

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF MADRASAH SELF-EVALUATION (EDM) IN THE OPTIMIZATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

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ABSTRACT

Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) is a strategic instrument within the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI), yet its implementation in madrasahs remains predominantly administrative rather than data-driven. Unlike previous studies that examined EDM implementation in general schools or as isolated topics, this study specifically analyzes the strategic role of EDM in optimizing quality assurance within madrasahs, institutions with distinctive characteristics under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Employing library research with content analysis, this study synthesizes recent empirical findings (2022–2026) to construct an integrative framework connecting EDM with Total Quality Management (TQM) principles. The findings reveal that EDM functions as a quality mapping instrument, a diagnostic tool for identifying institutional strengths and weaknesses, and the primary foundation for RKM and RKAM preparation. Critically, this study argues that EDM's strategic value is only realized when supported by competent human resources, a strengthened Quality Assurance Team, digital technology integration, and active stakeholder participation. The key contribution of this study lies in reframing EDM not merely as an evaluative tool, but as a systemic driver of accountable, data-based, and sustainable madrasah governance.

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INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization demands high public accountability from educational institutions, including madrasahs, to continuously improve their quality. As mandated by Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards, quality assurance is an obligation for every educational unit. The system is divided into two components: the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI), implemented by educational units, and the External Quality Assurance System (SPME), conducted by external institutions (Kemendikbud, 2016). Within this framework, madrasahs are required to implement Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) — a reflective instrument designed to identify

areas for development, map institutional strengths and weaknesses, and serve as the foundation for the Madrasah Work Plan (RKM) and Madrasah Work and Budget Plan (RKAM) (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Rosyid, 2024).

Despite its strategic mandate, EDM implementation faces a persistent and well-documented problem: it is frequently treated as an administrative obligation rather than a genuine instrument for continuous improvement (Salsabilah et al., 2026). Empirical evidence from Pandeglang Regency reveals that only 60.71% of madrasahs demonstrate relevance between accreditation scores and EDM results, signaling a serious gap between policy ideals and actual practice (Budiarjo et al., 2025). The 2023 national EDM data further confirm that quality culture achievement remains uneven across madrasahs, particularly in the areas of discipline, self-development, learning processes, facilities, and budget management.

This gap is compounded by a significant lacuna in the literature. Although numerous studies have examined EDM in general schools, research specifically addressing its strategic role within madrasahs — institutions with distinctive characteristics including Ministry of Religious Affairs oversight, limited resources, and unique religious content — remains considerably limited. Previous studies have also treated Total Quality Management (TQM) and EDM as separate topics, without integrating the two within a unified evaluative framework (Janna et al., 2024; Anita, 2025). Comparative cross-national evidence further indicates that external evaluation feedback has not yet fully stimulated coherent and sustained institutional innovation (Kutbaniyah & Faslah, 2025).

Against this backdrop, this study addresses three interrelated questions: How does EDM function as a quality assurance instrument in madrasahs? What is its strategic role in improving madrasah quality? And how can its implementation be optimized? Theoretically, this study contributes an integrative framework connecting EDM and TQM principles within the specific context of madrasah governance. Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, madrasah principals, and quality assurance teams seeking to reposition EDM from a compliance document into a genuine driver of sustainable educational quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a library research approach, in which various literary sources serve as the primary data. According to Mestika Zed (2014), library research constitutes a series of activities encompassing the collection, reading, recording, and processing of materials relevant to the research focus. This approach was selected to examine EDM as a quality assurance instrument, analyze its strategic role in improving madrasah quality, and identify optimization efforts based on theoretical frameworks and prior research findings.

Data were collected through documentation techniques by systematically tracing secondary sources, including journal articles, books, theses, dissertations, proceedings, and policy documents, via Google Scholar, Garuda, and DOAJ (Sugiyono, 2019). Sources were included if published between 2019 and 2026 and directly addressed EDM, madrasah quality assurance, SPMI, or TQM in the Indonesian educational context, while non-peer-reviewed and methodologically unclear publications were excluded. This process yielded a final corpus of 30 sources as the analytical foundation of this study.

