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Submitted	Revised	Published
11 October 2025	06 November 2025	09 November 2025
DOI : https://doi.org/10.58518/madinah.v12i2.4192		

MADRASAH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH FOR ENHANCING UMMI METHOD AL-QUR'AN LEARNING MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to empower madrasah communities in implementing improved Al-Qur'an learning methods through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The problem addressed a madrasah which has been unable to optimally implement the 10 UMMI quality pillars despite joining the program in 2018, evidenced by munaqosah passing rates below 50%. This research employed a critical-transformative PAR approach involving 38 participants (principals, teachers, coordinators, committee members, and parents) as co-researchers through four systematic cycles over four months (September-December). Data were collected through participatory observation, focus group discussions (12 sessions), in-depth interviews (25 participants), and documentation. The findings reveal significant improvements in the implementation of the 10 UMMI quality pillars, with average scores increasing from 71.5 (sufficient) to 84.8 (good). The most substantial improvements occurred in learning time allocation (+21 points, 32.3%), coordinator competency (+20 points, 33.3%), and target clarity (+20 points, 28.6%). Munaqosah passing rates improved dramatically to 84.4%. The novelty of this research lies in developing an Islamic values-based participatory empowerment model that integrates shura (deliberation), ta'awun (mutual assistance), and istiqamah (consistency) principles into educational quality management. This model can be replicated in other madrasahs with contextual adaptations, offering a democratic and transformative approach aligned with international quality standards and Islamic educational values, contributing to SDG 4 (Quality Education) implementation in Islamic education institutions

Keywords: Participatory Action Research, madrasah empowerment, UMMI method, Al-Qur'an learning, coastal communities



ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini bertujuan memberdayakan masyarakat madrasah dalam menerapkan metode pembelajaran Al-Quran yang lebih baik melalui pendekatan Participatory Action Research (PAR). Masalah yang dihadapi sebuah madrasah yang belum mampu menerapkan 10 pilar mutu Ummi secara optimal meskipun sudah bergabung sejak 2018, ditandai dengan tingkat kelulusan munaqosah di bawah 50%. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan PAR kritis-transformatif yang melibatkan 38 partisipan (kepala madrasah, guru, koordinator, komite, dan orang tua) sebagai co-researcher melalui empat siklus sistematis selama empat bulan (September-Desember). Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, focus group discussion (12 sesi), wawancara mendalam (25 partisipan), dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan implementasi 10 pilar mutu Ummi dari rata-rata 71,5 (cukup) menjadi 84,8 (baik), dengan peningkatan tertinggi pada aspek waktu pembelajaran (+21 poin, 32,3%), kemampuan koordinator (+20 poin, 33,3%), dan kejelasan target (+20 poin, 28,6%). Tingkat kelulusan munaqosah meningkat dramatis menjadi 84,4%. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengembangan model pemberdayaan partisipatif berbasis nilai-nilai Islam yang mengintegrasikan prinsip shura (musyawarah), ta'awun (tolong-menolong), dan istiqamah (konsistensi) ke dalam manajemen mutu pendidikan. Model ini dapat direplikasi di madrasah lain dengan adaptasi kontekstual, menawarkan pendekatan demokratis dan transformatif yang sejalan dengan standar mutu internasional dan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam, berkontribusi pada implementasi SDG 4 (Quality Education) di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Participatory Action Research, pemberdayaan madrasah, metode Ummi, pembelajaran Al-Quran, masyarakat pesisir.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Qur'an education constitutes the fundamental cornerstone of Islamic education in Muslim communities, particularly in Indonesia's coastal and rural regions where Islamic traditions remain deeply embedded in daily life. Every Muslim child requires proficiency in reading the Al-Qur'an correctly and fluently from an early age, as the Al-Qur'an serves as the primary source of Islamic teachings and the guiding framework for Muslim life.¹ However, the reality in many Indonesian madrasahs reveals that numerous students have not yet mastered the ability to read the Al-Qur'an with proper tartil and fluency according to correct tajweed rules, particularly in rural and coastal areas where educational resources and quality assurance systems remain limited.

