

Perspective on improving school quality: the influence of teamwork and curriculum effectiveness in Islamic schools

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ABSTRACT

School quality is the most important aspect and a major issue in the education system. This research aims to explore the influence of teamwork and curriculum effectiveness on improving school quality. The method employed is based on a quantitative design with a survey approach. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 146 respondents. School quality is the key variable in this research. The data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software to provide detailed information on the contribution of each variable's indicators. The findings of this research indicate a strong contribution from each variable in enhancing school quality. The R-square value for the curriculum effectiveness variable is 0.365, meaning that this variable contributes to a 36.5% improvement in school quality. On the other hand, the teamwork variable contributes 62.3% to school quality. These results clearly demonstrate the originality of this research, highlighting that teamwork in schools has a higher contribution value than curriculum effectiveness. Future research needs to examine how to establish teamwork in Islamic educational institutions in an effort to enhance quality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discussion on the quality of educational institutions continues to be a topic of conversation, both among academics and education practitioners in Indonesia. Data on the quality of education has not shown encouraging numbers. According to data from the World Population Review in 2021, Indonesia is ranked 54 out of 78 countries. Furthermore, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data on the Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Indonesia at 114, which includes the dimensions and indicators of education. These various reports further emphasize that efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia are still a significant task that has not been fully resolved. Various studies on the quality of schools/education have been conducted, but they have not been able to demonstrate significant improvements in educational quality. Existing studies on efforts to improve quality tend to focus on conventional variables, such as the influence of leadership on school improvement [1]–[4], the influence of financing and school quality [5], [6], teacher with school quality [7], [8], and culture and climate and their

influence on school quality [9], [10]. However, existing studies have not extensively examined the influence of teamwork and curriculum effectiveness on efforts to improve school quality. Yet, teamwork plays a crucial role in organizations [11]–[13]. In addition, curriculum effectiveness has an important role in the learning process [14], [15].

This writing aims to provide a different perspective on the study of efforts to improve school quality from the aspects of team collaboration and curriculum effectiveness. Specifically, it seeks to demonstrate that team collaboration and curriculum effectiveness also play important roles in schools. Therefore, the research seeks to answer the following questions: i) the influence of team collaboration on school quality improvement and ii) the influence of curriculum effectiveness on school quality improvement. The research findings on these two questions will provide a more comprehensive understanding of efforts to improve school quality. To answer these research questions, this research was conducted at all Medan City public Islamic educational institutions. Madrasah Negeri Medan City has experienced an increase in enthusiasts in recent years [16]. This high level of interest should be accompanied by an improvement in the quality and educational services provided by Islamic educational institutions. Speaking of the quality of Islamic Educational Institutions, many Islamic Educational institutions already have a fairly good quality, hence the high demand, but they are generally dominated by state Islamic educational institutions. Meanwhile, the number of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia consists of 90.89% private Islamic educational institutions or Islamic educational institutions managed by the community, which means that only 9.11% are state Islamic educational institutions [17].

This writing is based on the argument that quality improvement is the most important issue in educational institutions. Discussions on quality in educational institutions will never cease because quality continues to evolve with the changing times. It is also based on the weak efforts to improve school quality in Indonesia. Enhancing quality in schools should be the primary goal of educational management.

The quality of schools is often associated with efforts to make schools effective [18]. The quality of schools cannot be defined explicitly. There are many criteria that can be used as references to determine a school's quality. These criteria vary from one another due to different standards. Factors used as criteria include curriculum, teaching quality, resources, facilities, student achievements, student involvement, school leadership, teachers, and parental and government support, among others [19], [20]. Furthermore, high-quality schools are able to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in school and in life [21], [22].

The quality of schools is crucial in education and has a positive impact. High-quality schools have a significant effect on children's development, both academically and non-academically, which can be beneficial not only within the school environment but also outside of it [23], [24]. Furthermore, the quality of schools can also have broader social implications. High-quality schools contribute to economic growth, social mobility, and the reduction of inequality within communities and countries [25], [26]. In short, the quality of schools is important because it significantly affects students' academic outcomes and overall life. It also has broader implications for society as a whole.

The agreement on the importance of improving school quality must certainly be followed by efforts to realize it. To achieve quality schools, many aspects need to be implemented. Improving school quality involves identifying various variables where schools can enhance overall performance, effectiveness, and outcomes. Creating a high-quality school requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. Ultimately, improving the quality of schools necessitates a systematic approach that involves establishing a vision and mission, fostering professional teachers, developing a curriculum, cultivating a positive culture and climate, empowering parents and partner organizations, harnessing technology, and embracing continuous improvement. By taking these strategic steps, schools can create a more comprehensive and effective approach to providing quality education.