Content analysis was conducted by systematically interpreting data to derive conclusions relevant to the research objectives. Following Moleong (2018), the analytical stages encompassed data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with information categorized into three themes: EDM as a quality assurance instrument, its strategic role in improving madrasah quality, and optimization of its implementation. To maintain analytical rigor, categorization was conducted iteratively with cross-checking between sources to ensure consistency of interpretation and minimize selective bias.

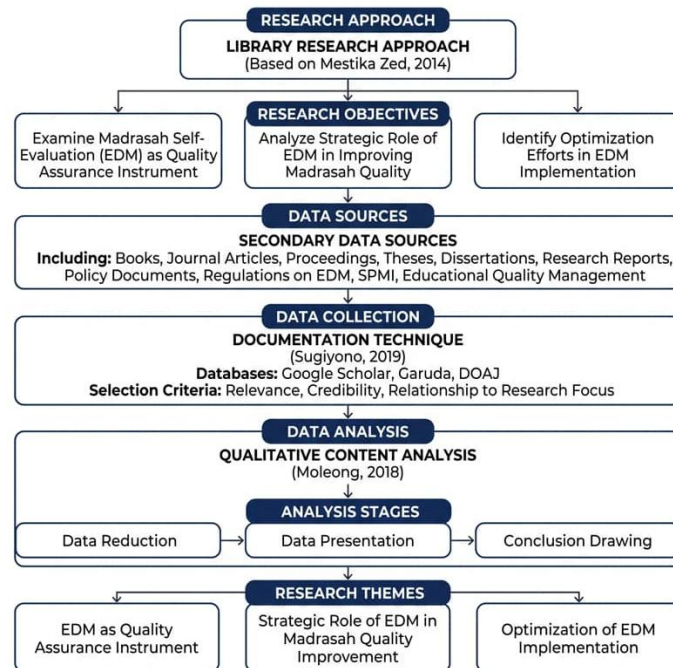


Figure 1. Research Methodology Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Self-Evaluation (EDM) as a Quality Assurance Instrument

EDM is a systematic process of assessing educational quality conducted by all madrasah stakeholders based on indicators referring to the eight National Education Standards (SNP). Its implementation requires the conscious, honest, and objective involvement of all madrasah elements so that deficiencies may be identified, strengths maintained, and educational quality developed in accordance with the madrasah's vision and mission (Ditjen Pendis Kemenag RI, 2022). In operational terms, EDM is managed through an integrated digital platform featuring a dashboard, budget recapitulation, evaluation history, guidance pages, and activity logs, tools that collectively render the reporting process more systematic, transparent, and accountable (Khatimah et al., 2024).

What makes EDM more than a routine administrative instrument is its integrative function within the broader quality information ecosystem. As illustrated in the EDM-Based Quality Information Model (Umar, 2023), EDM results do not stand independently but are processed alongside accreditation data, supervisory evaluations, academic achievement records, Dapodik, and teacher competency data to produce a comprehensive quality map of the madrasah. This integration is significant: it means that the validity of EDM as a decision-making tool depends not only on how honestly it is completed, but also on how well its outputs are cross-referenced with other institutional data. Research by Kurniawan et al. (2025) and Rosyid (2024) confirms that EDM serves both as an evaluative instrument and as a form of accountability under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, yet its value is only realized when evaluation results are actively used as the basis for RKM and RKAM preparation rather than filed away as compliance documents.



Figure 2. EDM-Based Quality Information Model (Source: Umar, 2023)

This points to a critical tension that the literature has not fully resolved: EDM is simultaneously mandated as a quality assurance mechanism and undermined by the very institutional conditions it is meant to address, limited human resource capacity, low transparency, and weak follow-through. Muslim and Faozi (2025) argue that sustainable quality culture requires both external (accreditation) and internal (EDM) mechanisms working in tandem, but in practice, the two often operate in isolation. The implication is that EDM's function as a quality assurance instrument cannot be taken for granted; it requires deliberate institutional scaffolding to move from data collection to genuine quality improvement.