In response to these persistent challenges, various Al-Qur'an teaching methods have been developed and systematically implemented across Indonesian educational institutions. One proven effective approach is the UMMI method developed by the UMMI Foundation, which has been implemented in thousands

¹ Tsamara Qurrota A'yun and Dzulfikar Akbar Romadlon, "Analysis of Al-Qur'an Learning The Ummi Metode Method at Islamic Elementary School," *Indonesian Journal of Education Methods Development* 18, no. 1 (October 13, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijemd.v21i.702>.



of educational institutions throughout Indonesia with satisfactory outcomes.² The UMMI method's strength lies in its structured learning system and clear quality standards through 10 quality pillars that must be fulfilled by every participating institution. These pillars provide a comprehensive framework for ensuring systematic and sustainable Al-Qur'an learning quality in madrasahs, encompassing qualified teachers, competent coordinators, adequate learning time, clear targets, appropriate materials, effective methodology, robust evaluation systems, proper classroom management, strong support services, and measurable quality outcomes.

Lamongan Regency, located in the coastal region of East Java, represents one of the most active areas in implementing the UMMI method. As a coastal community with strong Islamic traditions, Lamongan possesses substantial social capital for religious education. Data from UMMI Regional Lamongan indicates that 98 institutions have joined the UMMI method program, involving 14,920 students and 897 teachers. Among these institutions, 18 are Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) or Elementary Schools, comprising 18.2% of the total participating institutions. Nevertheless, not all institutions can implement the UMMI method optimally. Several madrasahs have successfully become model institutions with consistent capability to send students to munaqosah (final Al-Qur'an learning examinations) with 100% passing rates. However, some madrasahs in coastal and rural areas continue to experience implementation difficulties

A private madrasah has 400 students and 18 Al-Qur'an teachers, all of whom have completed UMMI method certification. The surrounding community consists primarily of farmers, fishermen, and traders with strong religious commitment and high concern for children's religious education. Despite joining the UMMI program since 2018 and possessing certified teachers, this madrasah has not demonstrated optimal performance. The primary indicator is the madrasah's inability to consistently send students to munaqosah, with passing rates below 50% in the two occasions when students were sent for evaluation. This condition demonstrates that despite all teachers being certified and facilities being available, the implementation of the 10 UMMI quality pillars has not proceeded as intended.

Addressing this research gap requires understanding that previous studies on Islamic education quality improvement have predominantly focused on curriculum development and teacher training,³ with limited attention to participatory approaches that engage all stakeholders as active change agents.

² Didik Hernawan, "Penerapan Metode Umami Dalam Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an," *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam* 19, no. 1 (February 13, 2019): 27–35, <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v19i1.7751>.

³ Umi Hasunah, "Implementasi Metode Umami Dalam Pembelajaran Alquran Pada Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Al-Mahfudz Seblak Jombang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (E-ISSN: 2550-1038)* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2017): 160–72; Busahdiar, Ummah Karimah, and Sudirman Tamin, "Total Quality Management (TQM) and Basic Education: Its Application to Islamic Education in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 20, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 215–32, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8015>.



Recent research emphasizes the importance of community-driven educational reform, particularly in religious education contexts.⁴ A systematic review by Afriantoni et al. revealed that most Islamic education improvement initiatives in Indonesia employed conventional top-down approaches,⁵ resulting in limited sustainability and weak stakeholder ownership. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how participatory methodologies can specifically address quality management challenges in standardized Al-Qur'an learning programs like UMMI, particularly in coastal and rural Muslim communities where social capital exists but remains underutilized.

Furthermore, while organizational transformation in Islamic education institutions has been widely discussed,⁶ empirical evidence on democratic empowerment approaches through action research remains limited in madrasah contexts. Torre and Fine argue that critical participatory action research holds particular promise for marginalized educational communities,⁷ yet its application in Islamic education, especially in geographically grounded coastal settings, remains underexplored. Educational program implementation challenges in madrasahs cannot be resolved through top-down approaches or conventional research that merely positions researchers as subjects and communities as objects. A more democratic and participatory approach is required that involves all stakeholders as active partners in the change process.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) represents an appropriate research approach to address this problem. PAR is a research methodology that integrates research, education, and social action into a unified process.⁸ This approach emphasizes active community participation throughout all research stages, from problem identification, solution planning, implementation, to evaluation. PAR's advantage in the madrasah empowerment context lies in its capacity to create strong ownership among all stakeholders toward the implemented program, enabling communities to develop solutions appropriate to their local contexts and needs.

⁴ Teguh Prasetyo et al., "Poverty Reduction For Coastal Communities In Indonesia Through Community Empowerment Training," *International Journal Of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHES)* 2, no. 6 (June 16, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v2i6.495>; Toto Sugito et al., "The Empowerment as Community Learning Based on Ecotourism of Coastal Border at West Kalimantan," *International Educational Research* 2, no. 3 (September 28, 2019): p23, <https://doi.org/10.30560/ier.v2n3p23>.

