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The role of tqm and agile leadership in improving teacher performance: a study on madrasah aliyah in South Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

Madrasah Aliyah plays a crucial role in shaping future generations, but improving teacher performance remains a significant challenge. The application of Total Quality Management (TQM) and agile leadership is a strategic approach to enhancing educational quality. TQM emphasizes continuous improvement, while agile leadership promotes flexibility and adaptation in response to educational changes. This study explores how TQM and agile leadership work together to improve teacher performance in State Aliyah Madrasahs (MAN) in South Kalimantan. The goal is to analyze the impact of TQM and agile leadership on teacher performance and examine the role of TQM in strengthening the relationship between leadership agility and teacher performance. Using a mixed methods approach, the study examines the interplay of TQM, leadership agility, teacher training, and performance in 13 South Kalimantan MAN schools. A sample of 303 teachers participated, with quantitative data analyzed using PLS-SEM and qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions. The qualitative data helped validate and enrich the quantitative findings, providing deeper insights into the factors affecting teacher performance. The results show that both leadership agility and teacher training positively influence teacher performance, with TQM moderating the relationship between leadership agility and performance. To improve teacher performance, steps such as fostering a culture of continuous improvement through workshops and feedback, integrating TQM principles into training, and promoting agile leadership focused on collaboration and problem-solving can create a supportive environment that enhances teacher performance and student outcomes.



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Introduction

Madrasah Aliyah has a very important role in producing superior generations who are able to face global challenges. As a secondary education institution, Madrasah Aliyah is expected to prepare students with knowledge, skills and good character. However, achieving these goals is highly dependent on the quality of teaching provided by teachers. Therefore, improving teacher performance is one of the main aspects that needs to be considered by madrasah managers to achieve optimal educational goals. In an effort to improve the quality of education, the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) can be an effective approach (A. Fauzi et al., 2023). TQM is a management philosophy that focuses on continuous improvement, involvement of all parties and data-based decision-making. In the context of education, the application of TQM can help create an environment that supports the improvement of the quality of the teaching and learning process. By applying TQM principles, madrasah management is expected to better manage teaching quality, improve student satisfaction and boost teacher performance (Alzoubi et al., 2022).

In addition to TQM, agile leadership also has a very important role in improving teacher performance. Agile leadership has the ability to adapt quickly to changes and challenges that occur in the educational environment (Yusuf, 2023). In the evolving context of education, especially with technological developments and policy changes, flexible leadership is needed to create a conducive environment for teachers. Agile leadership can anticipate changes proactively, respond quickly to teachers' needs and provide appropriate solutions to challenges faced in learning (Hosny et al., 2022). Agile leadership also plays a role in strengthening collaboration between teachers and madrasah leaders, which in turn can improve teacher motivation and performance. With a more collaborative approach, madrasah leaders can listen to teachers' aspirations and needs and provide the necessary support for their professional development (Gimenez-Espin et al., 2013). This responsive leadership approach creates teacher confidence and engagement, which in turn can lead to improved performance in teaching. This suggests that agile leadership not only pays attention to external changes but also facilitates internal development within educational organizations (Shahmohammadi, 2017).

Previous research conducted by Fauzi, (2019) study at SMK Ma'arif 1 Piyungan Bantul, indicates that TQM implementation positively impacts teacher performance, student achievement, and overall school performance. (Qingyan et al., 2023) found that Quality Management Systems (QMS) partially and significantly improve the performance of productive teachers at SMKN 2 Jember. This suggests that specific TQM approaches like QMS can positively contribute to teacher performance at the secondary school level. Overall, data from various studies support the notion that TQM implementation positively impacts teacher performance, although variability in research results suggests the need to consider contextual aspects and specific factors for a comprehensive understanding (Al Imama et al., 2022). Teacher performance is influenced by factors beyond Total Quality Management (TQM). Research emphasizes the positive impact of leadership agility and teacher training. (Setiawati, 2021) demonstrates a correlation between agile leadership and improved performance in millennial employees, particularly when accompanied by a supportive work environment. Similarly, (Yazici et al., 2022) show that school principals exhibiting agile leadership characteristics positively influence teacher commitment and job satisfaction, especially when combined with perceived organizational justice.