The Strategic Role of EDM in Improving Madrasah Quality

The strategic value of EDM lies in its capacity to connect institutional self-knowledge with purposeful action. Suhada et al. (2024) identify two complementary approaches to EDM utilization, user strategy (operator competency, training, support teams) and management strategy (policy support, platform monitoring, resource provision), a distinction that is analytically useful because it reveals that EDM's effectiveness depends on both frontline capacity and leadership commitment. Neither alone is sufficient: strong management support without competent operators produces data that cannot be meaningfully interpreted, while skilled operators without institutional backing produce reports that go unused.

This dual dependency is reinforced by findings from Chotimah et al. (2024), who identify five quality cultures in madrasahs, discipline, educator development, learning process, facilities provision, and budget transparency, each mapped against the eight SNP indicators. EDM's role here is diagnostic: it surfaces which of these cultures are functioning and which are deficient. The strategic significance of this diagnostic function becomes clearer when read alongside Setiawan et al. (2024), whose study of MAN 4 Pandeglang demonstrates that quality improvement grounded in POAC management functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) is most effective when EDM data inform each stage. In other words, EDM does not merely describe the madrasah's condition, it structures the logic of institutional action.

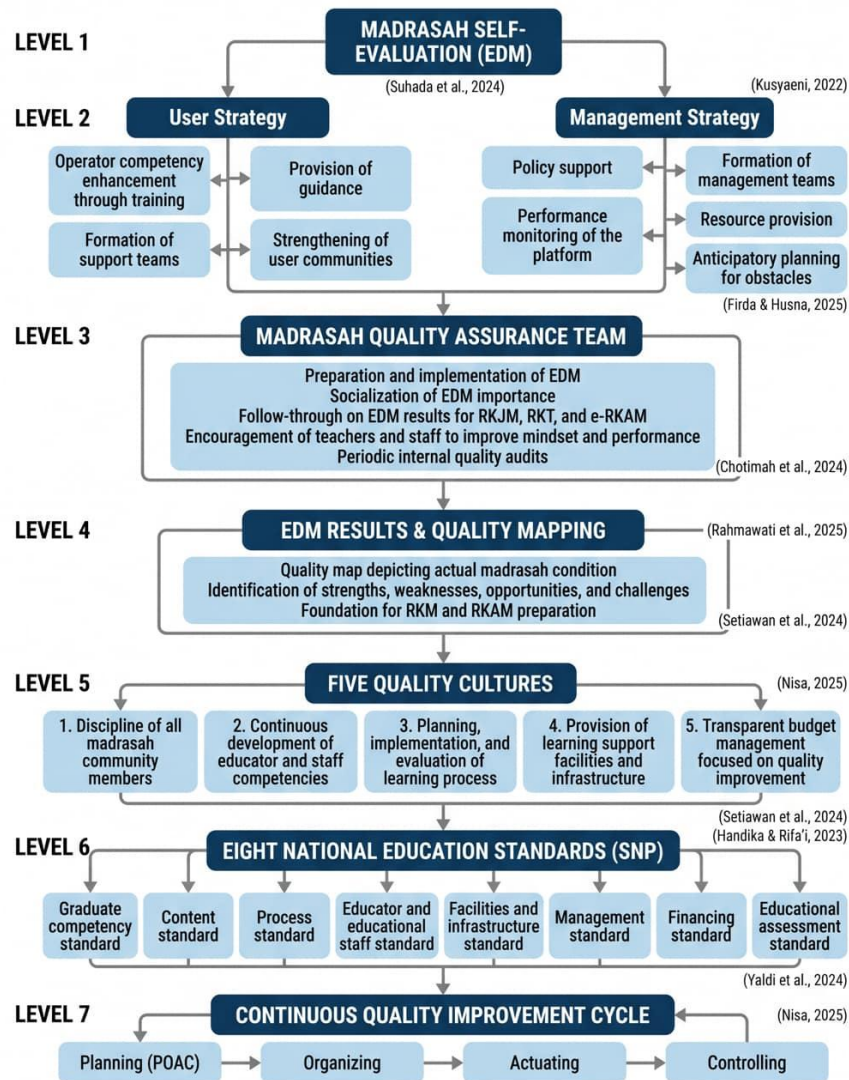


Figure 3. *The Strategic Role of EDM in Improving Madrasah Quality*

Yet the literature also reveals a recurring failure point: EDM results are collected but not translated into targeted programs. Handika and Rifa'i (2023) and Yaldi et al. (2024) both note that EDM produces quality maps intended to drive RKM and RKAM preparation, but the analytical step between mapping and planning is frequently skipped. This gap is not merely a technical problem but a governance one, it reflects weak institutional norms around data use and accountability. Amid the Merdeka Belajar policy and the digital transformation of madrasahs through e-EDM and e-RKAM, the expectation that madrasahs manage themselves on a data-driven basis has never been more explicit (Firda & Husna, 2025); yet the infrastructural and cultural conditions needed to fulfill this expectation remain unevenly distributed across madrasah contexts. EDM's strategic role, therefore, is not self-executing, it must be actively cultivated through leadership, policy, and professional capacity.

Optimization of EDM Implementation to Improve Madrasah Quality

Optimization of EDM implementation is best understood not as a single intervention but as a layered process involving human resource development, institutional mentoring, digital integration, and stakeholder engagement. Rahmawati et al. (2026) demonstrate that targeted EDM assistance significantly increases madrasah capacity to prepare data-based evaluations and to use them as the foundation for RKM preparation, a finding that suggests the bottleneck in EDM optimization lies less in the instrument itself than in the human and institutional conditions surrounding its use.