⁵ Afriantoni et al., "Implementation Of Total Quality Management (TQM) In Madrasah: A Critical And Comprehensive Analysis Through Literature Study," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Darussalam* 7, no. 2 (September 13, 2025): 248–60, <https://doi.org/10.30739/jmpid.v7i2.3852>.

⁶ Edward Sallis, *Total Quality Management in Education* (Routledge, 2014).

⁷ Michelle Fine et al., "Critical Participatory Action Research: Methods and Praxis for Intersectional Knowledge Production," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 68, no. 3 (2021): 344–56, <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000445>.

⁸ Jacques M. Chevalier and Daniel J. Buckles, *Participatory Action Research* (Second edition. | Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019.: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351033268>.



This research becomes significant for several reasons relevant to coastal Muslim communities and Islamic education development. First, The Madrasa possesses significant potential to become a model madrasah given the strong community support characteristic of coastal Islamic communities and certified teaching staff. If implementation challenges can be resolved, this madrasah can serve as a reference for other madrasahs in similar coastal and rural contexts. Second, this research can produce a madrasah empowerment model applicable to other locations with similar characteristics, contributing to community empowerment methodology in Islamic education. Third, the research addresses the practical need to ensure children's rights to quality Al-Qur'an education in underserved coastal areas. Fourth, this study contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by demonstrating how participatory approaches can improve educational quality in religious education institutions within specific geographic contexts.⁹

Based on the problem analysis above, this research formulates several research questions: (1) What is the initial condition of the 10 UMMI quality pillars implementation based on all madrasah stakeholders' perspectives? (2) What factors inhibit and support UMMI method implementation in this coastal madrasah context? (3) How can the madrasah community empowerment process through the Participatory Action Research approach enhance UMMI method implementation? (4) What changes occur in the implementation of the 10 UMMI quality pillars following the participatory empowerment process? (5) What sustainability strategies are developed by the madrasah community itself? This research aims to develop and validate a PAR-based empowerment model for improving Al-Qur'an learning quality management in madrasahs, particularly in coastal and rural Muslim communities, grounded in Islamic values of shura (deliberation), ta'awun (mutual assistance), and istiqamah (consistency).

METHOD

This research employed the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach with a critical-transformative paradigm. PAR was selected because it aligns with empowerment objectives that emphasize active and democratic participation from all madrasah stakeholders, reflecting Islamic principles of communal decision-making.¹⁰ This research aims not merely to understand problems but to transform conditions through collaborative action. As applied research oriented toward

⁹ M. Chotibuddin et al., "Quality Education with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No 4: Knowledge-Based," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 8 (January 2, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.5676>; Zohaib Hassan Sain, Nurulannisa Binti Abdullah, and Muhammad Taufik Hidayat, "Sustainable Pathways to Quality: Exploring SDG 4's Influence on Higher Education Transformation in Pakistan," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 4 (December 8, 2024): 1137–49, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v8i4.8923>.

¹⁰ Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and Rhonda Nixon, "Critical Participatory Action Research," in *Action Learning and Action Research: Genres and Approaches* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019), 179–92, <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78769-537-520191016>.



practical problem-solving, it involves the community as co-researchers, continuing beyond analysis to solution implementation and participatory impact evaluation.

The research was conducted at MI Maslakul Huda, located in Dengok Kandangsemangkon, Paciran District, Lamongan Regency, East Java Province. This coastal area is characterized by a religious community with strong Islamic traditions, where the majority of residents work as farmers, fishermen, and traders. This PAR research involved 38 participants selected through purposive sampling with maximum variation strategy to ensure comprehensive representation from all madrasah community elements. Selection criteria included: (1) Core Participants (23 individuals) must have direct involvement in UMMI program implementation with minimum one-year tenure, willingness to commit to the four-month research duration, and availability for regular meetings; (2) Supporting Participants (15 individuals) should represent diverse stakeholder perspectives including parents from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The participant composition consisted of 1 madrasah principal, 1 UMMI coordinator, 12 certified Al-Qur'an teachers, 3 committee members with active madrasah management involvement, 6 parent representatives elected through parent association meetings, 10 additional parents with children at various learning levels, and 5 community figures including pesantren administrators and local religious leaders. This total of 38 participants was determined based on theoretical saturation principles in qualitative research and practical considerations for effective participatory processes, aligning with PAR recommendations that participant numbers allow meaningful dialogue while maintaining manageability in collective decision-making.¹¹

