



## COMPREHENSIVE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: RESOURCES, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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### ABSTRACT

**Phenomenon/Issue:** The effective implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary schools faces numerous challenges, including resource limitations, inconsistent leadership quality, cultural acceptance issues, and inadequate stakeholder involvement.

**Purpose:** This study aims to identify the factors that influence successful IQAS implementation in elementary schools, focusing on resource availability, school leadership, cultural support, structured quality improvement processes (PDCA cycle), and the role of external stakeholders.

**Novelty:** While prior research has examined general aspects of quality assurance in education, this study uniquely analyzes the combined effects of resource allocation, school culture, and stakeholder collaboration, providing a holistic view of factors essential for IQAS success in elementary settings.

**Research Methods:** A qualitative case study approach was employed, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis from selected elementary schools. Data triangulation and thematic analysis were used to ensure reliability and depth in findings.

**Results:** Findings reveal that resource sufficiency, proactive leadership, a strong culture of quality, systematic application of the PDCA cycle, and active stakeholder engagement are critical to successful IQAS implementation.

**Research Contributions:** This research provides a framework for policymakers and school administrators to enhance IQAS in elementary schools, emphasizing the importance of integrated resource support, leadership development, cultural alignment, and community involvement to achieve sustainable quality assurance.

This study underscores the need for a collaborative, resource-backed approach to meet and maintain educational quality standards effectively across schools.

## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in primary schools has become an important priority in the effort to improve the quality of basic education in Indonesia. This system aims to create an educational process that complies with national

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standards and ensures that each educational unit can continue to make continuous quality improvements. However, the implementation of SPMI at the primary school level faces various challenges, ranging from limited facilities to low commitment and understanding of human resources in education. Therefore, it is important to examine how primary schools can overcome these obstacles and what strategies are effective in optimally implementing SPMI.

Quality assurance at the basic education level emphasizes the fulfillment of eight national education standards which include standards of content, process, graduate competencies, educators and education personnel, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and educational assessment. In accordance with the study by Susanto & Mahmudah, (2022), many primary schools in Indonesia have not met all of these standards, especially in the aspect of facilities and infrastructure. These shortcomings often hamper the implementation of a quality teaching and learning process and make it difficult for schools to achieve national education targets (Susanto & Mahmudah, 2022).

In this context, school management, especially the commitment and leadership of the school principal, plays a very important role in ensuring the effectiveness of SPMI implementation. Research by Rahminawati & Supriyadi (2023) shows that low commitment from school management often hinders the implementation of SPMI. The principal as the main driver needs to have a strong vision and commitment in developing a culture of quality in the school. Without adequate commitment, the quality assurance process is difficult to implement consistently (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

In addition to limited facilities and management commitment, the quality of human resources in primary schools is another important factor affecting the implementation of SPMI. Many primary schools experience problems in maintaining the quality of teaching staff due to the high mobility of teaching staff. This, as revealed by Seftiani et al., (2019), makes it difficult for schools to maintain consistency in SPMI implementation, especially in terms of adaptation and training of new staff. Often, high staff turnover requires periodic adjustments that are time-consuming and costly, disrupting the implementation of quality improvement programs (Seftiani et al., 2019).

Another obstacle faced in the implementation of SPMI in primary schools is the issue of socialization and communication. Often, the lack of socialization among school staff about the importance of education quality becomes a major obstacle. According the involvement of all parties in the school in the socialization process can improve the understanding of the importance of SPMI and the standards to be achieved. Lack of effective communication between management, faculty, and other staff can lead to misinterpretation or even indifference to the objectives of SPMI (Tamrin et al., 2025).

As a solution to this challenge, several strategies have been proposed by researchers to strengthen the implementation of SPMI in primary schools. One effective strategy is the establishment of a specialized team responsible for implementing and monitoring SPMI. Rahminawati & Supriyadi, (2023) showed that the establishment of a solid quality improvement team with clear responsibilities can help ensure that SPMI implementation runs well and effectively (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023)

In addition, the process of quality mapping and periodic evaluation plays an important role in identifying areas that need improvement and planning strategic steps. Eliawati et al., (2024) highlighted the importance of quality mapping as part of a continuous improvement cycle that enables schools to systematically identify shortcomings and make necessary adjustments in line with national education standards (Eliawati et al., 2024)

Furthermore, improving the quality of human resources is an important solution to implement. Research by Idris et al., (2022) shows that training and professional development programs for

educators are very influential in strengthening teachers' competencies, which in turn will support the successful implementation of SPMI in primary schools. Targeted and continuous training programs can help teachers master the skills needed to support higher education standards (Idris et al., 2022). Integrated approach through the PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act) has been proven to assist schools in implementing SPMI in a consistent and structured manner. The PDCA cycle allows schools to plan.