Just like in any other organization, in educational institutions, particularly schools, understanding the concept of teamwork, team leadership, and team learning is crucial. Educational institutions need to apply the principles of teamwork to achieve school effectiveness. The school principal needs to form work teams in an effort to enhance the quality of the school. The understanding and willingness of the school principal to build an effective work team should be improved. Liu and Feng [27] emphasized the importance of teamwork among teachers in schools in their study. Teamwork in schools is a social and interactive process in which teachers gather, analyze, integrate, and store information. In the era of globalization, which presents more complex challenges and rapid changes, team members need to engage in collaboration with organizations outside of education to access more resources for development.

Makewa *et al.* [28] add that a school work team is important for several reasons. Firstly, it goes beyond the traditional teaching process and transforms it into a more comprehensive approach. Secondly, it enables professional growth as teachers work together and share knowledge and expertise with external entities such as teachers from other schools, universities, or non-profit organizations that are dedicated to advancing education. Thirdly, leadership has become more complex and sophisticated, thus effective

leadership requires synergy among employees [28]. In addition, there are three factors that support the success of programs involving teachers in teams. i) Teachers within the team must be dedicated to their goals of developing individual effectiveness; ii) The content and procedures of the program should be practical; and iii) Adequate support from administrators is necessary, which includes resources, budgeting, and awareness-building for teamwork [29].

Teamwork that can have an impact on organizational development is characterized by the following criteria: collaboration among team members, providing additional incentives to team members, cohesion within the team resulting in effective changes, high commitment, and fostering creativity and innovation. For some organizations, during the selection and recruitment process, they prioritize the ability to work as part of a team or the ability to find creative solutions. They may even prefer individuals who have previous experience working in a team [30]. Noe ranks the top five qualities that organizations look for in recruiting new members [31] in Table 1. The research findings indicate that teamwork skills are the top demand from most organizations. The ability of a group of people (a team) is indeed superior to individual capabilities.

Table 1. Organizational new member recruitment quality order

Rank	Desired capabilities
1	Teamwork skills
2	Decision-making, problem solving
3	Plan, prioritize tasks
4	Verbal communication skills
5	Collect/process information.

Many definitions of teamwork are offered by experts, but there are differences in how they define it. Researchers attempt to summarize from various experts that teamwork is the assignment of work to groups of organizational members consisting of diverse skills, shared commitment, well-structured, clear division of labor, mutual interaction, and understanding to achieve common goals [30], [32], [33]. The curriculum can be defined in four parts: i) the curriculum can be defined as a plan to achieve goals, ii) the curriculum can be broadly defined as dealing with the students' experiences, iii) the curriculum can be defined as a field of study with its own foundations, knowledge domains, research, theories, principles, and specialists, and iv) the curriculum can be defined in terms of subject matter such as mathematics, science, English, history, and so on, or the content of how we organize and assimilate information [34].

The importance of the curriculum in the education process necessitates the effective development of the curriculum. An effective curriculum is a well-designed and structured educational program intended to achieve specific learning outcomes or goals for students. It is a critical component of any education system and should provide a clear roadmap for teachers and students regarding the knowledge and skills expected to be learned. An effective curriculum aligns with the learning objectives, which are a translation of the institution's educational goals. It should also be flexible, allowing teachers and students the opportunity to develop their potential [35]. However, the key to curriculum effectiveness is suitability for the diverse needs of students [36]. For this reason, the curriculum must provide various learning strategies and assessments for these diverse students.

Developing an effective curriculum is not an easy task. An effective curriculum is developed through a systematic and collaborative approach. The process involves various stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, subject matter experts, government officials, and others. Their input and expertise are crucial in designing a curriculum that meets the needs of students and aligns with educational goals and standards. Collaborative discussions, research, data analysis, and ongoing evaluation are integral parts of the curriculum development process to ensure its effectiveness [37]. The five key factors required for designing curriculum development are i) determining objectives, ii) teaching and learning processes, iii) selecting curriculum content, iv) learning evaluation, and v) learning resources.

2. METHOD

This research on school quality improvement is quantitative in nature and focuses on teamwork and curriculum effectiveness. The study examines the impact of the variables of teamwork and curriculum effectiveness on the formation of school quality. School quality is a key variable in this research. The population of this study consists of teachers in Medan City Madrasah. With the given population size, using the Isaac and Michel table, a sample of 146 teachers can be determined to participate in this research [38]. Teachers were chosen as respondents because they have the capacity and play a key role in Madrasah. The selection of respondents was then conducted through proportional random sampling, which means they were chosen proportionally to represent the Madrasah in Medan city [39], [40].