The research was conducted in four PAR cycles with Look-Think-Act-Reflect stages occurring over four months (September-December). Cycle 1 (Planning/Look and Identify, 3 weeks) focused on participatively identifying initial conditions and UMMI implementation problems through PAR orientation, collaborative research team formation, participatory observation, Focus Group Discussions for problem identification, visual problem mapping, and initial condition documentation. Cycle 2 (Action/Think and Plan Solutions, 3 weeks) involved analyzing root causes and collaboratively formulating action plans through causal analysis workshops using fishbone diagrams, group discussions for solution formulation, collaborative action plan development, role distribution among stakeholders, resource mobilization, and development of monitoring and evaluation indicators.

Cycle 3 (Observation/Implement and Monitor, 4 weeks) implemented action plans with participatory monitoring through program execution, weekly coordination meetings, problem-solving of emerging obstacles, and documentation of the implementation process. Cycle 4 (Reflection/Evaluate and

¹¹ Davydd J Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* (SAGE publications, 2006); Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, "Critical Participatory Action Research."



Reflect, 2 weeks) evaluated outcomes and reflected on the overall process through final evaluation workshops, measurement of changes in the 10 UMMI quality pillars, deep reflection sessions, formulation of sustainability strategies, and lesson learned documentation.

Data were collected through four primary methods: participatory observation of madrasah daily activities and Al-Qur'an learning processes; Focus Group Discussions conducted regularly at each PAR cycle with representatives from all stakeholder groups; in-depth interviews with key informants using semi-structured guidelines; and systematic documentation collection including learning implementation documents, coordination meeting minutes, student assessment data, and activity photographs. Data analysis followed an interactive model involving all participants through thematic analysis for qualitative data, comparative analysis to observe changes before and after intervention, reflective dialogue to construct shared meaning, and descriptive statistical analysis for quantitative quality pillar implementation scores.

Validity and reliability were achieved through triangulation across data sources, collection methods, and researchers; member checking by returning analysis results to participants for verification; prolonged engagement through intensive four-month interaction; and reflexivity through regular team reflections on researcher positions and potential biases. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Institut Agama Islam Tarbiyatut Tholabah Lamongan (Approval No. 045/LPPM-IAITABAH/EC/IX/2022, dated September 1, 2022), with institutional permission from MI Maslakul Huda and Pondok Pesantren Maslakul Huda. Informed consent was obtained from all participants through a two-stage process, with voluntary participation ensured, confidentiality carefully maintained, democratic participation guaranteed through equal speaking time and anonymous voting, and fair benefit distribution designed to benefit all madrasah community members. The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Condition and Problem Identification

The initial assessment conducted participatively with all madrasah stakeholders revealed that the implementation of the 10 UMMI quality pillars at MI Maslakul Huda was in the sufficient category with an average score of 71.5 out of 100. This comprehensive mapping provided clear insights into implementation strengths and weaknesses across all quality dimensions, revealing that while basic infrastructure and teacher certification existed, systematic quality management remained suboptimal.

The Qualified Teachers pillar scored 75, indicating that while all 18 teachers possessed UMMI certification demonstrating program commitment, several experienced skill degradation due to infrequent practice and limited continuous professional development. The Qualified Coordinator pillar received the lowest score at 60, with the coordinator lacking time for intensive coaching due to heavy



administrative responsibilities, resulting in minimal monitoring (only 2-3 times per semester versus recommended weekly schedules). Learning Time Management scored 65, revealing considerable schedule inconsistency with frequent adjustments conflicting with other activities and shortened learning duration. Target Clarity scored 70, reflecting inconsistent understanding among teachers regarding learning objectives.

Learning Materials scored 80, the highest initial score, with adequate UMMI books available though companion book usage remained suboptimal. Teaching Methodology scored 73, with most teachers understanding the UMMI approach but showing practical implementation inconsistencies, particularly in individual student management. Evaluation Systems scored 72, with daily assessments implemented but documentation and remedial follow-up remaining inadequate, and semester evaluations never conducted. Classroom Management scored 78, showing relatively good organization by ability levels though reclassification posed psychological challenges. Support Services scored 70, with regular parent communication through WhatsApp but limited systematic progress reporting. Quality Targets scored 72, with annual targets set but never achieved throughout four years, with only two occasions of munaqosah participation resulting in below 50% passing rates.