Finally, (Sunatar, 2023) reinforces the positive effect of leadership agility on employee satisfaction and performance, extending these findings to the civil service sector. Furthermore, the importance of ongoing professional development cannot be overstated, as evidenced by numerous studies demonstrating the significant positive impact of training programs on teacher performance ((Agustini et al., 2023). (Ogunbayo & Mhlanga, 2022) highlighted that training for technical and engineering-based subjects improves job performance and student academic outcomes, leading to increased recognition, promotion, higher pay, and personal satisfaction for teachers. Similarly, (Amaliyah, 2022) and (Basalamah et al., 2022) both demonstrated the positive impact of education and training on teacher competence and performance. Notably, (Nazim et al., 2024) found that training has a significant indirect effect on teacher performance, moderated by organizational commitment. These findings underscore the pivotal role of training in elevating teacher competence and performance across various educational contexts. Following research gap and research novelty:

Table 1 < Research Gaps and Novelty>

Research Gaps Novelty of the Study Limited exploration of TQM's role in moderating the This study specifically investigates how TQM relationship between leadership agility and teacher moderates the impact of leadership agility on teacher performance. Lack of comprehensive studies on the combined effect This study examines the combined effect of TOM of TQM and teacher training on teacher performance. and teacher training on teacher performance. Insufficient focus on the South Kalimantan context in Provides a localized analysis focusing on schools existing literature. in South Kalimantan, offering context-specific insights. Existing studies often consider leadership agility, Integrates leadership agility, TQM, and training to TQM, and training in isolation. assess their collective impact on teacher performance.

Thus, the novelty of this study lies in investigating the role of TQM in moderating the relationship between leadership agility and teacher performance, which has been limited in previous literature. This study also fills a void by analyzing the combined effects of TQM and teacher training on teacher performance, which has not

been thoroughly researched. In addition, this study offers a more specific contextual analysis with a focus on Madrasah Aliyah Negeri in South Kalimantan, providing insights that are more relevant to local conditions. Unlike previous studies that tend to look at TQM, teacher training and leadership agility separately, this study integrates the three elements to assess their collective impact on teacher performance. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of TQM and leadership agility on teacher performance in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) in South Kalimantan, as well as explore the role of TQM in strengthening the relationship between leadership agility and teacher performance.

Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education

Total Quality Management (TQM) offers a framework for continuous improvement that can be valuable in educational settings. At its core, TQM in education emphasizes a **student-centered approach**. This means understanding individual needs and tailoring educational practices to diverse learning styles and goals. Schools can achieve this through needs assessments, differentiated instruction, and regular student feedback mechanisms. Additionally, TQM promotes **continuous improvement** based on data analysis. By analyzing student performance data, teachers can identify areas for improvement in teaching methods and curriculum design. Collaboration among teachers and a culture of innovation in pedagogy further drive this continuous improvement cycle. Finally, TQM recognizes the importance of a motivated and skilled workforce (Permana et al., 2021). In education, this translates to **empowering teachers** through professional development, encouraging their participation in decision-making, and fostering a supportive work environment.

Successful TQM implementation in education requires the involvement of all stakeholders. This includes students, parents, administrators, and teachers (Arifudin et al., 2022). Each group offers valuable perspectives on educational quality. Students can provide feedback on learning experiences, parents can advocate for specific needs, administrators can allocate resources and set strategic direction, and teachers bring their expertise in pedagogy and curriculum development. By fostering open communication and collaboration among these stakeholders, schools can create a shared vision for quality education and leverage TQM to achieve sustained improvement (Georgiadis et al., 2020).

Leadership Agility and Teacher Performance

While leadership agility directly translates to a more stimulating work environment for teachers through fostering collaboration, professional development support, and recognition, its impact goes beyond motivation. Agile leaders excel at setting clear goals with flexibility, allowing teachers autonomy and a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, their commitment to continuous learning extends to their teams, creating opportunities for skill development and encouraging experimentation in teaching methods. This virtuous cycle of a supportive environment, clear goals, continuous improvement, and empowered teachers ultimately leads to effective teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

A comprehensive analysis of various studies reveals a multifaceted relationship between leadership styles and teacher performance. (Saleem et al., 2020) employed structural equation modeling to demonstrate that directive leadership has a significant impact on teacher performance in the examined schools, followed by supportive and achievement-oriented leadership styles. This finding underscores the crucial role of leadership in shaping teacher performance, with directive leadership having a stronger influence. Expanding the perspective, (Suharina et al., 2022) emphasized the influence of school principal leadership and teacher work motivation on teacher performance. Their findings indicate that school principal leadership affects teacher performance, as does teacher work motivation, and both jointly influence teacher performance. This highlights the importance of the interplay between leadership and motivation in fostering an environment conducive to optimal teacher performance.