In the data collection process of this research, the technique used is a questionnaire in the form of a survey. The questionnaire is designed to uncover and provide a comprehensive overview of the three variables: teamwork, curriculum effectiveness, and school quality. To measure each variable in this research, a questionnaire with attitude measurement is used, specifically a rating scale with a numerical rating scale. The questionnaire is administered to teachers using Google Forms. The data obtained through the questionnaire in this research is described. The quantitative data analysis in this research uses Structural Equation Modeling analysis using the smart partial least square software/application. This model is chosen because there is a conceptual model with variables and their indicators to determine their influence [41], [42].

3. RESULTS

Before proceeding to hypothesis testing in the research, a validity and reliability test of the instruments is conducted. The results of the validity analysis indicate that the instruments for all variables are valid. The validity is assessed based on each indicator of the variables and the variables as a whole. The data loading factor for all three variables shows outer loadings >0.70. The overall data can be seen in Tables 2 and 3. In Table 3, the individual outcomes of the curriculum effectiveness indicator (IDCE), the cooperation indicator (IDCP), and the school quality indicator (IDSQ) are elucidated.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	Curriculum effectiveness	Cooperation	School quality
Curriculum effectiveness	0.964		
Cooperation	0.846	0.977	
School quality	0.892	0.932	0.981
Fornell-Larcker Criterion			

Table 3. Cross loadings

Indicator	Curriculum effectiveness	Cooperation	School quality
IDCE1	0.959	0.822	0.870
IDCE2	0.971	0.821	0.860
IDCE3	0.961	0.798	0.840
IDCE4	0.965	0.814	0.858
IDCE5	0.962	0.823	0.871
IDCP1	0.840	0.978	0.931
IDCP2	0.826	0.974	0.903
IDCP3	0.836	0.990	0.919
IDCP4	0.821	0.971	0.885
IDCP5	0.827	0.979	0.901
IDCP6	0.809	0.968	0.921
IDSQ1	0.910	0.925	0.971
IDSQ2	0.873	0.912	0.987
IDSQ3	0.875	0.915	0.990
IDSQ4	0.841	0.903	0.976

The reliability test for all three variables also shows Cronbach's Alpha values in the very high category, which is >0.900. This test result confirms that all variables meet the criteria for composite reliability, indicating that the research variables have good and acceptable levels of reliability. This result implies that the instruments used have a high level of trustworthiness and reliability. For further details, please refer to Table 4:

Table 4. Construct reliability and validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Curriculum effectiveness	0.981	0.981	0.985	0.929
Cooperation	0.990	0.991	0.992	0.954
School quality	0.987	0.987	0.990	0.963

Next, after the data on validity and reliability testing indicate that the instruments meet the criteria, hypothesis testing is conducted. The hypothesis testing in this study is carried out to explain the relationship between variables based on the values obtained from the path coefficients. The data indicate that teamwork and curriculum effectiveness have a positive effect on school quality. Each variable (teamwork and curriculum effectiveness) significantly contributes to the school's organizational climate. For further details, please refer to Table 5.

Table 5. Total effects

Variable	Curriculum effectiveness	Cooperation	School quality
Curriculum effectiveness			0.365
Cooperation			0.623
School quality			

From Table 5, we can see the strength of each variable's contribution to improving school quality. The R-square value for the curriculum effectiveness variable is 0.365, which means that this variable contributes 36.5% to the improvement of school quality, while the teamwork variable contributes 0.623 or 62.3% to school quality. These results clearly indicate that teamwork in schools has a greater contribution value than curriculum effectiveness.

To provide deeper insights into this study, the outer loading results for each indicator in each variable (Table 6) are also presented. The results show that each indicator has a significant contribution, as evidenced by the overall outer loading values >0.7. For the teamwork variable, the indicator order based on the highest outer loading results is: team cohesion, commitment, collaboration, incentives, change, creativity, and innovation being the last. On the other hand, for the curriculum effectiveness variable, the teaching and learning process has the highest loading, followed by learning evaluation, learning resources, curriculum content, and goals as the last. The results of the bootstrapping model for testing the structural hypothesis can be seen in Figure 1. The results indicate that, from the figure, curriculum effectiveness and teamwork contribute to the influence on academic quality.