This research aims to address gaps that have not been extensively explored in previous studies on the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary schools. While past studies have discussed aspects of management and resource limitations, this research will delve into the role of school quality culture, local needs of schools, and the sustainability of teacher training. Additionally, it will explore how the PDCA cycle can be effectively adapted to the elementary school context and assess the role of school leadership in driving the successful implementation of IQAS amidst structural limitations and operational challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary education is essential for meeting national educational standards, ensuring continuous improvement in instructional quality, and establishing a school culture that prioritizes quality. Recent literature demonstrates the significance of IQAS but also reveals challenges that hinder its effective implementation. This section synthesizes relevant studies, identifies research gaps, and proposes hypotheses for further exploration.

### **Importance of IQAS in Elementary Education**

IQAS is designed to support schools in meeting national education standards and to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Studies have shown that effective IQAS implementation can contribute to better educational outcomes by ensuring adherence to quality benchmarks across curricular, infrastructural, and personnel dimensions Patel, (2024). Furthermore, IQAS encourages a structured approach to evaluating and improving various educational components through planned, systematic, and cyclic assessments, such as the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model (Hanim et al., 2022).

This structured approach not only impacts students' learning but also helps educators achieve higher standards of teaching effectiveness and accountability. A well-implemented IQAS involves comprehensive evaluation and quality control mechanisms that align with national education policies, promoting school accountability and the adoption of best practices (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

### **Challenges in IQAS Implementation**

Despite its benefits, IQAS faces multiple challenges in elementary education. One primary obstacle is the lack of adequate resources, such as infrastructure, technology, and skilled staff. Many schools do not meet all national education standards due to these limitations, which hampers the full realization of IQAS potential.

Another significant challenge is cultural resistance within schools, particularly when it comes to adapting to new quality standards and evaluation frameworks. School leaders and teachers may lack the motivation or training required to engage actively with the IQAS process, impacting the effectiveness of its implementation. Studies underscore the importance of

fostering a school culture that values quality improvement and sees IQAS as a collaborative effort rather than a top-down mandate (Eliawati et al., 2024).

### **Role of School Leadership in IQAS**

The effectiveness of IQAS largely depends on the leadership style and commitment of the school's principal. Effective leadership involves not only administrative competence but also the ability to engage teachers, students, and the community in quality initiatives. Principals who adopt inclusive leadership styles and involve various stakeholders in the quality assurance process are more likely to foster a conducive environment for IQAS implementation (Hanim et al., 2022) (Hanim et al., 2022).

Further, Rahminawati & Supriyadi, (2023) highlight that principals play a pivotal role in establishing quality improvement teams within schools. These teams act as facilitators and evaluators of IQAS, identifying areas of improvement and implementing changes based on data-driven insights. This role underscores the principal's influence in embedding IQAS into the school's operational culture and aligning it with broader educational goals (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

### **Hypotheses Development**

Based on the insights from current literature, the following hypotheses are proposed to guide further research on IQAS implementation in elementary schools:

**Hypothesis 1: The effectiveness of IQAS implementation in elementary schools is positively correlated with resource availability, including adequate infrastructure and skilled personnel.**

Studies indicate that resource availability significantly impacts IQAS success. Schools with better infrastructure and access to professional development for staff demonstrate more consistent IQAS implementation, as these factors directly support the standards IQAS seeks to uphold (Kitosi, 2021).

**Hypothesis 2: School leadership plays a mediating role in the relationship between IQAS implementation and overall school culture.**

Leadership is crucial in fostering a culture that embraces continuous improvement and quality standards. Effective school leaders, especially principals, can mediate between the structural requirements of IQAS and the cultural mindset of the school, thereby enhancing IQAS acceptance and adherence (Hanim et al., 2022).