Through in-depth analysis, inhibiting factors were categorized into three dimensions. Managerial factors included weak coordination systems due to coordinator workload, inadequate monitoring systems, and top-down planning with minimal teacher involvement. Pedagogical factors encompassed teacher competency variations, challenges in managing large heterogeneous classes, and suboptimal evaluation systems with inadequate remedial follow-up. Cultural factors involved work culture emphasizing routine over quality improvement, limited informal teacher communication about learning challenges, and restricted parental participation in program planning. Conversely, supporting factors included strong principal leadership commitment, all teachers possessing UMMI certification as human resource capital, adequate infrastructure and learning media, and high community support characteristic of coastal Islamic communities with strong religious commitment.

Participatory Empowerment Process and Transformation

The PAR-based empowerment process demonstrated unique dynamics emphasizing building awareness, capacity, and collective commitment through democratic dialogue grounded in Islamic values. The initial phase focused on building critical awareness through facilitated dialogue where participants recognized that implementation challenges stemmed not merely from external factors but also from internal community dynamics. A critical moment emerged when teachers openly acknowledged teaching challenges including skill deficiencies, creating a psychologically safe atmosphere for constructive discussion of sensitive issues. The principal also demonstrated openness by acknowledging management weaknesses and commitment to supporting changes.



The collaborative capacity building phase involved horizontal peer learning rather than external expert training. Experienced teachers shared knowledge with colleagues needing assistance, while parents successful in motivating children at home shared strategies with others. This horizontal learning enhanced not only technical competencies but also social relationships and mutual trust among stakeholders, operationalizing the Islamic principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance). Joint action planning became the most democratic phase, with all stakeholders having equal opportunities to propose ideas and participate in decision-making, reflecting the Islamic principle of shura (deliberation). The action plan emerged from collective deliberation rather than being imposed by the principal or external researchers, generating strong program ownership.

The implementation phase demonstrated collective empowerment momentum, with teachers proactively seeking solutions to obstacles, coordinators receiving support from all teachers, and parents actively monitoring children's learning at home. This synergy created a supportive ecosystem for quality improvement. The reflection phase became a space for collective learning, strengthening stakeholders' critical and reflective capacities and developing better understanding of empowerment processes and capabilities for independent continuous improvement, embodying the Islamic principle of istiqamah (consistency).

Quantitative and Qualitative Changes in Quality Implementation

The PAR process produced statistically significant changes across all quality pillars dimensions. Table 1 presents the comprehensive comparison of implementation scores before and after the PAR intervention.

Table: Comparison of UMMI Quality Pillars Before and After PAR

Quality Pillar	Before	After	Change	%
Qualified Teachers	75	88	+13	17.3%
Qualified Coordinator	60	80	+20	33.3%
Learning Time Management	65	86	+21	32.3%
Target Clarity	70	90	+20	28.6%
Learning Materials	80	85	+5	6.3%
Teaching Methodology	73	83	+10	13.7%
Evaluation Systems	72	87	+15	20.8%
Classroom Management	78	85	+7	9.0%
Support Services	70	83	+13	18.6%
Quality Targets	72	81	+9	12.5%
Average	71.5	84.8	+13.3	18.6%

The overall improvement from 71.5 to 84.8 represents an 18.6% enhancement, statistically significant according to Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($Z = -2.803$, $p = 0.005$), with large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.92$). This demonstrates that changes were not due to measurement error but reflect genuine educational



improvement. The data reveals three distinct improvement patterns: high-impact improvements (>20 points) in Learning Time Management, Coordinator Competency, and Target Clarity addressing previously critical gaps; moderate improvements (10-19 points) in Teacher Quality, Evaluation Systems, and Support Services; and modest improvements (5-9 points) in Learning Materials and Classroom Management reflecting optimization of already functional areas.

Most substantially, Learning Time Management improved 21 points (32.3%) through collective establishment of fixed Al-Qur'an learning schedules protected from disruption, with consistency reaching 95% compared to previous 60-70%. Coordinator Competency improved 20 points (33.3%) through fundamental role restructuring, reducing teaching load from 18 to 10 hours weekly, developing systematic monitoring with weekly visits, and providing supervision technique training. Target Clarity increased 20 points (28.6%) through intensive teacher socialization regarding achievement targets, posting learning targets in classrooms, developing systematic individual progress monitoring, and providing periodic reports to parents. Most significantly, the madrasah successfully conducted its first semester munaqosah in four years, with 38 of 45 students (84.4%) passing, dramatically improved from previous below 50% rates.