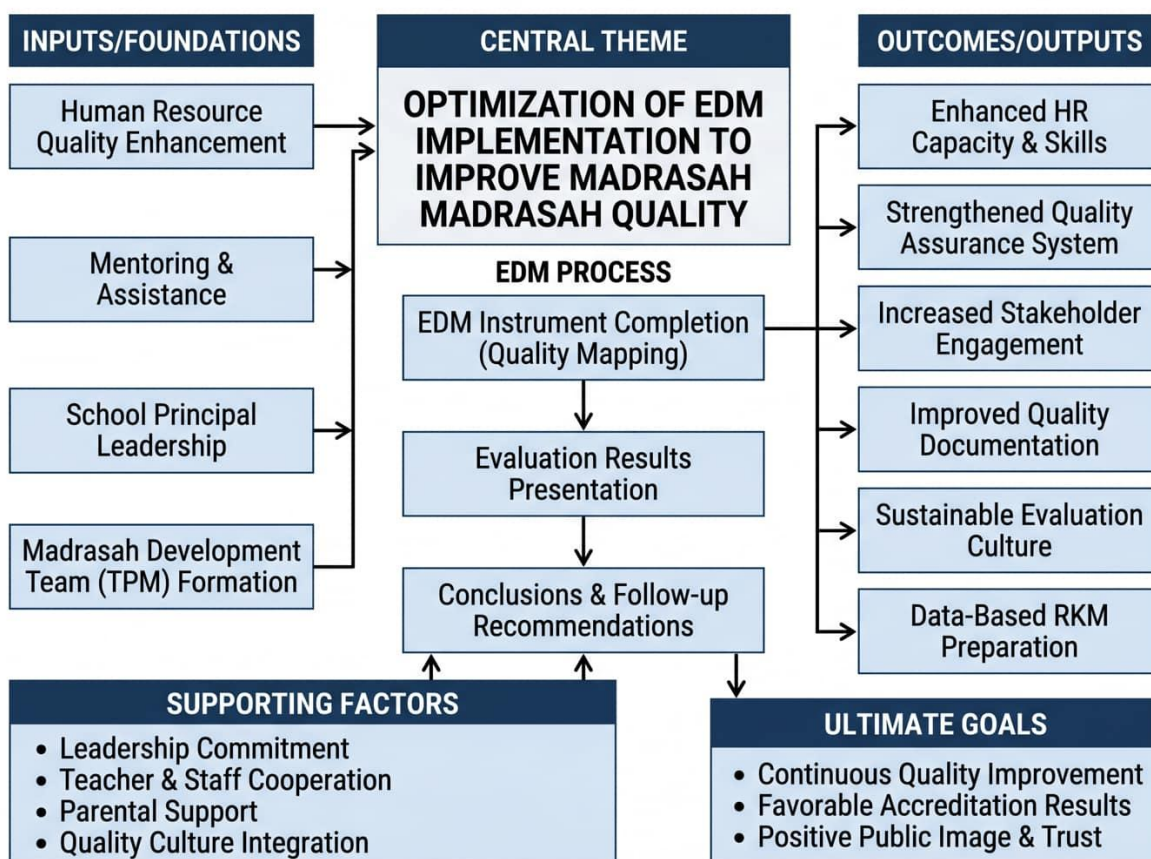


Figure 4. Optimization of EDM Implementation to Improve Madrasah Quality

The role of external mentoring is particularly instructive in this regard. Setiadi et al. (2025) show that sustained mentoring enables madrasah principals to implement all stages of management, from planning and implementation to evaluation and follow-through, in a more reflective and collaborative manner. Crucially, mentoring is most effective when it addresses not only technical skills but also the organizational culture of the madrasah. Firdaus (2024) reinforces this point by arguing that principal leadership is the primary driver of human resource competency enhancement, which in turn determines the quality of the learning process. Read together, these findings suggest that EDM optimization is inseparable from leadership development: principals who treat EDM as a strategic tool rather than a bureaucratic requirement create the conditions for a genuine quality culture.

Evidence from MI Ma'arif NU Karanganyar (Rahmat & Rifai, 2023; Efendi et al., 2025) provides a concrete illustration of this process. Despite being a newly established madrasah with identified deficiencies in discipline, educator quality, and operational budget, the systematic implementation of EDM through the formation of a Madrasah Development Team (TPM), instrument completion, result presentation, and recommendation formulation enabled the

institution to establish a structured basis for continuous improvement. This case is significant not because it represents success, but because it demonstrates that even resource-constrained madrasahs can use EDM productively when the process is conducted with institutional commitment. Aman et al. (2025) further confirm that the key enablers of quality improvement, leadership commitment, staff collaboration, and parental support, are precisely the conditions that make EDM