**Hypothesis 3: Cultural acceptance of IQAS among school staff positively affects its successful implementation.**

A supportive school culture is necessary for IQAS to thrive. When school staff value and understand IQAS goals, implementation becomes more effective, leading to better educational outcomes. A lack of engagement or resistance among staff, however, can significantly impede IQAS success (Eliawati et al., 2024).

**Hypothesis 4: A structured approach, such as the PDCA cycle, enhances the consistency and reliability of IQAS outcomes in elementary schools.**

The PDCA cycle facilitates continuous improvement and provides a structured mechanism for schools to monitor, evaluate, and refine their quality practices. Implementing IQAS with a structured approach has been shown to produce consistent results, aligning school operations with quality standards (Kaiser et al., 2022; Syukur et al., 2022; Nasution et al., 2023).

**Hypothesis 5: Stakeholder involvement, including parents and the local community, enhances the efficacy of IQAS in elementary schools.**

Engaging external stakeholders, such as parents and the community, provides additional accountability and support for IQAS. This involvement can create a broader sense of responsibility for educational quality, as well as provide resources and feedback that improve IQAS implementation (Sudarmin et al., n.d.).

The proposed hypotheses aim to address identified gaps in IQAS literature, including the role of leadership, resource constraints, cultural challenges, and the need for structured quality management. By exploring these hypotheses, future research can provide practical insights into optimizing IQAS in elementary schools and contributing to the broader objective of educational improvement through quality assurance.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES**

The analysis of each hypothesis provides insights into the various factors influencing the effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary schools. This section presents findings based on thematic analysis of interviews, observations, and document reviews, aligning these findings with each proposed hypothesis to evaluate their validity and relevance.

**Hypothesis 1: The effectiveness of IQAS implementation in elementary schools is positively correlated with resource availability, including adequate infrastructure and skilled personnel.**

The analysis reveals that schools with adequate infrastructure and skilled personnel report higher success rates in IQAS implementation. Schools with well-maintained facilities, access to educational technology, and sufficient classroom resources can more effectively meet national standards, thereby supporting IQAS goals. Additionally, schools with trained and experienced teachers demonstrate smoother adoption of quality measures, as these educators are more adept at aligning their instructional practices with IQAS standards. This finding supports prior studies that emphasize resource availability as critical to educational quality (Karakhanyan, Soboleva, et al., 2020). Schools lacking these resources struggle to meet standards consistently, underscoring the need for additional government support and targeted funding to close this gap (Karakhanyan, Soboleva, et al., 2020).

**Hypothesis 2: School leadership plays a mediating role in the relationship between IQAS implementation and overall school culture.**

The analysis confirms that school leadership, particularly the role of the principal, significantly mediates IQAS implementation by setting a tone for quality culture. Principals who engage with IQAS through active communication, accountability, and involvement of staff and parents create a more supportive environment for quality assurance initiatives. Leaders who foster a collaborative school culture tend to observe greater teacher engagement and adherence to IQAS processes, as teachers feel more invested in the outcomes. Studies indicate that principals who regularly communicate quality objectives, involve staff in decision-making, and lead by example are instrumental in cultivating a school culture that embraces quality improvement (Hanim et al., 2022). Therefore, leadership training and support systems are recommended to help principals develop competencies that positively impact IQAS effectiveness.



**Hypothesis 3: Cultural acceptance of IQAS among school staff positively affects its successful implementation.**

The study found that cultural acceptance of IQAS among school staff is essential for successful implementation. Schools where teachers and administrative staff understand and value IQAS objectives show more consistent adherence to quality protocols. Cultural resistance, on the other hand, results in sporadic or incomplete implementation of quality measures. Staff members who perceive IQAS as an external imposition are less likely to fully integrate its practices into their routines, impacting the overall effectiveness of the system. Prior research by Eliawati et al., (2024) highlights that an inclusive approach to introducing IQAS, which actively involves staff and addresses their concerns, can mitigate resistance and enhance cultural acceptance Eliawati et al., (2024). Thus, fostering a shared understanding of IQAS benefits through regular staff training and open discussions is crucial for embedding a quality culture in schools.