Table 6. Outer loading

Code indicator	Indicator	Curriculum effectiveness	Cooperation	School quality
IDCE1	Setting goals	0.959		
IDCE2	Teaching and learning process	0.971		
IDCE3	Select content/curriculum content	0.961		
IDCE4	Learning evaluation	0.965		
IDCE5	Learning resources	0.962		
IDCP1	Collaboration		0.978	
IDCP2	Incentive		0.974	
IDCP3	Compactness		0.990	
IDCP4	There is effective change.		0.971	
IDCP5	High commitment		0.979	
IDCP6	Having creativity and innovation		0.968	
IDSQ1	Empowerment			0.971
IDSQ2	Management system			0.987
IDSQ3	Capable of problem-solving			0.990
IDSQ4	Achievement of vision, mission, and goals			0.976

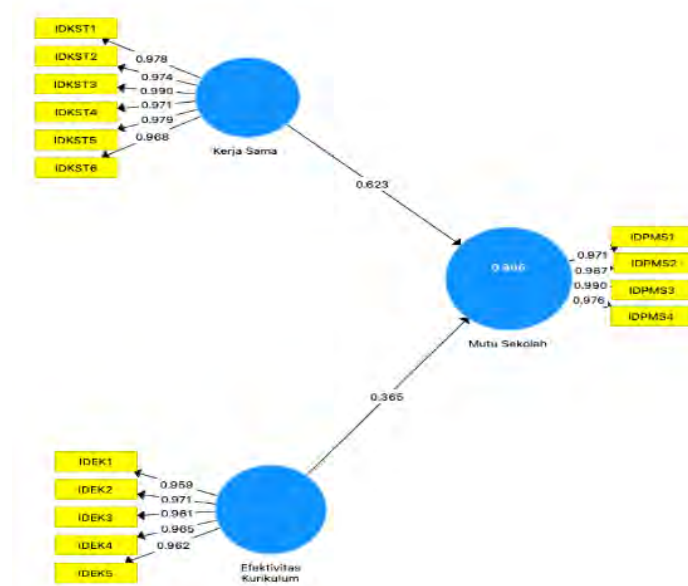


Figure 1. Smart partial least square analysis model

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that teamwork contributes more dominantly to the improvement of academic quality. There is a difference from previous studies that found curriculum effectiveness to be the dominant factor in efforts to improve academic quality [43], [44]. Various reasons can be argued for the differences in this study compared to previous studies, including the frequent changes in the curriculum in the Indonesian education system. It is noted that since the year 2000, there have been four curriculum changes, starting from the Competency-based curriculum, school-based curriculum, curriculum 2013, and the current Merdeka curriculum [17]. Various studies also indicate that frequent curriculum changes have a negative impact, especially in terms of adaptation for teachers and students [45], [46]. The readiness of teachers in curriculum changes is also important, which is inversely related to the competence of Indonesian teachers [47].

An organization is a place where people come together to achieve success. A good organization allows for sharing ideas, sharing expertise, learning from each other, complementing each other, and working together to overcome challenges. The individuals working within this organization need to have the ability to work as a team, as it is crucial and important. Teamwork is a form of collaboration among members to achieve a common goal that has been set. According to various studies, teamwork has an impact on efforts to improve organizational effectiveness and quality [13], [48].

Teamwork in educational institutions undoubtedly has a significant impact, similar to other profit-oriented organizations. High-quality human resources are the key to effective teamwork. Unfortunately, teamwork in educational institutions often does not receive sufficient attention, even though collaboration provides benefits for all members of a team in schools. Collaboration can occur between teachers and school administrators, subject teachers, teachers and laboratory staff, teachers and librarians, teachers, and parents, as well as teachers and students themselves.

4.1. Build an effective team

Working as a team has been considered more effective than working individually. Teams in organizations make significant contributions to change and goal achievement. Effective teams need to be built by effective organizations. The factors that influence the success and performance of teamwork are crucial to understanding in order to achieve team effectiveness. Various literature suggests that the following factors are important for team effectiveness: i) resources, ii) collaboration, iii) incentives, iv) support, v) communication, vi) leadership, vii) team size, and viii) cohesion (see Figure 2).

Resources: team resources (human resources and facilities) are important for the realization of an effective team. Human resources and facilities are equally important because having good human resources alone will not be able to maximize their potential in a team without adequate facilities, and vice versa. Resources/inputs are the most important factors in influencing team effectiveness [49]–[51].

