparency, and more responsive decision-making in educational institutions (Candido, 2020; Guevara & Barra, 2023; Jiao & Ge, 2022). The case of MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta shows early elements of such practices—such as documentation of graduate trajectories and supervision

records—but reveals that systematic data integration and digital monitoring remain underdeveloped. Meanwhile, the involvement of parents, alumni, and the wider community in school activities and facility management echoes findings that participatory structures can strengthen accountability and resource optimization at the school level (Ezenwaji et al., 2019; Raso et al., 2017; Yanto et al., 2024). However, the limited formal role of students in quality assurance structures contrasts with research that emphasizes student participation as a key dimension of modern quality assurance frameworks, suggesting a need to rethink how learners are engaged as co-assessors and partners in school improvement.

These findings can be explained by the interaction of several contextual factors, including the school's faith-based identity, regulatory environment, resource profile, and institutional history. The strong emphasis on religious routines, communal worship, and moral exemplarity reflects a quality assurance logic that prioritizes internalization of Islamic values and local cultural norms, aligning with work on the integration of local ethics and technology-based systems in Islamic education (Baharun et al., 2025; Ritonga & Amaro, 2022). At the same time, constraints in IT infrastructure, concerns about digital safety, and the need to preserve a protective environment for students help explain the cautious and selective use of digital tools for learning and monitoring. The relatively high levels of teacher initiative and stakeholder satisfaction may also be linked to broader trends in Islamic higher education and public institutions, where incentive structures, policy reforms, and institutional support have begun to reorient staff behavior toward performance and accountability (Basri et al., 2023; Hasyim et al., 2025). Nonetheless, the single-site, qualitative design and reliance on self-reported data necessitate cautious interpretation, as the experiences of MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta may not be fully generalizable to other madrasah or faith-based schools with different governance structures and resource conditions.

In light of these dynamics, the implications of the study point to several directions for policy, practice, and further research in quality assurance for faith-based secondary education. First, the relatively robust internal culture of discipline, religious commitment, and stakeholder trust at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta suggests that policy frameworks such as Madrasah Reform and digital governance initiatives could be leveraged to progressively embed more systematic, technology-enhanced quality assurance mechanisms without undermining the school's religious ethos (Abidin et al., 2023; Haddade et al., 2024; Yunilarosi, 2025). Second, the findings indicate that strengthening teacher professional development, peer learning, and structured dissemination of best practices could help bridge the gap between micro-level innovations and broader systemic improvement in Islamic schooling. Third, the school's experience highlights the importance of aligning quality assurance with multi-actor governance, regulatory reforms, and emerging sectors such as the halal industry, which increasingly demand graduates who combine religious integrity with global competence and quality awareness (R. Idris et al., 2025; Takala, 2018b; Wolff, 2015). Finally, subsequent studies could employ comparative or mixed-method designs across multiple madrasah and regions to deepen understanding of how different configurations of faith-based identity, policy environments, and resource allocations shape the enactment and outcomes of quality assurance in Islamic education.

Conclusion

This study examined how the quality assurance system at MA Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Yogyakarta aligns institutional policies with graduate outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction in a faith-based secondary educational context, focusing on discipline, religious values, resilience, communication skills, collaboration, and challenges in digital learning and student participation. The findings demonstrate that the school's strong religious culture, structured disciplinary systems, adaptive pedagogy, strategic use of facilities, and teacher professionalism contribute to high graduate quality, stakeholder trust, and a well-managed learning environment, even as infrastructural limitations and insufficient digital integration

persist. These results suggest that quality assurance in Islamic secondary education must be multidimensional capturing academic, moral, social, and spiritual development while emphasizing professional development, participatory governance, and context-sensitive resource management to sustain continuous improvement. However, the conclusions are limited by the single-case design, reliance on qualitative perceptions, and the absence of broader comparative or quantitative data, meaning the findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than universally representative. Further research should compare multiple madrasah, incorporate mixed-method measures, develop technology-enhanced quality assurance tools suited to faith-based schools, strengthen student involvement, and expand mechanisms for disseminating effective teaching and management practices across Islamic school networks to modernize, harmonize, and elevate quality assurance outcomes in the broader field of faith-based education.

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