**Hypothesis 4: A structured approach, such as the PDCA cycle, enhances the consistency and reliability of IQAS outcomes in elementary schools.**

The analysis supports the hypothesis that implementing the PDCA cycle contributes to more consistent and reliable IQAS outcomes. Schools that follow the PDCA cycle report better monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of their quality processes. The cycle enables schools to make continuous adjustments based on real-time evaluations, allowing for timely identification and resolution of quality-related issues. Observational data from schools implementing the PDCA cycle show that teachers are more systematic in documenting and addressing performance gaps, leading to improvements in teaching practices and student outcomes. This finding aligns with Nguyen et al., (2023) assertion that the PDCA model is effective in creating a structured environment for quality management. Consequently, training on PDCA processes should be prioritized to enable schools to better align with IQAS standards.

**Hypothesis 5: Stakeholder involvement, including parents and the local community, enhances the efficacy of IQAS in elementary schools.**

The findings indicate that involving parents and the local community in IQAS processes enhances its efficacy by fostering a supportive network that reinforces school quality initiatives. Schools that engage stakeholders through regular updates, involvement in quality planning, and feedback mechanisms benefit from increased accountability and resources. For example, schools that held periodic meetings with parents to discuss IQAS goals and progress reported higher levels of satisfaction and participation. These schools observed a stronger commitment from parents to support school quality efforts, whether through volunteering, feedback, or additional resources. This finding corroborates previous research by Sudarmin et al., n.d.. (2020), who found that parental and community involvement provides valuable insights and increases resource availability for schools). Therefore, schools should actively integrate stakeholder engagement strategies into their IQAS framework.

The analysis confirms that resource availability, school leadership, cultural acceptance, structured approaches, and stakeholder involvement all significantly impact the effectiveness of IQAS implementation in elementary schools. Schools with adequate resources and a supportive leadership structure are more successful in achieving IQAS standards. Moreover, a culture that values quality assurance and integrates stakeholder input is essential for sustainable quality improvements. The structured PDCA approach further enhances the reliability of IQAS by promoting continuous assessment and adjustments.

To optimize IQAS, recommendations include increased funding for under-resourced schools, leadership development programs for principals, regular staff training to foster a quality culture, and systematic use of the PDCA cycle. Additionally, schools should strengthen stakeholder engagement to ensure broad-based support for IQAS goals. These findings provide a framework for policymakers and educational administrators to enhance IQAS efficacy and contribute to the broader goal of educational improvement.

## DISCUSSION

This discussion delves into the key factors contributing to the success and challenges in implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary schools. Analysis based on the tested hypotheses reveals that IQAS effectiveness is influenced by resource availability, school leadership quality, cultural acceptance, the application of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, and stakeholder involvement. Each of these factors has significant implications for IQAS implementation and sustainability, consistent with prior research addressing similar issues in elementary education.

### Resource Availability as the Foundation of IQAS Implementation

Resource availability serves as a crucial foundation in IQAS implementation, especially regarding physical facilities, educational technology, and teacher competence. Findings indicate that schools with sufficient resources are more capable of meeting national education standards consistently, whereas resource-limited schools face challenges in achieving optimal outcomes. Afriadi et al. (2023) highlight that inadequate facilities hinder IQAS effectiveness in elementary schools, limiting their ability to perform quality assurance processes effectively (Fernandes & Singh, 2022; Karakhanyan, Aboul-Ela, et al., 2020; Mansell et al., 2020).

These findings imply that investments in facilities and teacher training are crucial for educational quality improvement. Additionally, local government support, in the form of funding and policies, is necessary to enhance resources in elementary schools. Schools with access to educational technology, for instance, can leverage digital tools in teaching, thereby supporting higher quality standards. Therefore, policies focused on equitable resource distribution across elementary schools are strategic steps toward strengthening IQAS across the board.

### School Leadership in Cultivating a Quality Culture

School principals play a significant role as leaders in the successful implementation of IQAS. Principals with strong leadership skills who actively engage various stakeholders, both within the school and the wider community, are more effective in promoting a culture of quality. Rahminawati & Supriyadi, (2023) found that proactive principals who establish quality improvement teams create conducive environments for IQAS, engaging teachers, staff, and parents in the planning and evaluation of educational quality.

Practically, this indicates that principals committed to achieving quality standards can facilitate better IQAS implementation. Principals with management and communication skills, who can motivate staff and teachers, are more likely to foster a school culture oriented toward quality. These findings underscore the importance of leadership development programs tailored specifically for principals to support their role as quality assurance leaders in schools.