(Yazıcı et al., 2022) shed light on the positive influence of agile leadership quality displayed by school principals on affective work commitment among teachers. When principals demonstrate adaptable leadership, teacher work commitment increases. Agile leaders significantly impact organizational and employee commitment, underscoring the pivotal role of leadership in shaping teachers' emotional attachment to their work(Wardani & Suniasih, 2022) showcased that instructional leadership, work discipline, and principal work motivation have direct and indirect effects on teacher performance. This reinforces that not only leadership style but also factors like work discipline and motivation play a significant role in shaping teacher performance.

Based on this synthesis, it can be formulated that a positive and significant relationship exists between various aspects of leadership (leadership style, school principal leadership, agile leadership, and transformational leadership) and teacher performance. Clear leadership styles, effective school principal leadership, agile leadership quality, and transformational leadership can serve as key factors in enhancing teacher performance, either through motivation, affective commitment, or other factors that directly or indirectly influence performance. Therefore, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive and significant relationship between agile leadership, and teacher performance.

Teacher Training and Performance

Investing in ongoing, high-quality teacher training is crucial for boosting teacher performance and student learning. These programs not only equip teachers with new subject-specific knowledge, pedagogical skills, and technology expertise, but also foster a culture of reflection and collaboration. Through engaging with new practices and learning from peers, teachers develop a sense of shared responsibility for student success and become empowered as innovative educators. However, the effectiveness of training hinges on its design, relevance to teachers' needs, and the supportive environment of the school. When these factors come together, well-designed training programs can significantly improve teaching practices and ultimately, student learning outcomes

A body of research has consistently demonstrated the significant impact of teacher training on teacher performance. (Mufidah et al., 2021) findings indicate that the more frequently teachers participate in training, the more their performance improves. This underscores the role of training as a crucial factor in enhancing teacher performance, providing opportunities for the development of skills and competencies in the classroom. (Jabeen, 2023) study observed a positive relationship between training and teacher performance, asserting that training can cultivate the skills and abilities of teachers to perform better in the classroom.

The implication is that educational institutions should prioritize providing training opportunities for teachers to elevate their performance in the classroom, which in turn contributes to the success and overall development of the institution. Furthermore, (Ma'ruf et al., 2023) research findings reveal a highly significant positive correlation between teacher education and training and teacher performance. This strengthens the argument that investing in teacher training can yield substantial positive impacts on their performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher training consistently correlates with the enhancement of teacher performance in the educational context. Based on this synthesis, the researchers propose the following hypothesis: Hypothesis 2: Teacher training has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance.

The Moderating Influence: Leadership Agility and Training

The effectiveness of Total Quality Management (TQM) in enhancing teacher performance can be significantly influenced by two key factors: leadership agility and teacher training. These factors act as moderators, shaping how TQM's principles are implemented and ultimately impacting their success. Let's explore this moderating role in three sections. While both agile leadership and teacher training are crucial for successful TQM implementation, their true strength lies in their synergy. Agile leaders foster a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, effectively communicating the vision of TQM and adapting it to the school's needs (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020). Teacher training equips educators with the skills to utilize TQM principles in the classroom, analyze data, solve problems, and develop new teaching strategies. This combination of a supportive environment, skilled educators, and a shared vision of continuous improvement through TQM ultimately leads to enhanced teacher performance and significant improvements in student learning outcomes (Shraah et al., 2021).

A consistent pattern emerges from various studies regarding the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices on teacher performance (Acquah et al., 2021) found a strong relationship between TQM practices and teacher performance, confirming a positive and significant influence. Additionally, a moderate relationship was found between organizational culture and teacher performance, with TQM and organizational culture also exhibiting a moderate relationship. This underscores the interplay between these factors in shaping teacher effectiveness in educational settings. The comprehensive characteristics of TQM implementation, as indicated by Fauzi (2019), involve all school elements and aim to enhance teacher performance, which in turn impacts student achievement and overall school performance. Motivational factors such as teacher quality, effective school leadership, adequate infrastructure, and community support contribute positively, while hindering factors require careful attention for successful TQM integration.

Furthermore, research conducted by Jannah (2021) at SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT Jombang provides a practical illustration of successful TQM implementation. The ISO 9001:2008 quality management system, implemented with commitment from the principal and school community, contributed to maintaining good teacher performance. The ISO framework facilitated continuous learning and performance improvement among teachers. The principal's and community's commitment, coupled with adequate facilities, mitigated barriers associated with ISO management system adoption. These findings emphasize the role of organizational commitment and infrastructure in ensuring the effectiveness of TQM practices in educational institutions.