Participant perspectives illuminate these quantitative improvements. One teacher reflected: "Before PAR, we were like musicians playing different tunes. The coordinator tried to guide us, but they had no time. After we discussed together and reorganized the coordinator's schedule, everything became synchronized. Now we feel like an orchestra – each playing our part, but creating harmony together" (Teacher A, FGD Session 8, November 2022). A parent articulated the community engagement transformation: "Previously, we parents only knew our children went to Al-Qur'an class. We didn't know what level they were at or what they should achieve. Now, with monthly reports and clear targets, we can support them at home. We're not just paying school fees anymore; we're partners in our children's religious education" (Parent B, Interview, December 2022). The coordinator's testimony captures organizational transformation: "The heaviest burden was lifted when my teaching load was reduced from 18 to 10 hours. But more importantly, teachers now see me as a mentor, not an inspector. We built trust through this PAR process" (Coordinator, Reflection Session, December 2022).

Islamic Values Integration in Participatory Educational Management

This research demonstrates that participatory approaches in Islamic learning management possess strong foundations deeply rooted in Qur'anic principles and prophetic traditions. The PAR process operationalizes fundamental Islamic principles in community life and educational management. The principle of shura (deliberation), explicitly commanded in Qur'an (3:159), became the foundation of collective decision-making where all stakeholders had equal voice regardless of hierarchical position. The principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance), referenced in Qur'an (5:2), was manifested through mutual support among stakeholders, transcending individualistic approaches to embrace collective



responsibility. The principle of istiqamah (consistency), emphasized in Qur'an (41:30), was reflected in sustained commitment to consistently implement agreed programs, transforming temporary enthusiasm into enduring institutional culture.

This integration validates Tilaar's thesis that educational management in Indonesian contexts should not merely adopt Western models but must be contextualized with local values and needs.¹² The research demonstrates that universal quality principles—systematic monitoring, continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement—can be meaningfully adapted through Islamic values lens, creating culturally responsive yet internationally competitive quality systems. This addresses the gap identified by Sallis regarding cultural and religious contextualization in Total Quality Management frameworks for education.¹³

Comparatively, this research's findings resonate with international studies on participatory approaches in religious education. Sain, Abdullah, and Hidayat's madrasah empowerment study reported comparable improvement, though focusing on higher education curriculum rather than quality management systems in elementary Islamic schools.¹⁴ Sugito et al.'s comprehensive work on coastal community empowerment identified stakeholder ownership as critical success factor, corroborating this study's central finding.¹⁵ However, this research extends beyond previous studies by demonstrating systematic integration of Islamic values into quality management frameworks, showing how religious principles can inform participatory educational reform in geographically grounded Muslim communities.

The coordinator role improvement provides specific insights into supervision and coaching in Islamic education. Islamic traditions have long recognized mentoring relationships' importance, known as the talaqqi tradition. This research demonstrates that talaqqi principles can be institutionalized in modern management systems through structured coaching, with coordinators functioning as internal coaches providing not only technical monitoring but also spiritual and professional mentoring.¹⁶ Parent involvement strengthened through PAR reflects Islamic concepts regarding shared educational responsibility, with Islam viewing education as joint responsibility of family, school, and community. Learning time consistency achieved has deeper implications, as time discipline is

¹² Henry Alexis Rudolf Tilaar, *Perubahan Sosial Dan Pendidikan: Pengantar Pedagogik Transformatif Untuk Indonesia* (Penerbit PT. Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia bekerja sama dengan Center for ..., 2002).

¹³ Sallis, *Total Quality Management in Education*.

¹⁴ Sain, Abdullah, and Hidayat, "Sustainable Pathways to Quality: Exploring SDG 4's Influence on Higher Education Transformation in Pakistan."

¹⁵ Sugito et al., "The Empowerment as Community Learning Based on Ecotourism of Coastal Border at West Kalimantan."

¹⁶ Mawardi Pewangi, Ferdinan, and Koree Jarong, "Integration of Islamic Values in the Implementation of Academic Supervision at a Muhammadiyah High School in Gowa Regency," *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 27, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 499–521, <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2024v27n2i13>.



highly valued in Islam, reflected in worship obligations conducted at specific times. Al-Qur'an learning, as worship and religious knowledge acquisition, should receive similar temporal respect. The successful munaqosah implementation holds significant meaning in Islamic education tradition, representing not merely academic assessment but quality certification and recognition of student achievement in studying Allah's word.