## **School Culture Supporting IQAS Implementation**

In addition to the principal's role, IQAS success heavily depends on the school culture's acceptance and support of quality programs. These findings align who assert that involving all school members, including teachers and administrative staff, in socializing and understanding the importance of quality assurance is crucial for effective IQAS implementation (Eliawati et al., 2024; Jannah et al., 2024; Warta et al., 2023).

A positive quality culture enables staff and teachers to respond more adaptively and collaboratively to challenges in IQAS implementation. Schools with strong quality cultures exhibit a collective commitment to improving education through continuous evaluation and improvement. Therefore, schools must organize comprehensive training and socialization programs to ensure that all school members have a unified understanding of IQAS. Creating forums for discussions also allows school members to share experiences and strategies in implementing IQAS effectively.

## **The PDCA Cycle as a Mechanism for Continuous Improvement**

The PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle provides a structured and systematic approach to IQAS implementation. This study finds that schools utilizing the PDCA cycle are more consistent in conducting continuous quality evaluation and improvement. The PDCA cycle enables schools to assess their achievements regularly and make necessary adjustments based on evaluation results. This finding is supported who notes that the PDCA approach is effective in establishing a sustainable framework for quality assurance (Benz-Camino et al., 2023; V. Nguyen et al., 2020; Rajagopalan, 2021).

PDCA implementation offers several practical benefits. First, this approach provides a mechanism that allows schools to make gradual improvements without waiting for problems to arise. Second, PDCA enables schools to document quality assurance processes in detail, serving as a reference for future evaluations. Therefore, training on PDCA implementation is recommended for all school staff to ensure they can effectively execute this cycle.

## **Stakeholder Involvement as a Supporting Factor**

Stakeholder involvement, including parents and the surrounding community, proves to be a crucial supporting factor in IQAS implementation. Schools that engage stakeholders in quality planning, execution, and evaluation processes receive broader support, both in terms of active participation and additional resources. Sudarmin et al., n.d. (2020) identify that support from parents and the community significantly contributes to the success of quality programs, as they provide valuable input and help create accountability in achieving quality standards.

This external support creates a broader network that enables schools to be more flexible in meeting quality standards. For instance, parents can actively participate in quality improvement programs through involvement in school committees or providing feedback on implemented policies. Furthermore, local community involvement allows schools to utilize local resources, both in terms of moral and material support.

The findings of this study offer several important implications for educational policy development. First, government policies prioritizing facility enhancement and teacher training in elementary schools should be emphasized to support optimal IQAS implementation. Second,



strengthening the principal's role in quality leadership requires focused training and mentoring programs to improve their competencies as leaders. This also includes enhancing management and communication skills to support successful quality assurance.

Third, programs to strengthen a quality culture within schools should become mandatory policy, incorporating systematic training and socialization activities so that each school member can adopt quality values in their routines. Utilizing the PDCA cycle in IQAS could be promoted as a standard operating procedure for elementary schools to ensure the consistency and reliability of quality assurance outcomes. Finally, increasing parent and community involvement in quality programs should be included in school policies, given the importance of this external support for IQAS success. This discussion shows that the success of IQAS implementation in elementary schools is highly influenced by several factors, from resource availability to external stakeholder support. Successful implementation requires synergy among principals, teachers, administrative staff, parents, and the local community.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the successful implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in elementary schools is significantly influenced by five main factors: resource availability, school leadership quality, school culture acceptance, the structured approach of the PDCA cycle, and external stakeholder involvement. Schools with adequate resources, competent principals, and a strong culture of quality are more likely to achieve desired educational standards. The application of the PDCA cycle has proven effective in ensuring continuous improvement, while the involvement of parents and the community provides moral support and additional resources that strengthen quality assurance programs. To optimize IQAS implementation, educational policies should focus on resource equity, leadership development, quality culture enhancement, and active community engagement. This study suggests that achieving sustainable quality assurance in elementary schools requires a synergistic approach involving both internal and external stakeholders. Such collaboration is essential for creating a robust quality assurance system that ultimately contributes to comprehensive educational improvement across schools. The findings emphasize that these combined efforts are key in helping schools meet and maintain national education standards effectively and consistently.

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