In a related context, Qingyan et al., (2023) discovered that efforts to enhance teacher performance align with general human resource concepts and aspects of the Quality Management System on teacher performance. This study showed a partial yet significant impact of the Quality Management System on teacher performance. This

reinforces the notion that TQM, when effectively integrated, can contribute to teacher productivity and overall performance (Acquah et al., 2021). Based on these findings, it can be stated that a positive and significant relationship exists between the implementation of Total Quality Management practices and teacher performance. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be formulated: (1) Hypothesis 3: Total Quality Management moderates the relationship between Leadership Agility and Teacher Performance; (2) Hypothesis 4: Total Quality Management moderates the relationship between Training and Teacher Performance.

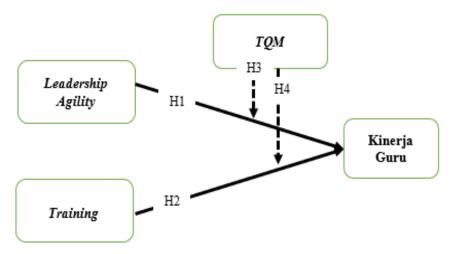


Figure 1 < Research Model Development >

Method

This study used a mixed methods approach to explore how Total Quality Management (TQM), leadership agility, teacher training, and performance are interrelated in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) schools across South Kalimantan. The researchers employed a random sample of 303 teachers from 13 schools, chosen to represent various regions within South Kalimantan. This sample size was deemed sufficient to ensure statistical power and generalizability, considering the diversity of schools involved. Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires, and the data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was chosen over other techniques due to its ability to handle complex relationships between latent variables and its flexibility in dealing with small to moderate sample sizes.

In addition to the surveys, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions (FGDs) to provide deeper insights into the factors influencing teacher performance. The qualitative data was used to validate and enrich the quantitative findings. Specifically, the results from the quantitative analysis guided the development of interview questions and discussion prompts for the FGDs. Themes emerging from the qualitative data were then compared with statistical results to confirm or further explain the quantitative findings, ensuring a robust interpretation of the data.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Teachers included in the study were required to have at least one year of experience at the respective MAN schools. Teachers with less than one year of service or those on extended leave were excluded. Additionally, schools selected were from both urban and rural areas within South Kalimantan to reflect a representative sample. Through this combined approach, the researchers gained a comprehensive understanding of how TQM, leadership agility, and teacher training influence performance in MAN schools across the region.

Results and Discussions

The quantitative data analysis highlights significant findings that emphasize the impact of leadership agility, teacher training, and Total Quality Management (TQM) on teacher performance. Several previous studies support these results, reinforcing the argument that effective leadership and professional development can positively influence educational outcomes. For instance, a study by Bass and Avolio (1994) found that transformational leadership, a concept closely related to leadership agility, significantly enhances the motivation and performance of employees, including teachers. In the context of education, leadership that is adaptive, responsive to changes, and capable of guiding teachers through challenges contributes to creating an environment where teachers are empowered to perform better in their roles.

Teacher training, as observed in this study, also plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance. This is in line with the work of Sancar et al., (2021), who concluded that ongoing professional development programs significantly enhance the effectiveness of teachers by improving their skills, knowledge, and teaching strategies. Additionally, teacher training that aligns with the specific needs of educators such as technology integration, classroom management, and subject matter expertise leads to improved teaching quality and better student outcomes. These findings support the conclusion that schools investing in comprehensive and targeted teacher training programs tend to see higher levels of teacher performance.

Moreover, the moderating role of TQM in the relationship between leadership agility and teacher performance aligns with previous research on quality management systems in education. TQM principles, which focus on continuous improvement, customer satisfaction (in this case, student learning outcomes), and teambased work, can create a more supportive and efficient educational environment. A study by Garesom & Hazarika., (2024) found that schools implementing TQM practices experience improved performance outcomes, including enhanced teacher engagement and satisfaction. The focus on quality processes within TQM supports the idea that leadership agility's impact on teacher performance is strengthened when schools adopt a systematic, quality-focused approach.