results actionable rather than archival. From a quality management perspective, this means that EDM optimization is ultimately a question of institutional culture: when evaluation is embedded in the daily governance of the madrasah rather than treated as an annual compliance exercise, it becomes the foundation for the continuous quality improvement that the SPMI framework envisions.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that EDM is not merely an administrative instrument but a critical strategic component of the internal quality assurance cycle. Through EDM, madrasahs obtain accurate information regarding educational standard attainment, identify institutional strengths and weaknesses, and establish a data-driven foundation for RKM and RKAM preparation. However, EDM's strategic value is only realized when its results are actively translated into institutional action, not stored as compliance documents. This requires madrasah principals to function as data-driven leaders, Quality Assurance Teams to sustain structured follow-through across planning and audit cycles, and policymakers under the Ministry of Religious Affairs to strengthen mentoring and capacity-building mechanisms, particularly for resource-constrained madrasahs.

Ultimately, the success of madrasah quality assurance depends less on the EDM instrument itself than on the institutional culture surrounding its use. When EDM is embedded in daily governance, supported by committed leadership, competent operators, and active stakeholder participation, it becomes the engine of continuous improvement that the SPMI framework envisions. Future research is encouraged to examine the causal relationship between EDM implementation quality and measurable learning outcomes, as well as to develop context-specific optimization models for madrasahs operating under varying resource conditions.

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