There is collaboration: collaboration is the collective effort of a team to generate plans and problem-solving solutions. Collaboration can facilitate the team in achieving its goals. There are many factors that can influence collaboration, including how the team members value each other and the interdependence among them [30], [32].

Providing incentives: providing incentives is useful for encouraging better teamwork, changing the mindset of team members, lighter supervision, and easier development. Incentives can also be given if the team successfully achieves or even exceeds targets. This means that incentives are given based on the team's performance or the output produced by the team [49], [52].

Support for teams: some opinions state that support for the team is part of the resources. However, support is not only in physical form but also in non-physical forms such as motivation, mentoring, coaching, and so on. Top management plays three important roles: first, encouraging the team to make changes; second, communicating the changes to be accepted; and third, continuously supporting the changes, especially during the initial phase of implementation [30].

Open communication: the effectiveness of communication plays a crucial role in determining whether a team can work effectively. Effective team members transmit information freely, efficiently, and in a respectful manner, adhering to norms to minimize the occurrence of negative impacts [32], [53], [54].

Team leadership: a team requires leadership, whether it is from top management or within the team itself. Top leaders do not necessarily need to directly lead the team's operations but rather provide support and allocate sufficient resources. Top leaders can delegate responsibilities to the team members instead [49], [51], [55].

Team size: the size of a team should match the team's needs, and the number of team members can vary depending on the goals to be achieved. However, most experts agree that relatively smaller teams tend to be more effective. There are several challenges associated with larger team sizes, such as difficulties in communication, maintaining cohesion, higher costs, slower coordination, and an increased potential for conflicts [49], [51], [54].

Team cohesiveness: a cohesive team is typically characterized by camaraderie, mutual care, familiarity, high motivation to stay together, and a sense of pride in being a team member. In essence, a cohesive team tends to perform better than a team that lacks cohesiveness [53], [55].

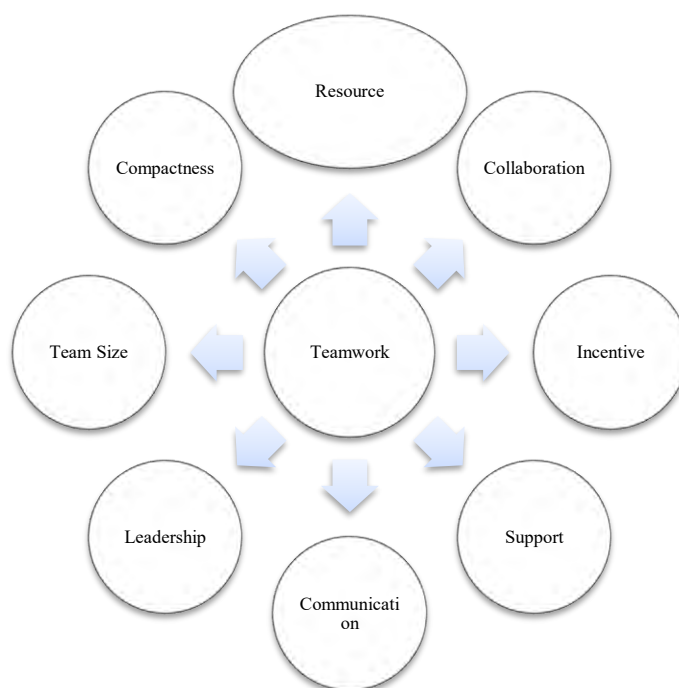


Figure 2. Teamwork and school quality improvement

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that teamwork in schools is the most significant factor contributing to the improvement of school quality. Furthermore, this study provides insights into the sequential indicators that shape teamwork in schools, namely cohesion, commitment, collaboration, incentives, change, creativity, and innovation. Therefore, this research makes practical and theoretical contributions to the development of knowledge in the field of educational management and administration. Teamwork is formed through agreements among school members, including teachers, school leaders (principals), teachers with teachers, and teachers with educational staff.

As scientific research, the researcher has made efforts to conduct the study following scientific principles. However, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the sample size, consisting of only three public Islamic schools, may not fully represent the overall data on school quality in general. Secondly, the instruments used in this study were developed based on theories believed to represent the three research variables, but there may be other theories that are more relevant in different situations and conditions. Future research should explore how to foster teamwork in schools and compare Islamic schools with public schools. In addition, policymakers need to consider this research in their efforts to improve the quality of Madrasah, including through strengthening cooperation. Cooperation should not only be carried out internally, such as between teachers and principals, teachers and laboratory staff, and librarians, but also through strengthening cooperation with external institutions such as higher education institutions, business world, and industry.

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