On the other hand, the finding that TQM does not moderate the relationship between teacher training and teacher performance suggests that while TQM enhances leadership effectiveness, its impact on teacher training may not be as pronounced. This may be due to the nature of teacher development, which often requires direct, hands-on support and continuous engagement rather than a structural quality system. A study by Bolaji et al., (2023) emphasized that the success of teacher training programs depends heavily on the relevance and applicability of the training content, as well as the active involvement of teachers in the learning process. Thus, while TQM can strengthen the organizational framework, it might not significantly alter the direct impact of teacher training on individual performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of creating an environment where leadership, training, and organizational practices work synergistically to foster teacher success. As noted by García-Martínez., et al (2021), educational leadership that supports collaboration, fosters professional growth, and engages teachers in decision-making leads to a more motivated and effective teaching force. The findings of this study underscore the critical role that both leadership and professional development play in shaping teacher performance. Therefore, schools that wish to improve educational outcomes should consider adopting a holistic approach that includes agile leadership, continuous teacher training, and a commitment to quality management practices like TQM. These elements combined can create a positive feedback loop that continuously enhances teaching quality and, consequently, student learning.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis also provides valuable insights into the factors influencing teacher performance in the context of leadership agility, teacher training, and the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM). Based on interviews with several school principals and teachers, it was found that agile leadership contributes significantly to improving teacher performance. Leaders who possess the ability to listen, adapt, and offer support tailored to the individual needs of teachers were found to increase teachers' confidence and motivation. Most teachers felt more valued and motivated when school leaders were open to new ideas and responsive to the challenges they faced in the teaching process.

Teacher training also emerged as an important factor in improving performance, as reflected in this qualitative analysis. Many teachers stated that training designed to meet their classroom needs, such as mastering educational technology and classroom management, had a significant impact on their teaching ability. Training that is practical and directly applied in the field is preferred because it allows teachers to acquire relevant skills for the situations they face. For example, teachers trained to use digital tools in teaching felt more confident integrating technology into their lessons, which in turn improved student interaction and understanding. Supported by Seufert et al., (2022), which states that training that focuses on practical skills, such as the use of educational technology and classroom management techniques, has a positive impact on teachers' teaching abilities.

Such training not only improves technical competence but also builds teachers' confidence in implementing more effective teaching methods. This is consistent with the results found in this study, where teachers who were trained to use digital technology felt more confident and able to utilize these tools to improve the quality of learning. In addition, in a study by Tamsah et al., (2021) it was explained that training based on the real needs of teachers in the classroom increases teaching effectiveness, especially in terms of interaction between teachers and students. The emphasis on hands-on practice during training allows teachers to be better prepared for challenges that arise in the classroom, such as managing students' diverse abilities and utilizing technology for more interactive learning. This study is in line with research findings showing that teachers feel more competent

and effective when they are provided with training that matches the demands and challenges they face every day in the classroom.

TQM, applied in several schools involved in the study, also showed a positive impact on teacher performance, although it did not directly moderate the relationship between teacher training and performance. In interviews, some teachers revealed that the application of TQM principles, such as regular evaluations and continuous improvement, provided a greater sense of responsibility and job satisfaction. The feedback system, which is constructive and ongoing, helped teachers evaluate and improve their teaching methods. However, there were also opinions indicating that while TQM provides structure and support, elements such as the clarity of training goals and the relevance of the material played a more dominant role in improving teacher performance.

Additionally, the qualitative analysis also highlighted that the implementation of TQM as a moderator in the relationship between teacher training and performance did not always run smoothly. Some teachers felt that while TQM's system of evaluation and continuous improvement was beneficial, it did not fully address the everyday challenges they faced in the classroom. Therefore, while TQM provides a useful framework, more intensive and needs-based training was considered more effective in improving teacher performance. This suggests that although TQM can improve structural aspects of schools, its impact on the development of individual teachers through training still depends on a more personalized and relevant approach.

Overall, the qualitative analysis enriches the quantitative findings by providing deeper context regarding teachers' experiences in the field. The interaction between agile leadership, teacher training, and the implementation of TQM shows that the success in improving teacher performance is not solely dependent on one factor but is the result of the interplay of various supporting elements. By combining flexibility in leadership, relevant training, and effective quality management principles, schools can create an environment that supports the holistic development of teachers.

Conclusions

The findings revealed that both leadership agility and teacher training positively impact teacher performance. Additionally, TQM moderates the relationship between leadership agility and teacher performance, suggesting that TQM principles can further enhance the positive effects of agile leadership on teachers. The implementation of TQM, teacher training, and leadership agility in improving teacher performance involves several specific steps. These include establishing a culture of continuous improvement through regular workshops and feedback sessions, integrating TQM principles such as customer focus and data-driven decision-making into teacher training programs, and fostering agile leadership by promoting collaboration, adaptability, and proactive problem-solving among school leaders. These strategies, when effectively integrated, can create a supportive environment that empowers teachers to achieve better performance and enhance student outcomes.

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