Sustainability Strategies and Institutionalization

One of the most significant achievements was emergence of sustainability strategies formulated directly by the madrasah community rather than external researchers. The madrasah established an UMMI Quality Assurance Team comprising the coordinator, three representative teachers, one committee member, and two parent representatives, responsible for continuously monitoring implementation, conducting periodic evaluations, and formulating improvement programs through monthly meetings. An internal coaching system was institutionalized with senior certified teachers appointed as internal coaches mentoring junior teachers through systematically arranged schedules. Strengthened partnerships with UMMI Foundation became integral, with the madrasah committing to routine participation in coaching programs, active teacher recertification, and periodic consultations with regional coaches.

Parental involvement was institutionalized through formation of a Parents Support Group conducting regular monthly meetings to evaluate children's progress and formulate collective support strategies. Transparent financial sustainability was achieved by allocating specific budget for UMMI program within the madrasah's annual budget. Most crucially, the madrasah developed continuous improvement culture through regular quarterly reflection mechanisms ensuring quality improvement became inherent in madrasah management rather than temporary project.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From empowerment theory perspective, this PAR process successfully facilitated three critical dimensions conceptualized by Zimmerman: psychological, organizational, and community dimensions.¹⁷ The psychological dimension manifested through enhanced self-efficacy among teachers and management, aligning with Freire's notion that genuine education must liberate individuals from passive mentalities,¹⁸ enabling them to become active change agents. The organizational dimension was reflected in strengthened institutional capacity with quality assurance systems, coordinator roles, and coordination mechanisms experiencing fundamental improvements, consistent with Fullan's educational change theory emphasizing systemic transformation.¹⁹ The community dimension

¹⁷ Marc Zimmerman, "Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational and Community Levels of Analysis," in *Handbook of Community Psychology* (Springer, 2000), 43–63, http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4615-4193-6_2.

¹⁸ Paulo Freire, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," in *Toward a Sociology of Education* (Routledge, 2020), 374–86.

¹⁹ Michael Fullan, *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (Teachers college press, 2016).



emerged through democratic participatory decision-making, reflecting Cornwall's concept of "spaces for participation" involving substantive power and decision-making rather than tokenistic consultation.²⁰

PAR's uniqueness lies in capacity to integrate external knowledge with local wisdom. UMMI quality standards represented external knowledge systematically introduced, while implementation strategies emerged from community's contextual understanding. This integration produced contextually relevant yet quality-standard-compliant solutions, aligning with Kemmis and McTaggart's argument that PAR bridges theory-practice gaps through dialectical processes between external knowledge and lived experience.²¹

This research possesses important implications for Islamic education quality improvement policy. First, madrasah quality improvement programs are more effective employing participatory rather than directive approaches, aligning with SDG 4's emphasis on inclusive and equitable quality education recognizing quality must be collectively constructed.²² Second, strengthening middle-level management capacity proves highly strategic, addressing SDG Target 4.c regarding qualified teachers and educational personnel. Third, parental involvement importance is frequently underestimated, with quality policies needing systematic mechanisms for engagement, reflecting SDG 17's partnerships emphasis. Fourth, quality improvement requires fundamental organizational culture transformation emphasizing continuous improvement, innovation, and democratic participation rather than routine and compliance.²³ Fifth, institutionalizing quality improvement mechanisms within management structures ensures sustainability beyond project cycles, contributing to SDG Target 4.7's sustainable development education emphasis.

For coastal and rural Muslim communities specifically, this research demonstrates that strong social capital and religious commitment can be systematically mobilized for educational quality improvement when appropriate participatory frameworks respecting Islamic values are employed.²⁴ The model offers developing countries a culturally responsive yet internationally competitive

²⁰ Andrea Cornwall, "Unpacking 'Participation' Models, Meanings and Practices," *Community Development Journal* 43, no. 3 (June 5, 2008): 269-83, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsn010>.

²¹ Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, "Critical Participatory Action Research."

²² Chotibuddin et al., "Quality Education with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No 4: Knowledge-Based."

²³ Busahdiar Busahdiar et al., "Implementation of Total Quality Management and Its Impact to Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School)," *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 8, no. 1 (August 13, 2023): 15-30, <https://doi.org/10.18326/attarbiyah.v8i1.15-30>; Asep Encu, "Beyond Traditional Models: Exploring the Synergy of Total Quality Management and Educational Excellence in Madrasah," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (July 2, 2025): 427-41, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v9i2.10804>.

²⁴ Maxensius Tri Sambodo et al., "Towards a New Approach to Community-Based Rural Development: Lesson Learned from Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (December 15, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2267741>; Prasetyo et al., "Poverty Reduction For Coastal Communities In Indonesia Through Community Empowerment Training."



approach to educational quality enhancement in religious education sectors often marginalized in mainstream development initiatives.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research possesses several acknowledged limitations. First, single-site research in specific coastal context requires caution regarding generalizability to other madrasahs with different characteristics, necessitating further research in various urban and rural contexts.²⁵ Second, four-month timeframe was relatively short for observing long-term sustainability, requiring longitudinal research following implementation several years post-intervention. Third, focus on 10 UMMI quality pillars as indicators, while relevant and measurable, requires longer-term assessment of ultimate impact on student Al-Qur'an reading quality. Fourth, absence of in-depth comparative analysis with other quality improvement approaches requires comparative research between PAR-based and conventional approaches for robust evidence.

Future research recommendations include: replication studies in various madrasah contexts testing model transferability and identifying necessary contextual adaptations; longitudinal studies monitoring achieved change sustainability; comparative studies between PAR and other approaches; research examining model scalability at district or regional levels; and exploration of how PAR approaches can be integrated with digital technologies to enhance efficiency and reach in coastal and inland Muslim communities.

CONCLUSION

This research successfully demonstrates that Participatory Action Research represents an effective and transformative strategy for empowering madrasah communities in coastal Muslim areas to enhance Al-Qur'an learning management quality. Through systematic four-cycle process involving planning, action, observation, and reflection, statistically significant improvements ($p = 0.005$) were achieved across all 10 UMMI quality pillars, with average scores increasing from 71.5 to 84.8, representing 18.6% enhancement and large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.92$).

The research's novelty lies in three interconnected contributions. First, it develops an Islamic values-based participatory empowerment model successfully operationalizing Qur'anic principles—shura (deliberation), ta'awun (mutual assistance), and istiqamah (consistency)—into contemporary educational quality management systems, demonstrating participatory approaches are authentically Islamic methodologies rather than merely Western democratic imports. Second, the model effectively integrates external quality standards with local contextual adaptation through democratic processes, resolving persistent tension between standardization and contextualization in educational quality assurance. Third, the research validates that PAR can produce rapid yet sustainable improvements

²⁵ Juharyanto Juharyanto et al., "Antecedents of Primary School Quality: The Case of Remote Areas Schools in Indonesia," *SAGE Open* 13, no. 1 (January 16, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221144971>.



within four-month timeframes in resource-constrained coastal settings, challenging assumptions that participatory approaches necessarily require extensive time investments.

Most substantial improvements occurred in learning time management (+21 points, 32.3%), coordinator competency (+20 points, 33.3%), and target clarity (+20 points, 28.6%), demonstrating that systematic participatory approaches effectively address critical bottlenecks. The dramatic munaqosah passing rate improvement from below 50% to 84.4% provides concrete evidence of effectiveness in producing tangible learning outcomes beyond procedural compliance.

Research implications suggest multiple pathways for replication. At institutional level, this PAR-based model can be systematically replicated with contextual adaptations, with madrasahs facing similar challenges prioritizing coordinator capacity building and learning time consistency as high-impact interventions. At policy level, educational policymakers should transition from directive to facilitative approaches, prioritizing middle-level management capacity development, structured multi-stakeholder participation mechanisms, and organizational culture transformation support. At methodological level, this study demonstrates PAR can be effectively implemented within academic timeframes while maintaining participatory integrity. At broader educational development level, this research contributes to SDG 4 implementation in religious education contexts, offering culturally responsive yet internationally competitive approaches particularly relevant for resource-constrained religious education sectors.

The madrasah community's capacity to continue quality improvement independently after external intervention concluded represents ultimate validation of participatory empowerment's transformative potential in Islamic education, particularly in coastal and rural Muslim communities where strong social capital and religious commitment can be systematically mobilized through Islamic values-based participatory frameworks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors express sincere gratitude to MI Maslakul Huda, Pondok Pesantren Maslakul Huda, and the UMMI Foundation for their collaboration and continuous support. We are profoundly grateful to all research participants – madrasah principals, teachers, coordinators, committee members, parents, and community leaders – whose genuine engagement and collective ownership made this research meaningful and transformative.

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